

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 21ST-22ND, 2023 // BAPTISM WEEKEND

## FIVE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

1. There is a brokenness and sickness in you that can't be fixed by the things of this world.
  - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
  - "The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it" (Jeremiah 17:9)?

We live in a broken world full of natural evil, moral evil, and internal evil.

- All the brokenness in this world is a symptom of a greater problem---we have sinned against our Creator, and we're separated from Him.
- All human beings are guilty of 3 things (Romans 1):
  1. We worship creation rather than the Creator.
  2. We think we're smarter than God.
  3. We've all failed to acknowledge Him as God.

None of the brokenness in you or in our world can be completely fixed by moralism, politics, education, science/progress/human reason, or therapy and mental health.

- If we *could* fix ourselves, we'd still be guilty of failing to acknowledge our Creator.
- We are all guilty and in desperate need of salvation from someone outside of ourselves who is not guilty and broken.

2. You deserve nothing from God except for the penalty of your sin (death)---yet God offers you the free gift of eternal life in Jesus.

- "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

When you work for the master of sin, you are paid back with death---both physical death and the second death in the life to come (Revelation 20:14).

- You and I deserve the just penalty for our sins, which is eternal punishment and separation from God through hell.
- On the cross, Jesus died the death that your sins deserved, and He's offered you eternal life because He's paid your debt in full.

3. You can do absolutely nothing to earn what's been given to you freely by Christ--- God has invited you just as you are.

- "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).
- "Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace" (Romans 11:6). This truth drives legalists, moralists, and religious people absolutely insane! We like to think that we can earn something from God or that our religious performance gives us a leg up.
- Jesus died your death for you while you were still a sinner---you did nothing to earn it, deserve it, or be worthy of it.
- This free gift of salvation is made available to anyone no matter what they've done.

## JESUS + "GOSPEL" = 0

The Jesus + "gospel" is a false gospel that diminishes the grace, love, and power of God and exaggerates the power of our own religious merit.

- "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).
- You can do nothing to earn God's grace---it's a free gift that is to be received through faith.

4. To receive God's gifts of forgiveness and eternal life with Him, we must trust and surrender to Jesus as Lord.

- "If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

To truly be saved, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead---true faith is a surrender to the identity of Jesus as God and King.

- But mere intellectual agreement with the facts of the cross and resurrection isn't enough without accompanying action.
- What the heart truly believes, the mouth will confess (Luke 6:45).

In the Roman Empire, confessing that "Caesar is Lord" was a sign of allegiance, loyalty, and devotion.

- So, to "confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord" is to publicly confess your total heart allegiance, loyalty, and devotion to Jesus as the resurrected King over the entire universe.
- To confess "Jesus is Lord" in Rome was an expression of your willingness to be martyred.

To confess "Jesus is Lord" also implies that you're surrendering your right to be Lord over your own life.

- Part of that involves repenting of your sin and choosing to leave it behind.
- Repentance is turning from sin and self, changing your mind/heart, making a clean break from lifestyles and patterns of sin, and submitting to what Jesus, as your Lord, says about sin.

These two things---genuine belief and public confession of allegiance---result in justification (being made right with God) and salvation.

- This is a promise of scandalous simplicity, and it's available to everyone and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord!
- Neither outward observance of religion that is void of inner faith nor privatized belief that is void of public confession will save.

5. A relationship with God through Jesus results in transformation, life change, an assurance that we belong to Him, and a desire to live for Him in all that we do.

- "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

When we trust fully in Christ, we can know that because the price of our sin has been paid in full by the work of Jesus on the cross, God's justice towards us is forever satisfied.

- God is not mad at us anymore!
- This is not subjective feeling, but objective reality.
- We are born again (John 3:3), transformed by the Holy Spirit into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), and we're given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26).

We're not saved by works, but when we are saved, we're given the responsibility and desire to do good works (Ephesians 2:10).

- We're given the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit's presence in our lives produces good "fruit" (Galatians 5:22-23).
- God redirects our desires away from sin and self and towards Himself and good things.
- Does this describe the state of your spiritual life?
  1. You're a sinner who can't save yourself.
  2. You deserve nothing from God except for His wrath---yet Jesus paid your penalty.
  3. You can do nothing to earn salvation.
  4. To be saved, trust in Jesus and surrender to Him as Lord.
  5. If that has happened, your life should show it.
- What about water baptism?

## WATER BAPTISM IS A STEP OF OBEDIENCE FOR ANY TRUE DISCIPLE OF JESUS.

### JESUS COMMANDED IT.

- Matthew 28:19-20

### BELIEVERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH WERE BAPTIZED.

- Acts 2:37-38, 41a

### JESUS MODELED IT.

- Matthew 3:16-17

Baptism is simply our public, symbolic profession of faith in our allegiance to Jesus as Savior & Lord.

- It's our way, as disciples of Jesus, to publicly declare before the people of God...
- "I've repented of my sins" (burial by water).
- "I've been cleansed of my sins" (washing by water).
- "I am a new creation in Christ" (rising from the water).
- "I intend to follow Him with my life" (identifying with Christ).

Baptism is something we do physically that symbolizes what God has done in us spiritually.

- Baptism is how we, as disciples of Jesus, profess the change that has occurred in us through active faith in Jesus Christ.
- Baptism symbolizes the washing and cleansing of sin we experience in salvation (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16).
- Baptism shows we've been forgiven, covered, and given a new life and purpose.

Baptism symbolizes the union we share with Christ as we find in Him salvation and embrace His call to discipleship (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

- Baptism shows that we've been changed and given a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17)!
- Baptism is a symbol of beginning the Christian life, so it's given only to those who have already begun the Christian life (Acts 2:41). It shows outwardly what's already happened inwardly.

## "WHAT ARE WE SAYING WHEN WE'RE BAPTIZED?"

1. I believe I'm a sinner unable to make myself right before God.
2. I believe that Jesus died for me the death I deserved b/c of my sin, and He rose again.
3. Jesus is my Lord, and I've repented of my sin.
4. I'm trusting in Christ to be made right before God.
5. I now want all the world to know it.

## "DO I HAVE TO?"

- When we ask that question, it already proves that our hearts are in the wrong place.
- Once we grasp the lengths that Jesus went to for our redemption, we should want to do ANYTHING He asks us to do.

## THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST ISN'T...

- Get busy with church and religious activities so you can be a better version of yourself.
- Follow the moral example of Jesus, and God will love you because then you'll be a good person.
- Clean yourself up by jumping through the right hoops to try to hopefully get into heaven.
- Only moral, diligent, and hardworking religious people can get saved.

## THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IS...

- You are far more sinful, broken, lost, and depraved than you can possibly imagine, yet God is far more loving, gracious, forgiving, and merciful than you can ever possibly imagine.
- Jesus came to earth and died for you so that you could have the free gift of eternal life.
- God stands ready to forgive you, cleanse you, and give you a new life in Him.
- Can you say with complete certainty that you have believed in the Lord Jesus---that you have repented of your sins and put your faith in Him?
- If so, have you ever been baptized as a profession of your faith in Him and a declaration to the world that you belong to Him?
- If not, what's stopping you?