

# BEING A REAL CHRISTIAN; WHAT THAT MEANS

## *First Century Gospel Church*

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There will be very few real Christians in the closing days of the Gospel Age, Jesus explained. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." (Luke 17:26), when there were only eight persons ready to believe God and be saved at the time of the flood. By that act of believing God for the 'saving of their lives from drowning', the Bible says that Noah became a spiritually 'righteous man'.

Remarkably, that faith to believe on God enabled their 'act of obedience to God', which was all that was involved for their protection from death by drowning (along with all other people in the world). (Hebr. 11:7) "Through faith Noah, being divinely taught about things as yet unseen, reverently gave heed and built an ark for the safety of his family, and by this act he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which depends on faith." (That Holy Spirit inspired statement from God, leaves us no room for any excuse we may have to not believe that God's Word is true, and to be counted faith righteous).

(John 1:12-13) "But all who have received Him, to them—that is, to those who trust in His name— He has given the privilege of becoming children of God; who were begotten as such not by human descent, nor through an impulse of their own nature, nor through the will of a human father,... but from God."

When it comes to spiritual things, we are all on the same basis, meaning we are all qualified to receive the same blessing that people received in Bible times. If one person can receive them, then we all can get them. If we fail to get the blessings, it leaves us without any excuse. When we get rid of all excuses for any lack of failure on our part that we may have, it would be a wonderful thing for us, because excuses may hold and pass in our life here, but they will never pass in eternity. Excuses would be like counterfeit money after we leave this world (as Jesus clearly illustrated for us in God's Word, Matt. 22:11-14), "Now the king came in to see the guests; and among them he discovered one who was not wearing a wedding-robe. 'My friend,' he said, how is it that you came in here without a wedding robe?' The man stood speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "'Bind him hand and foot and fling him into the darkness outside: there will be the weeping aloud and the gnashing of teeth.'" "For there are many called, but few chosen."

It is the work of Satan to put excuses in a person's mind, (and that man may have had a few excuses for why his faith had faltered, and why he was not victorious in his faith life on earth), and not prepared and ready to meet Jesus on His return. However, while his excuses may have worked for him in his life here, they would not pass for him in a next life in eternity.

Noah's believing faith took away all the excuses of the world, for the Bible says "by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." He trusted and believed God to protect his body (and those of his family) from drowning, and God's Word says that this faith made him 'spiritually right' with Him. Noah just trusted God for His protection from drowning.

Jesus used a parable of an 'unjust judge' and 'poor widow' to enlighten us to the Truth of us holding steadfast in our faith, and to persevere in our prayer, to get our deliverance from God out of present day troubles in this life on earth. (Luke 18:1-5) "He also taught them by a parable that they must always pray and never lose heart. In a certain town," He said, "there was a judge who had no fear of God and no respect for man. And in the same town was a widow who repeatedly came and entreated him, saying, "'Give me justice and stop my oppressor.'" "For a time, he would not, but afterwards he said to himself, "'Though I have

neither reverence for God nor respect for man, yet because she annoys me I will give her justice, to prevent her from constantly coming to pester me.' "

Jesus then applied that parable to everyone else's life,... "And the Lord said, "Hear those words of the unjust judge.<sup>7</sup> And will not God avenge the wrongs of His own People who cry aloud to Him day and night, although He seems slow in taking action on their behalf?"(Luke 18:6-8)

(If an unjust judge would give a widow a 100% deliverance, would not God give that much or more to His own people? ) (vs.8)

"Yes, He will soon avenge their wrongs"... "Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"(Jesus questioned), (OR, will He find people getting their victories through dealing personally with God and trusting in Him alone?)

So, it being a fact of there being so few who will go through trusting God to the end, that makes our 'spiritual interests' of most great importance. Heaven is the most grand and glorious place, and God intends that we are to enjoy so many grand things there,... while the Lake of Fire is such a terribly horrible place, that it is extremely critical for us to know 'what it means to be a real Christian', and to also live up to that 'standard of faith', and hold steadfast unto our victory.

There are three things that define what it means to be a 'real Christian', and that will make us become that in our life. The first thing is a 'new birth', which means to really be born again of the Spirit. Jesus said "unless a man is born 'anew' he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:4-7)"How is it possible, Nicodemus asked, "for a man to be born when he is old? Can he a second time enter his mother's womb and be born? In most solemn truth I tell you," replied Jesus, "that unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Whatever has been born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished at my telling you, 'You must all be born anew.'"

That means that the self-life that we were all born with, must be gotten rid of. (That is the 'new birth'), and the condition for being born anew are given us (1 John 1:9) "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, ... and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (from all results of a 'life of self'.)

A real sincere confession always brings that 'new birth' in Christ, and when we truly confess and forsake our sins, we are then to really believe on the authority of God's Word that we are pardoned and cleansed.

When a person sincerely confesses and forsakes their sins, but then listens to the suggestions from Satan that they are not really forgiven of their old sins,... of course, as long as they believe that 'lie of the devil' (that God was not faithful to forgive them), then they will have no faith in God at all. That would be giving in to a temptation from the devil (pure and simple, the late Pastor said), and neither God nor man could help them believe to receive from God. (God has told us plainly "if we confess our sins" (acknowledge our true spiritual condition), "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

It is our responsibility to believe that Word of God, but there are not many professing Christians who really do believe that, and we will not have a clean heart until we do believe His Word, and we must continue to believe it (to continue in faith and be made righteous through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told Paul(Acts 26;18) "I send you to

open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the obedience to Satan to God, in order to receive 'forgiveness of sins' and an inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Me."

To be 'born anew', have that 'new birth' as Jesus said we all must have, and have a 'clean heart',...is a very valuable thing; it is the only foundation of ever living a victorious overcoming life of faith and being sanctified through faith and made righteous and prepared to meet Jesus Christ on His return.

However, there is a seriously grave error being made by a multitude of people of the world (and among many of religious sects), those who believe that if anyone person(s) is just 'born again', that he (they) are sure of getting to Heaven. They say (and falsely teach) that it does not make any difference what happens (takes place) in their life afterward, that they will get to Heaven only because they have the 'new birth' Jesus said we all must have. (John 3;3) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Jesus did not say that everyone who was just 'born again' would get to Heaven. He gave that as a 'first step', and a very important step. [ We can compare it to one of the qualifications to become President of the United States, that is, one must be a natural born citizen of the United States of America. But that is just one condition, and what happens after their birth is what determines whether they become President. That is what Jesus meant when He gave the first condition or qualification of 'getting to Heaven',...which is 'new birth' via the Holy Spirit.

The second step (condition) is an absolute surrender of our life and will to God (as we are instructed Rom.12:1-2) "I plead with you therefore, brethren, by the compassions (mercies) of God, to present all your faculties (body) to Him as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to Him. This with you will be an act of reasonable worship. And do not follow the customs of the present age, but be transformed by the entire renewal of your minds, so that you may learn by experience what God's will is—that will which is good and beautiful and perfect."

We all belong to God via creation and by the Blood-purchase that He sent His Son to make, to pay the price for our sins, and so to pardon and cleanse us, and make that 'new birth' possible in the lives of true 'believers'. God is the only One who has the right to say what we shall do or shall not do. That is His prerogative to do with us just as He pleases, just as it is our prerogative if we own something, to say what is to be done or not done with that thing. It is not simply because God wants someone to obey Him, but God well knows that if we do not submit to His Will for us, then Satan will get control and possession of us. Satan will rob us in this life, and in the end will land us in 'the Pit' of the 'Lake of Fire'. [Everyone must surrender the 'life of self', and submit our (themselves) to doing God's will in their life, and so, be 'born anew' of the 'Holy Spirit.'

Jesus explained to us (John 3:6-8) "Whatever has been born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished at my telling you, You must all be born anew.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So is it with every one who has been born of the Spirit."

Our surrender of 'self' is altogether for our benefit; and it is an absolute necessity. God cannot do anything for us spiritually or otherwise, and surely cannot prepare us for Heaven, until we are fully surrendered to do His Will in our life. That means that we are willing to meet circumstances of life as the New Testament teaches us to meet them. That is what it means to live a life according to the Scriptures given us in God's Word.

We may not know all of God's Will at first in our 'new life in Christ', and God does not send us to the Pit because we do not know. But we are responsible for one thing, and that is to take an attitude of surrender and willing to obey His Word as far as we understand it (at the time). We are also required to stay surrendered, (not fall away from faith), and so, to 'bear spiritual fruit', or be 'thrown into the fire'. (Matt. 7:19), (and 3:10) "And already the axe is lying at the root of the trees, so that every tree which does not produce good fruit will quickly be hewn down and thrown into the fire."

God, (however), does not ask anyone to do this in their own strength; but He does require us to take that attitude toward Him, that is, be willing to obey His Word as far as we know it. And, the moment that we surrender fully and whole-heartedly, God will take possession of us, and gives us the power and guidance to live and obey and meet things as His Word says to meet things. God doesn't expect us to obey any command in the New Testament until He gives us the strength and guidance to do so. All of that is received through surrendering self, and believing on the power of the Atonement work of Christ (the One whom God has sent).

We should take notice that in all of the epistles written for us, first of all, the Blood (the Atonement of Christ) is brought out as the merit; the power of God is the 'means', and then God gives the commands (or directions) that we are to obey.

'The Law' was given to be obeyed in human strength, and of course they failed. 'The Gospel' was given, however, to be obeyed in God's strength. So that is something we should be very comfortable about, that is, we are responsible for the surrender of our will, (and that surrender must be absolute), since God gives us the strength to obey His Will.

If we do not surrender right, and leave ourselves even a slight privilege to disobey God's Word (and go our own way) or do something different from what God's Word says, then that is what we will find ourselves doing, because our surrender to God is not sincere and absolute.

We will never obey the Word of God as long as we allow or tolerate any rebellion in our heart, and disobedience in our life. Our final surrender means an absolute subjection to God, and must be that way in order for us to be successful, because if we leave any loophole for Satan to tempt us, he will surely come in to do just that (to lead us away from our Lord, Savior).

If we say that we will just obey God in the things that suit us and things that we cannot see, we will disobey, and then cover it up by saying that the Lord does not require us to obey on that issue or matter. Satan will supply us with all the excuses we need to tolerate that disobedience in our life, by not 'meeting circumstances in God's way. However, as long as we allow ourselves the privilege of not 'meeting things right', we will never be able to 'meet the right, and it will land us the Pit of the Lake of Fire forever (if we do not recognize that 'rebellion' against God's Word, and confess and correct it). (Luke 13:3) "unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

