



Life
church

BELIEVE
LIKE JESUS

www.lifechurchint.com

Book 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Believe like Jesus.....	2-3
Day 1: How do I know that there is a God?.....	4-6
Day 2: The Oneness of God.....	7-9
Day 3: Having a relationship with God.....	10-12
Day 4: Sin.....	13-16
Day 5: Salvation and Repentance.....	17-19
Day 6: The 10 Commandments.....	20-22
Day 7: Baptism.....	23-25
Day 8: Communion.....	26-28
Day 9: Empowered by the Holy Spirit.....	29-32
Day 10: The fruits and the gifts of the Spirit.....	33-35

INTRODUCTION: BELIEVE LIKE JESUS

Welcome to the first of four books that have been designed to accompany you over 40 days of devotions as you spend time daily with Jesus. This journey with Jesus will take you on a profound experience that invites reflection, growth, and healing. We pray that you will be open to how the Holy Spirit will lead and guide you through the devotions and that your response to Him, as He illuminates areas of growth, will truly bring change in your life.

Our journey with Jesus is characterised by diverse terrains—ranging from breathtaking mountain peaks to shadowy valleys. Some days may feel like smooth, easy paths, allowing for moments of peace and clarity. Other days may present rough, strenuous routes that test our resilience and faith. These varied experiences are integral to spiritual growth, helping us develop perseverance, humility, and a deeper understanding of God's presence in our lives. Thankfully, that no matter where we are in the journey, we are comforted that He will never leave us or forsake us. (Deuteronomy 31:8). His unwavering presence provides strength and reassurance, guiding us through both the highs and lows of our spiritual journey.

Our first book is called 'Believe like Jesus.' As we journey to ultimately become like Jesus, we need to understand His beliefs. Belief is a powerful, capable of transforming us internally and externally, and altering our perception of life itself. In Hebrews chapter 11 we see how God honours those that have gone before us who have demonstrated faith. Without a clear understanding of what we believe, cultivating genuine faith and trusting in God becomes challenging. Conversely, steadfast beliefs elevate our faith, enabling us to trust God even in seemingly impossible circumstances. Developing a deep and unwavering conviction is essential for spiritual growth and for experiencing the full extent of God's promises.

This book aims to guide you in understanding the core beliefs of Jesus.

Each devotion aims to teach you the truth. In today's world, we are taught that we should believe what we want, whatever is true to us. However, for Christians, the foundation of their beliefs is rooted in the Bible, which is regarded as God's Word. The Bible provides an objective and unwavering source of truth, guiding moral and spiritual conduct. This is exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, whose actions and teachings epitomise living in accordance with God's Word. His life serves as a model of divine truth manifesting through compassion, integrity, and unwavering faith, leaving a profound impact not only during His earthly ministry but across countless generations thereafter.

The enduring influence of Jesus shows us the importance of adhering to God's truth as the way to live a meaningful and purposeful life. As you embark on the journey of 'Believe like Jesus,' our prayer is that your eyes will be opened to God's truth, bringing freedom that you have never experienced before. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, that if we hold to His teaching then the truth will set us free.

ROMANS 1:20

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So, they have no excuse for not knowing God.

Many individuals still question whether there is a God, whether there is someone out there that has control over what is happening in our world. People often struggle with this question because of how they have been brought up or what they have been taught. Others do not believe in a God, because they cannot reconcile what they have experienced in their life and what they believe. For example, someone may have lost a loved one to cancer or been through a horrific trauma or experienced heartache where there was once hope for a bright future. There are so many examples where people have decided to not believe in God because of what they have experienced. The questions become, 'How can there be a loving God if this has happened to me', or 'How can there be a God who is in control, when life seems out of control.' Questions turn to doubt which inevitably turn into beliefs as people struggle to understand and doubt the existence of a loving God.

Romans 1:20 is a remarkable verse as it emphasises that irrespective of our personal beliefs and experiences, **creation proves to us that there is a God.** In creation we see struggle and breakthrough as a butterfly pushes itself out of a cocoon before it can open its wings and fly. We see heartache and sacrifice to bring new life, when a mother octopus dies from exhaustion and starvation after her babies are born. We see pain and joy when a mother's belly grows as a human is being formed inside of her which leads to an unbelievable miracle of childbirth. Creation shows us that life is not without struggle and pain. Pain, struggles, heartbreak are all a part of being fully alive, and **a place of fully experiencing God's goodness and love.** Creation truly declares the glory of God (Psalm 19:11). The question is, 'Are we really searching for God or are we more caught up with ourselves; what is best for us and what we want?'

Jeremiah 29:13 says, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you,' declares the Lord. We cannot let our beliefs be based on how we are brought up, what we were taught at school or even our experiences. It must come from a place of deeply searching for God.

If we do not search, we will never truly know for ourselves if there is a God who cares, and we will be continually pushed back and forth by the waves of belief around us. May our lives be a continual search for God, truth and His love.

Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you"

QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that God exists? How?
2. How have you seen God in nature?
3. How have you seen God through your life experiences?
4. In what area of your life do you need to seek God?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER

'Thank you, God, that you exist. My desire is to be connected to you every day, and to hear and obey your call. Amen.'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Questions and thoughts about creation
- <https://www.allaboutcreation.org/>
- Lee Strobel: Is God real?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZy6G132gXE>

QUESTIONS

1. Which fruit of the Spirit have you seen as you have gotten closer to God? (e.g. self-control)
2. Which gifts of Spirit the have you seen working through your life? (Read Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11 for a list of possible gifts.)
3. If people would begin to exalt you, because of your gifts, what would you do?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER:

'Lord my God, thank you for showing me your greatness and sovereignty. Your power has amazed me. Please make the fruit of the Spirit evident in my life and fill me with power so I can go.

Amen.'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Discovering your gifts:
<https://giftstest.com/>
<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/gifts-survey/>

GALATIANS 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law".

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

Both the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit were a visible manifestation in the life of the Lord Jesus, and this manifestation became a hallmark of the apostles and the Early Church. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul concludes a series of instructions on walking in the spirit versus in the flesh by listing the fruits of the Spirit.

The **fruits of the Spirit** are the result of salvation in a believer's life after becoming a new creation. The fruit of the Spirit shows itself in our lives not because of our own efforts but because of the presence of the Lord Jesus Himself in their lives and their daily communion with the Father.

The **gifts of the Spirit** are a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the regenerated believer, and they serve to equip believers for the work of the ministry. The work of the ministry requires great dependence on God, supernatural power, discernment, and wisdom. Being equipped for the work is so important that the Lord Jesus asked the disciples not to leave until they received the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) and were clothed with power.

One of the problems Paul encountered in the Corinthian church, regarding the gifts of the Spirit, was the issue of comparison. Some thought their gift was superior to others, but the Bible does not teach us that. It teaches that the Body must flow in harmony, working together to **build each other up using the gifts.** (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Both the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit are works of God in the life of the believer, but it requires cooperation in surrendering our hearts in faith for them grow and be used through us.

2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen!

The Bible clearly states that **there is only one God** (Deuteronomy 6:4). But this one God reveals Himself in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is fully God, co-eternal, and equal in essence.

Although the word trinity is not explicitly written in the Bible, on several occasions it is described. **God the Father** is the Source of all things, creator and sustainer (1 Corinthians 8:6). **God the Son** (Jesus Christ) is the Word who became flesh, died, and rose again to save us (John 1:1-14; Colossians 2:9). **The Holy Spirit** is the Comforter, guide, and dwells in us (John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

The Bible shows that the three persons act together in unity. At Jesus' baptism, the Father spoke from heaven, the Son was in the waters, and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove (Matthew 3:16-17). The apostolic blessing also declares, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Thus, the Trinity is the testimony that there is only one God, revealed in three divine persons, united in love and purpose.

The Trinity is a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith. We do not worship three gods, but one **God who reveals himself in three persons** co-eternal and equal in nature: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father loves us and planned salvation, the Son rescued us with His death and resurrection, and the Holy Spirit dwells in us to guide and transform us. This is not only a doctrine to understand, but a truth to live by. The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, invites us to **fully trust in Him**, to enjoy His love, and to reflect His unity in our relationships.

So, how do we live and relate to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit every day?

1. By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives us grace, forgiveness, hope, and new life.
2. By experiencing God's love. The Father's love envelops, protects, and guides us.
3. Through the communion of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit unites us to God and transforms our hearts to live according to His will.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your relationship with the Holy Spirit like? Have you ever been baptised in the Holy Spirit? What was the experience for you?
2. Why do you think it's important to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit? How does this happen?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER:

'Holy Spirit I acknowledge that you are in my life. Help me to open my ears and eyes to what you are doing around me. Empower me to be your vessel. Amen'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- John Bevere: How to be empowered by the Spirit
<https://youtu.be/Y7DkcjWn1FU?si=WTt5qK9ZJHIn6vqm>

QUESTIONS

1. Have I recognized that salvation and forgiveness come only through Jesus? How can I live today by receiving and sharing this grace?
2. Practical action: Choose someone to forgive or bless today, putting Christ's grace into practice.
3. How do I trust in God's love even in difficulties?
4. Have I shown love to others as He loves us? If not, do a small action of love: a word of encouragement, some help, or prayer for someone.
5. Have I sought the Spirit's direction in my decisions and am I open to the daily transformation He offers? Set aside 5 minutes of silence to listen for the voice of the Spirit and ask for wisdom in a situation of the day.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER

'Jesus, today I receive your grace. Thank you for forgiving my sins and help me forgive those who sin against me. Father, thank you for your love. Help me to show your love to someone today. Holy Spirit direct me and guide me in your purpose. Amen.'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Trinity explained
<https://youtube.com/shorts/19pIqmLPCFU?si=yfFuUJ0MHrnhB5Dn>
- The Trinity explanation by Redeemed Zoomer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f4BJgaOStI>
- The Trinity explained by The Bible Project
<https://youtu.be/eavvYmE2YYIU?si=BiGeYhJEKd1I7xta>

Acts 1:4-6 tells us that just before Jesus was taken up into heaven, He gave his disciples a command to wait in Jerusalem for a gift from the Father until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Once Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples went and waited in Jerusalem. In Acts 2:4, we see the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit. This indicates to us that there is a second experience with the Holy Spirit apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation. This is called Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Jesus promised that His disciples would receive the "promise of My Father" that would "clothe them with power from high" (Luke 24:49). This promise was repeated in Acts 1:8. Being baptised in the Holy Spirit is part of your empowering and equipping from God to do His purposes.

CAN ANYONE BE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Anyone who is saved can receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some people think there are certain things they must do to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The blood of Jesus qualifies us. All we must do is repent, accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and pray in faith that we will receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We see in the book of Acts that as people were baptised in the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues. This may happen to you. As you are being prayed for, an unknown language may start coming from your lips as you worship and speak to God. In the Bible 'speaking in tongues' was either God using you to speak a new language for a specific purpose, (Acts 2:1-11) or the Holy Spirit speaking through you to God in a tongue that no person will understand (1 Corinthians 14:1-40), but which edifies you (1 Corinthians 14:4). You may even use other spiritual gifts when being prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some may or may not have any outward sign that anything has happened, but we believe in faith that as we pray for the Holy Spirit, we do receive. Don't ever feel pressured when being prayed for, or disappointed if you have not spoken in tongues. Keep trusting God and spending time with Him. You have been baptised by the Holy Spirit in faith, and the evidence will come.

CONTINUAL FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Throughout the book of Acts Christians were continuously being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is something we should always move towards. "He must become greater; I must become less." John said about Jesus (John 3:30).

DAY 9: EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

JOHN 14:16-17

'And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth.'

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and also fully God. He has been sent to continue the ministries of Jesus after His departure. That is why He is called the 'Paraclete' or helper, the Counsellor, the comforter, or advocate who Jesus promised to send to us to work in his place (John 14:16). He is now available to all God's people abundantly and permanently (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2; John 14:26). When we are not sure which direction to go, we don't know who can help us. This is the role of the Holy Spirit. To bring light into darkness. He will be the One who can guide us and comfort us. He also convicts us of our sin but draws us close to God in times of need. He is our teacher, sent by Jesus to walk with us daily.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN YOU, BEING BAPTISED/EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN YOU

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we are born again of the Spirit (John 3:5-8). That means the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit before He left earth, to be with us forever (John 14:15-20).

BAPTISM/EMPOWERING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This experience is available to all believers. Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem to be clothed with power from on High...thus to be baptised with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-6.) It is an empowerment we receive to equip us for God's service. Here is an example, from the disciples, that shows the difference between being indwelt by the Holy Spirit (having the Holy Spirit live in you) and being baptised by the Holy Spirit (having the Holy Spirit equip you for a time and purpose).

In John 14:14-20, Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit coming to be with the disciples since He was going away. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples before ascending to heaven and breathed on them the Holy Spirit- (John 20:22). Hence the disciples were indwelt by the Holy Spirit after the crucifixion. This is the same when we accept Jesus and what He did for us.

DAY 3: A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

GENESIS 3:8

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

This garden was the place God intended for them to enjoy, to look after the land, to take care of the animals and **to have fellowship with Him**. "They heard the sound of God walking". This would have been a familiar sound to them as He walked and talked with them often in the garden. God had come close before, and He was coming close now, even at this moment, when they had sinned and irrespective of their sin.

Their sin caused a separation between themselves and God. Later down in the chapter you read that God had them leave the garden. Now the relationship looked different, it was no longer the same as a Holy God could not be with sinful people. People later had to go through a High Priest and make sacrifices to get closer to God. It is later through Jesus and His death on the cross that the relationship between humanity and God is restored and we could all come close again. As Jesus took on our sin on the cross, it meant that **we can now come close to God** as we are. He wants us to have a relationship with Him. The more time we spend with Him, the more we surrender parts of our lives. He forgives us and accepts us back into a relationship with Him.

Proverbs 8:17 says "I love those who love me: And those who diligently seek me will find me." The Lord is always waiting for us to press in and seek Him. He desires that we have a relationship with Him and that we would make time for Him. **He chose us first** and sought after us, so we can go after Him. We can tell Him each morning why we are grateful for Him, and we can ask Him what He wants from us for that day. You see, each day with the Lord is new and we can grow each day in our relationship with Him, as we sit with Him, read His word, and go about our day. Let's **invite Him in**, seeking Him in each moment.

QUESTIONS

1. What comes to mind when you think of a relationship with God? (Close/far, think about it deeper)
2. What do you feel the Holy Spirit is highlighting for you to seek Him more?
3. How can you start each day with Him?

DAY 4: SIN

1 JOHN 3:4 -6

'Everyone who sins breaks the law, in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him there is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.'

Sin breaks God's law, it is in total opposition to God's commandments, it goes against His will in the Old and New Testament. Sin goes against God's moral principles and standards which He has set in place. The Hebrew word for "sin" (*Chatat*) means to 'fail' or 'miss the mark'.

This means that sin is not just about blatant wrongdoing but also about falling short of God's intended purpose for humanity. Even actions that might not seem inherently wrong can be sinful if they fail to align with God's will and purpose.

The Bible tells us that **we are all sinners**. Romans 3v23 says, *'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'* This means that every person, on the face of the earth, including you and me, have fallen short of God's requirement. God's requirement is not balanced out on the good and bad scale; we are all measured and found wanting. Yet God, in **His grace, freely makes us right in His sight**. He did this by sending His Son. 2 Corinthians 5v21, *'God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.'* This is central to our Christian beliefs and faith in God.

This means that God made Christ, who knew no sin to be sin for us. This theological idea signifies that Jesus, without sin, took on the weight of humanity's sin (our sin) through His crucifixion, acting as a substitute for our sins. This sacrifice, according to Christian belief, makes it possible for believers to be reconciled to God and receive forgiveness. This means we have no righteousness (we are not right before God) in ourselves, but our righteousness is in Him, it is our belief in Him and what He did for us that makes us righteous. **He willingly took our place**. I can remember the moment I had that realisation. I had always believed that Jesus died on the cross for the whole world, because I saw him there in the Churches I visited as a child. I never applied His death and resurrection to my life. It was only when I realised that this was a personal act, which he did for me, for my sin, that it became a reality.

DAY 8: COMMUNION

LUKE 22:19-20

'And when he took a loaf of bread, he gave thanks, he broke it, and served it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body offered for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, and said, "This cup signifies the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out in your benefit.'

The Lord's Supper has its origins in the Last Supper of Jesus with his apostles, reported in the Gospels and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25 and 1 Cor. 11:23-30) Jesus used the bread to symbolise His body, and the cup of wine to represent His new covenant as His blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins.

The **Lord's Supper is an act of faith and remembrance**, where believers partake of the bread and wine to remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the new covenant established by his blood. Instituted by Jesus and commanded to his followers, this ceremony invites reflection, repentance, and fellowship with Christ and other believers, proclaiming the Lord's death until He returns.

Below are essential practices to observe when participating in communion.

1. **Remember and Gratitude:** Communion is a time to remember the sacrifice of Jesus and to give thanks for the salvation and forgiveness that He provides.
2. **Examination and Repentance:** Preparation for communion involves self-examination, repentance, and confession of sins, ensuring that one participates worthily.
3. **Unity with God and other.** Communion is a time of union with Christ and communion among believers, strengthening the body of Christ as a whole.
4. **Proclamation of the Death of Christ.** By participating, Christians publicly announce the Lord's death until He returns.

When I accepted this, I can still recall the overwhelming sense of relief from guilt and shame for all the things that had happened in my life, the scars, and the forgiveness towards those who had inflicted those scars. If He had forgiven me then I must forgive myself and others, and it released me to do that.

I have heard people say that they are good people and have never harmed anyone, yet the Bible is clear in Isaiah 64:6 'All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags: all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away'. Sinners do not see that they are sinners and that they have fallen short of what God requires in His Word. They will admit to lying, stealing, cheating but still believe they are good people, yet sin is sin. If you break one of God's commandments, you have broken them all. Ultimately, they need the Holy Spirit to open their eyes to their sin and their need for Jesus. Sin is a daily thing that needs our constant attention, we are not tempted by God to sin, and God does not tempt anyone to sin. (James 1 v13)

As Christians and children of God, we have an advocate with the Father and that is Jesus His Son. We can come into His throne room and receive the grace and the mercy that we need. We need to be alert to the enemy of our soul who is the Accuser and who has schemes that want us to fail. He wants to kill and destroy our lives, but **Jesus has come to give us life** and life more abundantly. We must walk away from sin and tap daily into the life God has provided.

QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life do you feel the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin? Can you open that door to Him and allow His love and forgiveness to flow through you?
2. What are some of the devil's schemes against you, that you are aware of?
3. Do you struggle with being forgiven and forgiving others? Why is that?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER

*'Dear Father, I thank you that you made a way that I can
come to you through your son
Jesus and I ask you to help me in these areas that need work.
Forgive me where I have wilfully disobeyed you (name these things)
forgive my rebellion and deliver me from evil.
Help me to turn away from these things and follow you.'*

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- The Bible, Old and New Testament – Genesis, Psalms, Romans, and the gospels.
- The Bible Project: What is sin?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOZ7ocLD74>
- Google any material by John Piper delving into the nature and implications of sin on YouTube.

Matthew 10:32: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven." Today, the practice of baptism continues to benefit the church in many ways. It is a shared experience among all disciples of Christ and helps to unite them as the body of Christ. "For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free..." (1 Corinthians 12:13). Believers are baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

QUESTIONS

1. What have you understood by this teaching on baptism?
2. Read these Scriptures for more understanding on baptism: Romans 6:1-11; Matthew 3: 13-17; Acts 8:12
3. Have you been baptised? Do you want to get baptised? Who can you speak to at church about this?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER

*"Thank you, God, for your church that is a united body through Jesus Christ.
May our understanding and practice of baptism strengthen our faith,*

deepen our commitment,

and inspire us to share Your gospel with the world.

Father, guide us to walk in obedience,

living out the new life You have given us in Jesus.

Amen.'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Crossroads Kids Club
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BQ-H8V3hP4>
- Nilkministries
https://youtube.com/shorts/DIgfseYjZRw?si=zd4_mFHG&xrtNz1kX
- Are you ready to get baptised?
https://youtu.be/zw4k11S83SE?si=XMXxwwJhoRyL_pjKS

MATTHEW 28:18-20

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Did you know that baptism is part of the Great Commission commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28? There are many reasons why Christians should be baptised, yet it can so often be neglected.

BAPTISM IS A COMMAND FROM JESUS

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commanded His disciples, and by extension the church, to go and make disciples of all nations and to baptise people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus' command establishes baptism as a core component of the process of making disciples.

BAPTISM IS A PICTURE OF SALVATION

Baptism is a picture of salvation. It is a way to actively commemorate and celebrate inclusion in the Kingdom of God. When new disciples are baptised within the church, they are immersed (not sprinkled) in a body of water. They are brought down into the water, just as Jesus was brought down into the grave after His death on the cross. Yet, like Jesus, the disciples do not remain in the water. They are raised out again in a symbolic representation of Christ's resurrection. Paul reminds us in Romans 6:8 that because we have died with Christ in baptism, we will also live with Him through resurrection.

BAPTISM IS A PUBLIC DECLARATION OF FAITH

Biblical Christian water baptism is reserved for people who have already made a conscious decision to follow Christ. When a person is baptised, they are publicly professing their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. It is a way of saying, "I am no longer living for myself, but for Christ. My old life is gone, and I am now identified with Him." This public declaration is a testimony not only to the church and the community but also to spiritual forces. It is also a great opportunity to evangelise to family, friends, and the community at large.

JOHN 3:3-4

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." 4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked.

"Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

In John chapter 3 we see that Nicodemus wanted to understand what it meant to be "born again". Jesus tells him that for him to see the Kingdom of God, **one must be born again**. Nicodemus misunderstands and thinks it means a physical rebirth and questions how this could be possible in the natural world; Jesus clarifies that this "new birth" is a spiritual one, being born of water and the spirit.

When we hear a preacher say you must be saved, what he is telling you is that you need to be saved by God from the consequences of your sin. Sin also includes eternal death or separation from God. (Romans 6v23) Spiritually we are dead in our trespasses and sin and ready to be judged by a Holy God. The only way to salvation is through Jesus. In John 14v6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". We are unable to access God the Father in any other way, except through Jesus and what He accomplished by taking our place on the cross, receiving the punishment that was due to us.

Our salvation not only means that we have been justified (just as if we never sinned) through the death of Jesus, but we have also been made righteous (giving us right standing before the Father) who gives us access into the throne room of Grace and Mercy. **We can't come with our own righteous behaviour**. We need to come in Christ's righteousness to God: Titus 3v5 "He saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit". Our salvation is achieved for us by our faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

It is a process of redemption whereby we get to live a life that is pleasing to God, a life that is transformed and renewed in our thinking and actions. It is where we get reconciled with God and given the promise of eternal life. This is a gift of God at salvation, we cannot work for our salvation, we can only live in gratitude to Christ for His indescribable gift. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Love needs to be an essential character trait of Jesus' disciples, namely, you and I. Jesus said, 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' These are remarkable words. We often think that to be a good Christian we need to be Bible-bashing everyone that we meet, but Jesus says that those that don't know Him will see that you are a follower of Jesus if you love them. Therefore, if we focus on loving God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength, that love will overflow into those around us. It will even overflow into areas of our lives that we struggle to accept in ourselves. Areas that we possibly have not surrendered to Jesus yet. It all begins with loving God.

So, should we be obeying the 10 commandments? Well, if we 'Love the Lord our God', 'love our neighbour', and 'love ourselves' then inevitably we will be obeying the 10 commandments.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you know if you love something or someone else more than God? Do you love something or someone else more than God? What are you going to do about that?
2. In which areas of your life do you struggle to love yourself?
3. What does it mean to love someone with God's unconditional love? What has stopped you from loving people with God's unconditional love?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER:

'Thank you, God, that true love comes from you. Today I surrender myself to you. Show me areas in my life that I struggle to love you, myself or others. Holy Spirit make me aware of these areas that I need to surrender. Thank you that you love me unconditionally and help me to do likewise. Show me how to conduct myself in relationship with others around me and show me which areas of my life where I am not loving you. I give myself to you.

Amen.'

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Remembering the 10 commandments easily
<https://youtube.com/shorts/wy537p4Uoe8&si=y4t8ftVvu0yZLbiv>
- Tomarrows World: Did Jesus actually teach the 10 commandments?
<https://youtu.be/RkwwWwslYq9g&si=ODspcu7oUf0AqCmy>

Whether you have accepted Jesus into your heart recently or have been a Christian much of your life, the most important thing we can do is grow our faith and trust in God. Too often I have gone back to thinking I need to earn my salvation by doing the right things, but I must remind myself that it is finished work. The more I get to know Jesus and love Him the more I am grateful and thankful to Him for what He has given to me.

Repentance is not always about 'not doing', it is about **changing direction**. If you are off course, get back on. If you jumped out, jump back in, where you jumped out. The Bible tells us in Philippians 2v12, "to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling". To have a fear or respect for God is the beginning of wisdom. This helps us to repent. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that brings us closer to God. It includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It is motivated by love for God and a sincere desire to obey His commandments. We must feel sorrow for our sins, we must forsake our sins, we must confess our sins, we must make restitution for our sins (where possible) and we must forgive others.

The big thing I have struggled with is forgiving myself. I must have faith that believes that God has removed my sin as far as the east is from the west. If he chooses not to look at it, why am I still looking? It is the enemy who constantly accuses us, he does not want us to be free, but **Jesus' truth sets us free**.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe God has saved you from?
2. What area of your life is lacking transformation?
3. Does your struggle need help, counsel, therapy? What is stopping you from getting the help you need? Maybe your next step is to recognize the need for help and make an appointment with someone.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PRAYER

'Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice. Today I ask for your forgiveness for my sins. I confess those sins that I see and don't see. Be my Lord and Saviour. Help me to turn the other way. In your name Amen'

EXTRA RESOURCES

- The Bible: Read Matthew 4v17; Luke 13v3; Acts 2v38; 2 Corinthians 7v9-10
- Billy Graham: <https://youtube.com/shorts/zgptWaxDvU?si=sIDMQ3S7DLBCA3ih>
- Impact Video Ministries <https://youtu.be/1h1WDgB6qkE?si=6OKI3FMhWIT8GmxxM>

MATTHEW 22:37-39

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

We have all heard of the 10 commandments, commandments such as 'Do not lie', 'Do not murder', 'Do not say the Lord's name in vain', and the like. We read about these commandments in Exodus 20 in the Old Testament. They were commands given to Israelites when they were released by an Egyptian Pharaoh after 400 years in slavery. God needed to help His people, the Israelites establish a new way of living a holy lifestyle as He, a Holy God, wanted to have a living relationship with them.

Many of us know of these commandments but what do they mean to us in the 21st century? Well, you are not the only one that has asked this question. There was a man mentioned in Matthew 22:36 who asked Jesus, 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' In verse 37, Jesus replies: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus was emphasising that ultimately the 10 Commandments come down to three LOVE principles:

1. Love the Lord your God
2. Love your neighbour
3. Love yourself.

What Jesus calls us too, first and foremost, is 'to love'. These makes sense because '**God is love**' (1 John 4:8). The essence of who God is unconditional love. God does not ask us to follow commands that become just a 'to-do' list or a 'I have to list'. No, everything that God calls us to do comes from a place of love and if done will result in love. Even we study the 10 commandments we can see that every commandment fits into at least one of the three LOVE principles.

The first four commandments emphasise 'Love the Lord your God.' And the second four commandments emphasise 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'