

Free
Take One

January 2012

New Years Series & 1 Peter 3

“The Church God Always Wanted”

Striving To Be...



The Church God Always Wanted

January 2012 New Years Series

From the Pulpit Ministry at Christ E Free Church
of Saegertown Pa. www.christefca.org

763-2934

“A New Year and A New Focus”

January 1, 2012

Matthew 2:7-11

Matthew 2:1-11 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, (2) saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (3) When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; (4) and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. (5) They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: (6) "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" (7) Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. (8) And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." (9) After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. (11) And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh

Sermon: "A Jesus Focused Life"

Text: Mat. 2:1-11, Wisemen / Mat. 7:7-11; 1 Jn.2:6 / 2 Thes. 1:11

INTRO

Children's Church

What kind of Church do you think God desires to have?

After our month long Advent celebration focused on Jesus do we go back to business as usual? Do we resort back to life as it was before we spent a month focused on Jesus and His birth? Will we just pick up where we left off, no different, no change?

Pray and ask God to give you a mindset of discontent with your own personal spiritual life, with the state of your church, with the manner in which we are reaching the lost and making disciples. Pray God will make you discontented with the way things are.

Discontent is not dissatisfaction, but rather being *dissatisfied remaining where I am*.

I God wants a Church that is Fully Jesus Focused,

* *Consider The Wise men – Jesus was the central focus of their lives.*

There is no evidence of apathy, complacency, doubt, or even weariness.

A. The Wise Men Made Jesus the Focus of Attention & Study

* *Finding Jesus was their central focused priority.*

(1) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,

When you go deer hunting, your scope is a crucial part of your hunting equipment. When you look into the scope, it blocks out all the peripheral distractions. You don't see the birds flying overhead. You don't notice the squirrels scurrying about on the ground just in front of you. You only see what is in the sights of your scope.

THAT IS FOCUS!

The Wise men were fully Jesus focused. The Church must be fully Jesus focused. In order for the Church to be fully Jesus focused, each of us as individuals, must be fully Jesus focused. It won't "just happen."

When hunting, our focus is important in order to keep us from being distracted. We often need to re-focus. Its important to do that, in order to keep the target clearly in view. As Christians, we need to re-focus frequently. We tend to get distracted. Being careful not to become distracted and to re-focus, is crucial to keep Jesus clearly in view at all times.

B. The Wise Men Made Jesus the reason of their journey.

** The Wise Men were on a life changing journey and their journey had purpose.*

(2) saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."
--

Their journey had a reason. Jesus was that reason.

Growing up, our family vacations were highly structured events. My Dad was a marine and our vacation was often like reconnaissance mission. – “*Get in. Get out. Get-R-done!*”

Driving from Etowah Tennessee to Houston Texas was long and boring. We'd drive by a county fair or amusement park and I'd say, “Dad can we stop there, it sure looks like fun”. But fun didn't seem to be scheduled into our journey. *Nor were bathroom stops.*

I have to hand it to my Dad, he was focused and there was a reason for our journey – get there on schedule, attend a meeting or two at the convention, do some sightseeing and come home. I don't remember my Dad getting sidetracked or ever getting lost.

For us, the danger of getting sidetracked is always there. The tendency of loosing sight of the reason for our journey is often a possibility.

As Christians, we are all on a journey – a spiritual journey. Each of us must constantly be aware of and perhaps re-evaluate

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

what the purpose for our journey really is, in order to keep from getting side-tracked.

C. They Made Jesus the object of their worship

* *They gave Jesus all the best gifts they had.*

(10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. (11) And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh

We know from v2, that the wise men were coming to find the king of the Jews. I'm imagining that Jesus was not what they may have been expecting. They found no royalty, no entourage, nor any palace. Instead, them found their king, in a manger, a barn or perhaps a cave – with animals and wrapped in shredded cloth. And yet they gave Him what they had. Their worship and their gifts.

Too often, we don't find Jesus to be what we had anticipated. And too often, we fail to give Him what we have and what He deserves – our worship, being all that we have and all that we are. As one quartet's recording was entitled, Jesus, our King is worthy of "*Nothing Less Than Everything*".

((Jesus must be our central, Focus))

II We Must Desire What God Desires

* *God desires His people to experience Him in depth.*

When God offers a promise, He is inviting the Church to be the kind of Church God wants us to be. When God offers a promise, He typically includes a command He desires us to obey.

Jer 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

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Here, the command is “call to me”. The promise is “I will answer you.” The promise is conditional upon obedience to the command. And in the midst of this, God tells us – God desires His church to experience something quite radical – quite unusual –quite powerful.

If we are not experiencing the promise, then we may not be obeying the command – at least in the way God intended.

A. Tidal Wave Promises, yet unfulfilled

(Jere.33:3)

Gods desires are communicated through His promises. We know that because He gives us a challenge to experience something we have not yet experienced. We are invited to desire that which He desires and to experience something that God wants us to experience, yet until now, we have not experienced. Why? Or Why not?

Tidal Waves

Tidal Waves occur because of 2 main things: 1) significant seismic activity, and 2) debth of water. Activity and debth.

** September 9, 2002 - A strong earthquake struck just off Papua New Guinea's northern coast – in the coastal town of Wewak,"About 40 or 50 houses were **washed away**. It wasn't this monstrous tidal wave”

* Dec. 2004 – tidal wave in Indonesia left 10,000 dead and **washed away** an untold number.

* October 2010- Burma - Pauk Taw township- Tidal waves generated by Cyclone Giri killed nine people and **washed away** seven villages in Pauk Taw Township in Arakan State,...

** March 2011- Japan's most powerful earthquake since records began struck the north-east coast, triggering a massive tsunami, **washing away** cars, ships, buildings and untold hundreds of people were **swept away** by [the] wall of water.

Things I noticed about Tidal Waves.

1) Tidal Waves exhibit immeasurable power. Something far

beyond that which we are familiar with. Far beyond what we may be comfortable with.

2) Tidal Waves tend to wash a lot of stuff away. Not just one thing here, and something over there, leaving a lot of things in the middle, undisturbed and just as they were.

You can't pick and choose what a tidal wave is going to affect.

3) Tidal Waves change things. They tend to have long lasting effect. They change the landscape. They take a while to recover from. For those who personally experience a tidal wave, their lives are dramatically changed.

Kiddie Pool blessings vs. Tidal Wave blessings.

What would happen if we began to experience tidal wave movements of God?

We tend to prefer "Kiddie pool" experience of God vs. Tidal wave of experiencing God. In the kiddie pool, we can choose how wet we get. We can protect our hair, or keep our face from being splashed.

When a tidal wave comes, we have no control over it. We might just get washed away.

Kiddie pool experience of God at work vs Tidal wave experience of God at work.

Debth involves attention, our journey and our worship. Debth is risky. Debth means no footing, nothing substantial to stand on, debth means no fooling around, playing the game, splashing in the kiddie pool and thinking "this is my ministry". "This is what God has for me". "This is what the Christian life is all about".

This is what it takes for the Church today to become...

"The Church God Always Wanted!"

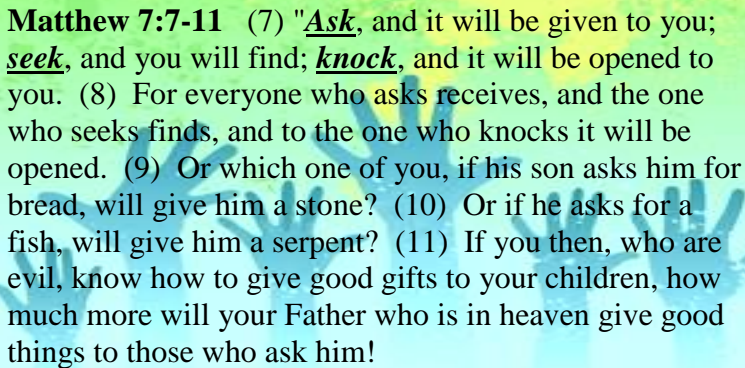


“The Church God Always Wanted ” pt2

New Year Series

January 8, 2012

Text: Matthew 7:7-11 / 1 John 2:6 / 1Thes. 1:11



Matthew 7:7-11 (7) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. (9) Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? (10) Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? (11) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Our Church Mission Statement:

Christ Evangelical Free Church

is committed to demonstrating God's Word
through His unconditional love
to reach people and
develop mature disciples
in the Lord Jesus Christ.

INTRO

Kids Sermon

What kind of Church do you think God desires to have?

After 1 full month of Advent focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, what do we do when the celebration is over? Do we go back to business as usual? Do we resort back to life as it was before we spent a week focused on Jesus and His birth? Do you just pick up where we left off?

If our focus on the person and work of Christ makes any difference in our lives at all, then surely we will be changed – at some level.

May 2012 bring us a refreshed focus for the Church!

In order to fully accomplish this mission statement and to be the kind of Church God Always Wanted...

I We Must Desire What God Desires

** God desires His people to experience Him in depth.*

When God offers a promise, He is inviting the Church to be the kind of Church God wants us to be. When God offers a promise, He typically includes a command He desires us to obey.

A. Tidal Wave Promises, are yet unfulfilled

Jere.33:3

** Tidal Wave promises are unmistakable indications of God's desire for the church and invitations to taste and experience Him more deeply than ever before.*

The Question before us, then, is this: ***Do we really want it?***

Tidal Waves

Tidal Waves occur because of 2 main things: 1) significant seismic activity, and 2) depth of water – unusual significant activity and unusual significant depth.

Jer 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Here, the command is “call to me”. The Tidal Wave (TW) promise is “I will answer you.” The promise is conditional upon obedience to the command. And in the midst of this, God tells us – God desires His church to experience something quite radical – quite unusual –quite powerful.

If we are not experiencing the promise, then we may not be obeying the command – at least in the way God intended.

Gods desires are communicated through His promises. We know that because He gives us a challenge to experience something we have not yet experienced. We are invited to desire that which He desires and to experience something that God wants us to experience, yet until now, we have not experienced. Why? Or Why not?

Things I noticed about Tidal Waves.

- 1) Tidal Waves exhibit immeasurable power.
- 2) Tidal Waves tend to wash a lot of stuff away. You can't pick and choose what a tidal wave is going to affect.
- 3) Tidal Waves change things.

There are Kiddie Pool experience with God then there are Tidal Wave experiences and blessings.

The **TW** experiences always depend on activity and depth.

Question #1: What would happen if we began to experience TW movements of God? Any ideas what it would look like?

Relationships Changed! Families Changed! Disciples Empassioned! Churches Revived! Communities Transformed!
If TW experiences from God came, they would not go unnoticed.

We tend to prefer our “kiddie pool” experience of God vs. a Tidal Wave experience of God.

In the kiddie pool, we can choose how wet we get. We can protect our hair, or keep our face from being splashed.

But When a tidal wave comes, we have no control over it. We might just get washed away.

Tidal waves are risky events. Depth is risky. Depth means no certainty. Depth means things are out of control – *our control*. Depth is risky.

((Tidal Wave Promises Are Yet Unfulfilled))

B. Tidal Wave Power, is yet undemonstrated

Question #2: ¹⁾What would happen if we began to experience tidal wave movements of God? ²⁾What would have to happen in order for us to begin experiencing the tidal wave blessings of God? What can you and I do, in order for God to begin moving, in order for there to be some unusual, significant activity and unusual, significant depth with TW effect and blessings? God answers that question.

A.S.K.!

Mat. 7:7-11 (7) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. (9) Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? (10) Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? (11) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Sunday School Class Input: 1) In our Sunday School class this morning, someone said this passage sounded like God was intended to be our source. We are to plant, but God brings the increase. 2) Another person said, we should be ASKing according to God's will, rather than ASKing as though it was God's responsibility to give us what we want. 3) Margaret said it was like the "don't ask don't tell policy". We might need wisdom or direction from God. And If we *don't ask* from God, He *don't tell* us what we need to know.

* Last week we distributed promises with related commands. Do you get the cause and effect? Did you notice the promises that are conditional upon the commands being obeyed?

v.7) **Ask** (*command*) , and it will be given to you (*promise*)
v.8) For everyone who asks receives,

v7) **seek** (*command*), and you will find (*promise*);
v.8) the one who seeks finds

v7) **knock** (*command*), and it will be opened to you (*promise*)
v.8) and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Command → Promises	Cause → Effect
“If...” → “Then...”	Obedience → Experience/ blessing
Our part → God’s Part	

If the promises of God are our destination, *then* our obedience to God’s commands are the vehicle for us to arrive at that destination. If the result of what we are looking for is the fulfillment of God’s Tidal Wave promises, *then* our obedience to His commands, are crucially key for those Tidal Wave promises to be realized in our lives and in the life of this church and in our community.

A.S.K. = These indicate not a one time event, but a continuous action of all three of the commands.

A. = Ask = keep praying for direction and open doors

S. = Seek = keep seeking and researching your options, considering avenues, examining opportunities and possibilities.

K. = Knock = Keep knocking. Continue taking steps to determine which options are open doors, and which are closed.

A.S.K. is a promise we have not yet experienced. In order for this to be fulfilled, I believe we must begin to desire that which God desires for us. Do you realize that God’s promise to Ask, Seek and Knock are promises that have gone unfulfilled in most churches and remain unexperienced by most Christians?

What is keeping us from desperately seeking God, in such a

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way, that we would risk being dumped out of the kiddie pool of spiritual experiences and experience the Tidal Wave of God at work?

Not just little ripples, with slight splashes, and safe waves. But Life changing TW experiences of God on the move.

** We must desire what God desires. We must do what God expects.*

What about our Elderly? Any of our Elderly willing to be an example to the rest of us of those desperately seeking the work of God in our lives? Anyone willing to risk being swept out into really deep water by a Tidal Wave of God at work?

A. TW Promises *are yet unfulfilled.*

B. TW Power *are yet undemonstrated.* and

C. Tidal Wave Experiences, are yet unknown to most of us

What about our ACTION group? What if God began to move among our youth? Anyone willing to risk being swept out to sea by the Book of Acts, Pentecostal move of God in your life? in the life of your church?

If you read anything about missions, you know that around the world, there are pockets of such powerful movement of the Holy Spirit of God that many have compared it to the book of Acts and the work of God at Pentecost when thousands came to faith in Christ and were added to the church daily.

We can be confident that God desires these things for His church, because He instructs or commands us to pray for, expect and be ready for these mighty acts of God.

((We must desire what God desires for His church.))

In order to fully accomplish this mission statement and to be the kind of Church God Always Wanted...

II We must look at things and live our lives differently - - - THINGS MUST CHANGE!

** We must view life differently. We must choose to live differently.*

1 John 2:6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

What we ask for, *reveals our heart*. How we ask, *reveals our faith*.
Why we ask, *reveals our motives*.

Some people who have time, count the cost and respond to the Tsunami Warnings. You can pack it up and head for higher ground, ensuring that you aren't affected in anyway by the coming tidal wave.

Or you can stand around with your cameras and get washed away.

What if God were to offer us opportunity to experience the Tidal Wave power of God in our mission to reach this mission field?

What if God were to bring about tidal wave change, in our own personal relationships with Him and in the way we do ministry and experience Him?

I believe God gives us Tidal Wave warnings (commands) of how to prepare for the Tidal Wave experience of God (His promises).

1) God gives us promises that if we trust Him for something Great – or if we pray for certain things – or if we are involved in certain kinds of ministry – the warning is that we will experience a Tidal Wave experience with God.

2) Or once we hear or read of the warnings in the forms of promises, we can pack up and head for higher ground, being very careful to stay well out of reach of any effect of the Tidal Wave.

How did Jesus walk or live? His desires were the desires of His Heavenly Father. He submitted to carrying out the Fathers' will. He was willing to obey the commands, in order to experience the promises.

2Th 1:11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of the calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

[“..fulfill every delight for good and every work of faith **with power.**”]

Eph 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever. Amen.

** If things must change...then what must change?*

Our mindsets must change!!

A. Mindset #1: I must become discontented with my present Church experience with God.

We Must Become Dissatisfied With the Status Quo. We are not experiencing God’s promises as He promised. So far, I don’t believe we have experienced blessing our kingdom efforts and fulfilling His kingdom promises of fulfilling our delight for good and works of faith by demonstrations of His mighty power. If you say “yes, we have experienced His power”, then I’d say that we have different expectations of what the demonstration of God’s mighty power looks like.

God’s tidal wave needs to wash away the complacency and contentment of our present Christian life. We have grown so accustomed to not experiencing God’s promises, we think this is the way He intended it to be.

As a result, we don’t really expect anything out of the ordinary

B. Mindset #2: I must become desperate for God to break through and use me.

We Must Begin To Pray, “Lord Use me”. God’s TW needs to wash away any me-centered mindsets that remains in our church.

No “bless me” prayers.

Babies continue to cry out “give me...”, “I want...”, Somewhere, sometime, Christians must begin to look, not so much to be *blessed*, but to be *used*.

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Someone once advised me: “Jeff don’t look for a church that will meet your needs. Look for a church where you can meet the needs of others.”

No more prayers, “*Lord bless me*”. Some of us have had 30 or 40 years of that. Our maturing Christian prayer must become, “*Lord, Use me!*”.

Give me an outlet in my church. Give me a ministry in the community that will allow me to live my Christian life, share my Christian faith, and do the Christian job you have called me to do. Lord, fulfill in me your TW promises.

Anybody willing to pray that prayer?

C. Mindset #3: Its up to me.

We Must Begin To Think, “*Its up to me*”. – Lord wash away *my* excuses and reasons. God has called *me* and He expects *me* to answer His call. God has commanded *me* and He expects *me* to obey. He expects and desires *us* to experience His TW promises and power.

This is not a mindset that thinks it all depends upon me. But it is a mindset that says, “God expects certain things from me, It is up to me to respond in obedience”.

Our mindset must change. *I* must realize, *I* must obey, without excuses, alibis, all the reasons *I’ve* used in the past. They don’t work anymore. They aren’t appropriate any more. I refuse to accept them anymore.

Let this year be your year of change – change of mindset, change for your family and change for your church.

No one else is going to do *my* job for me. No one else is going to fulfill *my* calling for me. No one else is going to stand before God in eternity and take the heat for what *I’ve* failed to do in this life for Christ.

Its up to me. God has called me. God has promised to use me. God has empowered me. God will meet my faith with His grace. God will be please as I obey Him, as He expects me to obey.

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Its up to me. No one is going to bail me out. No one is going to sneak in and magically through the cloak of darkness, do what I'm supposed to be doing. Its up to me.

I will no longer be content with falling short of what God wants for me. I will no longer accept less than God's full will for my life.

I will no longer be satisfied with the way things are, never experiencing what God has promised could be, if I'd only trust Him, obey Him, and submit to His kingdom purposes for my life.

Its up to me.

My friend, if discontent does not fill our hearts and change our minds, we will forever live "kiddie pool" Christian lives, thinking this is the way it was meant to be, all the while missing, being ***The Kind of Church God Always Wanted.***

((We must look at things and live our lives differently))

APPLIED

If discontent does not fill our hearts and change our minds, we will forever live Christian lives, thinking this is the way it was meant to be, all the while missing, being the kind of Church God Always Wanted.

Question 1: What change might God want to make in our mission field this year?

Question 2: What change might God want to make in our church this year?

Question 3: What change might God want to make in my personal life this year?

Let's resolve not to pick back up where we left off. Let's commit in our hearts, not to return to "business as usual".

** We can be satisfied with where God has brought us. We must not become content with staying here!*

God's promises await fulfillment.

God's commands await obedience.

Our mission field awaits being reached for Christ.

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Tuesday night at EMBers I hope to share with you some open doors for reaching our community for Christ and how each of us can be praying and consider participating.

Kids Sermon

Happy Dollars

wet suit

How many really like playing in the water? How many of your can swim? How many like the kiddie pool? It's a safe place. Once you start swimming in the deep water, it can become pretty risky.

ILLUSTRATION: This is a wet suit. I was going to put it on to model it for you, but it seems to have shrunk since the last time I wore it.

A wet suit is made for deep water, because it protects you from the cold.

LESSON |

Trusting and obeying God is a little like learning to swim in deep water.

READ Psalm 40:1-4a.

Trusting and obeying God is like learning to swim. You start of splashing around in the kiddie pool. Then you get some water wings and you get to float around in a little deeper water with an adult. Then you eventually become strong enough to swim in deep water on your own without sinking.

We learn to trust God in small things, as very young Christians. We learn about God's grace, His help, His watch care, His love, His presence with us. We grow in our faith and we begin to experience that God keeps His promise and answers our prayers. Then we eventually really that we can trust God for much deeper and much bigger things, than we ever thought possible.

APPLY |

What about you today? Like learning to swim in deep water, God wants you to learn to trust Him for greater and deeper things in our Christian life.

PRAYER |



“An Undesirable Virtue & An Unfulfilling Promise”

January 15, 2012

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 Peter 3:1-9

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives-- (2) when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (3) Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing-- (4) but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (5) For this is how the holy women who hoped in God^{2:23} used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, (6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. (7) Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (8) Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. (9) Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a **blessing**.

1Peter - Sojourning in Suffering

- 1 - Suffering & Sacrifice
- 2 - Suffering & Stumbling Stones
- 3 - Suffering & Submission

I To the Women - Wives (1Pet. 3:1-6)

** Godly wives are those willing to Submit to God's plan and suffer for doing so.*

(6) Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives--

A. Consider The Overall Context

** Christians who have willingly submitted themselves to Gods will and are suffering because they are doing what is right before God.*

“Likewise” – Consider the context of this statement. The context is Christians suffering for doing what is right. **“Likewise”** points us back to what has just previously been mentioned and what comes after is linked to that.

1 Peter 2:13 submitting to Government – even when Government is an ungodly Government and it may result in Christians suffering for doing what is right. And Christ is our example.

It's not an issue of rights. “They can't treat me like that, I have rights, I deserve better than that!”

Following the example of Christ in submitting to God in undesirable circumstances or even in unfulfilling relationships.

That is an overwhelmingly Undesirable Virtue to so many Christians that they simply disregard this area of obedience to God.

They put up a fight, they fight for their rights, make a big deal over what is often times, minimal issues. Because they feel **entitled** to better treatment than what they are getting, -- all the while ignoring the clear admonition of Scripture and example of Christ.

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Question: Can we find a place in the Bible where Jesus exhibited that kind of attitude? Did Jesus complain that His rights were being violated when they were scourging Him? Did He discuss entitlements when He was being nailed to the cross?

Here is what “*Likewise*” refers to.

1Pet. 2:21-23 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

That is Gods admonition to us – that is Christ’s example before us. And yet as clear as that is, so many Christians read that and resolve in their hearts and scream out in their own thoughts, “*Never will I submit to that.*”

((Our attitude should reflect Christ’s attitude of submission to God the Father, doing what is right, even though it may be undesirable to us.))

B. Consider the Specific Context

* *The specific context appears to be a Christian woman who is married to a Non-Christian man.*

....wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do **not obey the word, they may be won** without a word by the conduct of their wives-- (2) when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (3) Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing-- (4) but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. (5) For this is how the holy women who hoped in God^{2:23} used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, (6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

That those who “do not obey the word, may be won without a word, but by the conduct of their wives.” (v1)

Focus is not to be on the outer, but the inner person. The emphasis is on attitude and actions in our relationships, as we are following Christ’s example.

“...the holy women who hoped in God...” (v5) This is a reference to Christ’s example.

1Pet. 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

That was Christ’s example – He was able to trust God in undesirable situations. The Bible refers to this as being unequally yoked. (2 Cor. 6:14)

So what does a person do who is unequally yoked and specifically, unequally yoked to a spouse who is unsympathetic or even antagonistic to your faith and Biblical convictions?

Many Christians have disobeyed God in this area. And once relationships fail to work out like they had hoped – they continue in the same line of false reasoning – “well surely God doesn’t want me miserable” – “surely God wouldn’t force me to remain in this unpleasant relationship” – “surely God will certainly understand if I leave this person and find a really Godly person, who will be the kind of Godly and caring spouse I need.”

God says **no**! You disobeyed and got into this situation. You are to stay where you are. You are to willingly submit to my will and be willing to suffer for doing what is right. God will take your present situation and can use it for good.

C. Whats a spouse to do?

** Submit to God’s will, even in unpleasant and undesirable circumstances.*

1) Stay where you are. **Unless you are being abused.** Stay put.

2) Submit afresh to the purposes of God for your life in your situation.

3) Believe you have a calling in your marriage relationship. Realize it is not about your rights. It is about submitting to Gods plan and being willing to suffer for doing what is right and pleasing to God. Being willing to endure circumstances that are less than ideal – situations that are far from pleasant and relationships that are far from satisfying. God promises the believing spouse can have a positive spiritual effect on the unbelieving spouse, if they will submit to God's way of working and using them in the relationship.

1Cor. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

4) Be willing for God to change your attitude toward your spouse.

****** As a Godly Spouse, you are to be a Godly witness of the Godly example of Jesus Christ.

II To Men - Husbands (1 Pet. 3:7

** Godly Men are those willing to Submit to God's plan and suffer for doing so.*

(7) Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

A. Being a Godly man is Not an issue of rights but of example

1Peter. 2:21 - [Christ] suffered for you, leaving you an **example**, so that you might follow in his steps

Following in Christ's steps means Suffering unjustly. We don't read of Jesus saying, "My relationship with the church is all a Savior could ever hope for!" "This church really meets my needs". On the contrary, Jesus went so far as to tell the church in Ephesus, that they had left their first Love. That "first Love", being Christ. (Rev.2:4)

Jesus didn't refer to the church as a whirlwind romance with a story book ending. In fact He put up with a lot of disappointment.

And when Paul writes to the Church in Ephesus, he writes for men there to be examples of Christ's love in their own marriages

--"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (Eph. 5:25)

Christ's example of love was not one characterized with romance, but of sacrifice.

For Any Spouse

1) Do your best to earn respect in your home.

2) Do your best to give respect in your home even when you feel it is not deserved.

The "No More Christian Nice Guy", attitude has no place in true Christ centered families. Standing up for your rights and cracking down on your spouse or family, has no place in the family of God. We are not to treat people as they have treated us, if we have been treated badly.

((We are not to lead by our rights but by our Christ like example))

B. Issue of quenching relationship destroying behavior

** Criticism, blame, bickering will not win anyone over, and God says that relationship destroying behavior must be quenched.*

1 Pet. 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten,

III To the Church (1 Pet. 3:8

** A Godly Church is that which is willing to Submit to God's plan and suffer for doing so. Of course this means the individual Christians who make up the church must evidence the behavior they desire the church as a whole to manifest.*

(8) Finally, ***all of you***, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind

That was written to the church... "*all of you.*"

A. The Rights of the Son of God

** He surrendered His rights!*

Mat 26:53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

Who are we as Christians and true followers of Christ, if we demand our rights, and refuse what Christ Himself submitted to?

Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be held onto (such as "rights"), but He emptied Himself. (Phil.2:6-7)

B. The Actions of the Body

- Be unified in mind –

- Be Whole in your attitudes rather than exhibiting the behaviour of the fallen, broken human nature.

- Love one another. Not a storybook romance, but a sacrificial relationship, willing to sacrifice for the benefit and overall good for another. Not evil railing but Godly loving. Not reviling but understanding. Not accusing but forgiving. Not attacking but supporting. Ultimately, we have no rights, because we are owned by another.

1Co 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

((The Church belongs to Christ, therefore the Christ-like church, must willingly submit to God's plan and be willing to suffer for doing so.))

APPLICATION

* *An Undesirable Virtue and an **unfulfilling promise** .- for some.*

(9) Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, **bles**s, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a **blessing**.

An unfulfilling Promise. (v9)

You mean we are to be willing to submit to God's will, give up our rights, suffer for doing good, potentially experience undesirable treatment and maybe even endure an unfulfilling relationship and our motivation for all that is we "may obtain a blessing."?

Really? So---That's it huh? A blessings. How generic does that sound? **Talk about an unfulfilling promise.**

I believe there are many Christians who believe just that, about much of God's commands regarding how we are to live, behave and relate to others.

We are expecting a lot more than "a blessing." We were hoping for a bit more than that out of the sufferings of this life.

If we find ourselves thinking that, then I believe we are in need of a heart change – a mindset change. WE are not here for your "Best Life NOW".

We are here to honor and Glorify God
and Jesus Christ, and if that means enduring
suffering and undesirable circumstances,
then so be it.

If we're not satisfied with that, we are in need of a heart change.

Mat 25:19-23 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. (20) And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' (21) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master.**' (22) And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' (23) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master.**'

Herein, lies “the blessing” that we thought was so small, so insignificant and so lame. We enter into the joy and satisfaction of God in our lives and in our service to Him.

If God's joy and pleasure with our lives are not our ultimate motivation for all that we do and endure, then we are living false Christian lives.

Truth is, we can endure more than you think. We can suffer and sacrifice much more than you think. You'd be surprised the change that can take place in your spirit and attitude once “self” is dealt with and once our “rights” are properly submitted to God.

Once “self” is out of the way and off the throne, then Christ can take His rightful place.

Once “Self” dies and Christ lives, and reigns in us and once the new nature begins growing into its proper Christ-likeness, you'll be surprised with what God can then begin to accomplish in His church, so that the Church can be filled with joy and become

“The Church God Always Wanted”.



“A LifeStyle Message”

1 Petet 3:8-16

SOHL Sunday

January 22, 2012

INTRO

Communion

Kids

S

1Peter 3:8-16 ESV Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. (9) Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were *called*, that you may obtain a blessing. (10) For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; (11) let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. (12) For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (13) Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? (14) But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, (15) but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (16) having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

INTRO

We have evangelism training to be able to effectively share our faith. We learn how to tell others how we have trusted Christ and found forgiveness for our sins and eternal life through Christ's death on the cross.

But something we often do not associate with personal evangelism I how we live and even how Christians treat one another. The Gospel is a verbal message, but it is also a visual LifeStyle message.

Regarding the LifeStyle message, consider....

I Christian treatment and what we show the world (v8-9

** How believers live, is to be a living testimony to an unbelieving world, of the gospel of Christ.*

Verses 1-7 pertain to the treatment of husbands and wives.

Verses 8-9 pertain to the biological as well as the church family.

Scripture tells us that...

A. Christian living demonstrates the Christian message (v8

The Gospel is a LifeStyle message. The fact is God wants each of us to be a walking billboard, advertising and proclaiming the gospel message.

(8) Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

The “all of you” now widens the focus to the entire church.

Our Church’s mission statement:

Christ Evangelical Free Church

is committed to **demonstrating** God’s Word
through His unconditional love
to reach people and
develop mature disciples
in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“*Demonstrating*” is referring to a LifeStyle message. First to one another (vs1-8).

Joh 13:35 ESV By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

First to one another but then to those outside the church, by loving our neighbors. This is what will be taking place in our “Serve Saegertown Project”.

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

How we live and how we treat one another is not optional behavior. In fact it is an important part of the gospel message, because...

* *The Christian Living Demonstrates the Christian Message.*

Scripture also tells us that...

B. How we live is not only “not and option” it is our holy calling.

(9) Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were *called*, that you may obtain a blessing.

I thought my calling was to be a husband or a mother or a secretary or a tool and die cutter or a truck driver.

Those may be more *specific* callings of God on your life. But God also calls Christians in *general* to a LifeStyle that does not think or act like the unbelieving world around us.

In chapter 2:9, we are told that we are “called” out of darkness into His marvellous light. In 2:21, we are told that as Christ suffered for living righteously, we are “called” to follow in His steps.

The calling of God is His preparation and expectation for how He wants us to live. If we want to be part of *The Church God Always Wanted*, we must be the individual Christians that He has called us to be. In God’s mind, our calling is not optional.

A powerful means of communicating the gospel message is our

* *Christian Treatment And What We Show the World.*

Regarding the LifeStyle message, consider....

II The LifeStyle of the Righteous (v10-12)

* *The LifeStyle of true believing Christians is to be pleasing to God.*

Righteousness is God’s measuring rod for maturity and devotion.

1Pe 3:10- ESV (10) For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; (11) let him turn away from evil and do good; let

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him seek peace and pursue it. (12) For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

This is given in context with our LifeStyle.

The LifeStyle of the Christian is one of ...

A. Gaining Trust and Establishing Credibility (v10-11)

* *When we talk the talk, we must walk the walk.* Our LifeStyle must match our message.

v.10) Love “life” refers to the God submitted life and the Christ modeling life. This means living obediently and pleasing to God with a Kingdom attitude and kingdom affections.

v.11) “let him...” is an invitation for the true believer to be evidencing his/her faith and devotion by righteous living.

v.12) – The Righteous are characterized by certain traits which appear to be relationally oriented. The focus is not on idolatry, not immorality, or murder but relational traits.

The LifeStyle of the Christian is one of...

B. Being a Living Witness of faith in God (v12)

* *The LifeStyle of the Righteous has Heaven’s Attention.*

The church is viewed as the Righteous. Those who would be considered unrighteous would be those of the world and evil.

The promise in verse 12 is that “the eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their prayer.”

Here, we are reminded of two concepts. Our sin has separated us from God and keeps God from answering our prayers (Is. 59:1-2). But we also are reminded that “the eyes of the LORD search to and fro throughout the earth, that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” (2 Chron. 16:9).

* *Righteous LifeStyle from the true believers, is a living witness of our faith in God and it also has Heaven’s attention!*

Regarding the LifeStyle message, consider....

III The Commission of the Kingdom (v13-16)

** Our calling for our Christian LifeStyle has a very specific and very important purpose.*

1Pe 3:13-16 (13) Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? (14) But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, (15) but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (16) having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

A. Our LifeStyle is A Witness to the world

** How we live makes a difference in our gospel message.*

I recall an older Christian lady in our church telling me the story of how she lived in a setting that allowed her to live in the same house as another younger woman. One day, after several years of watching the older lady, the younger woman asked the older Christian lady, "what is it about you that makes you so very different?" Then she said this: "I want what you have!" As a result the younger woman was led to saving faith in Christ.

** This is a great example of our LifeStyle witness to the world and what God intended by our attitude and our actions being noticeably different from that of the unbelieving world.*

B. The Value of Human Life to God (v14)

** God values all human life regardless of our differences.*

(15) but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

God created humans in His image^{Gen1:27} and with His own breath^{Gen2:7}.

All people are important and valuable to God. All races. All genders. All ages and all economic levels. On Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, we typically celebrate the life of the unborn. But all human life is sacred to God.

Therefore we attempt to reach all peoples of the earth – all ages in our communities – help all economic levels with physical help and share spiritual help as well. Because all human life is sacred, our purpose is to save the unborn and share with all living, the wonderful grace and eternal love of God and the salvation they can receive through faith in Christ.

** Reaching the Lost is the commission of the Kingdom.*

C. The Eternality of the Human Soul (v15)

** God created human'*

Humans are in His likeness, given life with His breath, and we possess an eternal soul. I heard one person put it this way.

“We are not humans with an eternal soul. We are eternal souls, with a temporary human body.”

To this point – God’s R. are to exhibit behaviour that would not confuse them with the “world”.

- so that when the world sees our behaviour and if God has moved in their hearts to see the difference and to be interested, we have to be prepared to share why our life is different. And we are specifically called to share why, in the face of persecution and antagonistic treatment, we continually to live righteously and live out our faith – why we do this? The issue being, we are to share the hope we have within us, - the same hope the women of old hoped in (3:5) and the same hope Jesus Himself hoped in (2:23).

Our faith is to make a difference in how we live. How we live is to make a noticeable difference in the eyes of our antagonistic world and pagan culture.

Our righteous living, enduring persecution, - our sojourning in suffering for the joy that is before us (1:8) is to be so evident that

people will indeed ask us questions about our hope, our faith and why we do and live the way we live.

For wives, that their husbands might be won (3:1), for husbands to honour your wives (3:7), for the life of the church, for a testimony to the unbelieving world (3:8), for the pagan government to evidence our eternal hope in God and not in the ordinances of men (2:13). Our lives matter to God. Your life makes a difference to your neighbours, your family members, your church and your community – to all humans.

The Human soul is of great value to God. The Human soul is eternal in its existence - it never ceases to exist.

This is our Commission – we have a mission and we are in co-mission – working together with God.

Living the Christian life and giving a visual and verbal witness of the

life lived for Christ and seeking to bring as many souls into the kingdom of heaven as God would use us to bring.

APPLIED

(16) having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.
--

When you are treated wrongly, what does your life tell others? When we suffer wrongly, or when we are mistreated for living righteously, our LifeStyle is intended to show the world around us, even without words, how very wrong they were and thus silence their false accusations.

What does your LifeStyle say to others? What message does your attitude and actions send to the cynical, skeptical unbelievers around you?

What does your LifeStyle say about Who You Are, What You Believe, and Who It Is You Represent?

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

The value of a human soul cannot be separated from the needs of the human body. It is the purpose of the Serve Saegertown Project to provide opportunities to show God's love visually and to share God's love verbally.

And it is the mission of this church to Demonstrate the love of God through whatever means He provides.

Our Church's mission statement:

Christ Evangelical Free Church

is committed to **demonstrating** God's Word
through His unconditional love
to reach people and
develop mature disciples
in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Focus—Our Hope - 1 Cor. 11:23ff

Romans 5:8: "God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Our life has a message. And as Christians our Christian life has a distinctively Christian message.

In communion, we remember that our message is a message of hope in Jesus Christ.

Our Christian lives demonstrate our hope in Christ and the message of God's love.

God is big on demonstrating things. He has "demonstrated His own love for us", through the death-blood sacrifice of His only Son.

In communion, we celebrate God's demonstration of love.

Questions Worth Considering

Executable Outlines, Mark Copeland www.executableoutlines.com

v.7) Why should husbands treat their wives so kindly?

v.8) What duties do we as brethren have to one another?

v.9) How are we to respond when mistreated by brethren? Why?

v.10-11) What prescription is offered for those who would love life and see good days? _____

v.12) What is said of the righteous? Of those who do evil?

v.13) What is the general principle regarding persecution?

v.14) What is said of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake?



“The Serve Saegertown Project 20112”

1 Peter 3:15

Missions Sunday

January 29, 2012

1Pet. 3:15-16 MKJV (15) but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you, with meekness and fear;

Mat. 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven

Gal. 5:13-14 MKJV For, brothers, you were called to liberty. Only do not use the liberty for an opening to the flesh, but by love *serve* one another. (14) For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

INTRO

Children's Church

We all desire and pray for the lost. We all want to reach our own mission field of Saegertown for Christ. We all want our own church to be The Church God Always Wanted.

Each of us wants to be the kind of Christian whose life makes an eternal kingdom impact for Jesus Christ. We each want to hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master."

In order to be ***The Church God Always Wanted***, we must...

I Fulfill The Church's Co-Mission

** The Co-mission of the church is to work in partnership with God, to share the gospel, reach the lost, make disciples and advance God's kingdom.*

1Pet. 3:15-16 MKJV (15) but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you, with meekness and fear; (16) having a good conscience, that while they speak against you as evildoers they may be shamed, those falsely accusing your good behavior^{2:12} in Christ.

* When God gives a promise of spiritual eternal kingdom blessing, there is most often an obedient physical command accompanying the promise. The promise together with the command is God's invitation to His church to join Him in His kingdom work.

In order to Join God in His kingdom work...

A. We must be lights (Mat 5:16

** Our lives should illuminate our source. Our LifeStyle should direct others to Christ. How we live should reflect our purpose.*

Mat 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

This involves who we are as believers. We cannot expect or be content with living closet Christian lives. It is God's plan that the unbelieving world will watch our lives, see our good works (righteous living) and be pointed toward or even drawn to Christ.

Light points the way, shows the path, illuminates the darkness of confusion, faithlessness and sin.

* *We must be lights.*

In order to Join God in His kingdom work...

B. We must point others to God (1Pet.2:12)

* *The world needs evidence and our lives are visual messages of the saving, and life changing work of God.*

Peter has a thing about Believer's Behavior. He writes to help us understand the importance of and Kingdom power of Christian Conduct or a LifeStyle that reflects the life of Jesus Christ in us.

Our lives must point others to God.

Our Church missions statement is all about demonstrating God's love.

Our Church's mission statement:

Christ Evangelical Free Church

is committed to **demonstrating** God's Word
through His unconditional love
to reach people and
develop mature disciples
in the Lord Jesus Christ

1Pe 2:11-12 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (12) Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds^{3:16} and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Peter's writings and our church's mission statement fit perfectly with what The Serve Saegertown Project is all about. Serve Saegertown is purposed to demonstrate God's love to our community in order to effectively share the gospel, so "that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."^{John3:16}

* *The Church's mission is Co-mission with God.*

This is the kind of Church that God wants.

In order to be *The Church God Always Wanted*, we realize that...

II Serving and Helping are human earthly means to share eternal, spiritual help.

** God has chosen to use human, earthly means for His spiritual, heavenly purposes.*

Gal 5:13-14 MKJV For, brothers, you were called to liberty. Only do not use the liberty for an opening to the flesh, but by love *serve* one another. (14) For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The Serve Saegertown Project is an event that is intended to become a movement or a way of doing ongoing ministry. Serving is an effective means of getting church people, out of the church building and connecting our Christian lives with those in our mission field.

A. Our lives are ripples (Acts 1:8)



** Effective missionaries don't spend the majority of their time working on the Sunday morning service. While that is important, they must pour themselves into their community, involving themselves in the lives of others, connecting person to person, and life to life. Sunday worship is more of an overflow of the week of ministry with the people they met and the lives they touched.*

Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Our lives in connecting with those in our mission field are like ripples in the water. God gives us His strategy for reaching the world.

The Ripple Effect. One person connecting with another and sharing their lives and the gospel. People involved in the community, sharing life, work and entertainment, in a way that provides opportunity to build relational connects and opportunities to share Christ in depth, both in message, *AND* in LifeStyle.

1) The Ripple Effect on our community

“Serve Saegertown” is a project of gathering and uniting, a coalition of local like-minded churches and believers, who have a heart for obeying Jesus Christ and reaching our community with His love and message. We hope to be accomplishing this task by, Serving our community, Building relational connections, Showing God’s love, Sharing Christ’s message and reaching our families and community.

Now, imagine your own home community.

Question: What would happen if, as Churches and as Christians, the ripple effect of our lives began to go out, our faith began to spread, and our mission fields began to overlap?

Answer: People would be reached for Christ!

The early Church had the opportunity to make a ripple effect impact for God’s kingdom and God’s way did just that.

2) The Ripple Effect on our Church

** If we grasp God’s strategy for missions, and begin to live it out, we will experience an “enlarging” effect in our kingdom impact.*

We will.....

Enlarge our Vision: We will begin to think outside the traditional box. We will begin to see our mission field is not inside

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

the church walls, but outside, for the most part. We will begin to realize the world is not coming into the church, so the church must go out into the world. That is Gods' design. When we enlarge our vision, we will begin to creatively consider more effective ways of reaching that mission field.

We will.....

Enlarge our Ministry: What God has called His Church to do, is so much larger than Sunday morning or inside the building kinds of ministry. Once we grasp God's ripple effect strategy of reaching the world, we will enlarge our vision and as a result we will see the need for and be motivated to creatively enlarge our ministry.

No longer will we be satisfied getting kids into the church building, but we might begin taking the ministry to the kids. BackYard Bible Clubs in a local park or trailer court works wonders for making personal contacts that may result in deep spiritual relational connections.

No longer will we be satisfied with the struggle to get people outside the church into our small groups, but we'll be praying and seeking out creative opportunities to take our Bible studies to our community. Talking to local merchants, in attempts to find someone willing to open their facility to the community for a small group study before morning work hour begins.

Consider creative new ways to get the church people out of the church building to do church ministry more effectively.

Once that happens, We will.....

Enlarge our Kingdom Impact: As our vision has enlarged, our ministry had begun to enlarge and with that comes enlarged kingdom impact. That is why so many of our traditional church focused ministries are beginning to be directed more toward our community.

We have the – Saegertown Christmas Choir, Saegertown Sports Camp, Saegertown Bicycle Clinic, Saegertown National Day of

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

Prayer Gathering, Saegertown Men's Group, and now Serve Saegertown, which is our Saegertown summer service project.

Our kingdom impact is enlarging. All these are "human" means of making relational connections with the residents of our community. We do this because... * *God has chosen to use human, earthly means for His spiritual, heavenly purposes.*

B. Our Lives as Sowers (Mat. 13:3-9 / 18-23

* Like lives that are ripples of influence, our lives are also sowers of God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Mat 13:18-23 "Hear then the parable of the sower: (19) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. (20) As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. (22) As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (23) As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Sower sowed seed. Seed grew, and multiplied. The Sower had the opportunity to make a ripple effect for Gods Kingdom.

It is God's purpose that we bear much fruit for our kingdom labors.

Joh 15:8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Serve Saegertown is a great way to help and lift up those who are down, due to their circumstances.

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Ecc 4:9-10 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. (10) For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

Woe to the one who has no one to lift him up. We are to help others when it is within your power to do so.

Prov 3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. (28) Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"--when you have it with you.

The Serve Saegertown Project is all about serving, helping, encouraging, lifting up and showing God's love to those who are both physically and spiritually needy in our community mission field.

In order to be *The Church God Always Wanted*, we must...

III Serve Saegertown as Another way to share the love of God with our community.

** Enlarge Your Vision, Your Ministry and Your Impact for Christ.*

The Serve Saegertown Project is thinking outside the traditional ministry box and getting the church people outside the church building, in order to more effectively reach our mission field for Christ.

Sharing God's love means....

A. Taking initiative to obey Christ, participate in the Great commission, and fulfill our church mission of demonstrating God's love to our community. (Mat 28:18-20)

** Participating in the Great Commission means following Christ and doing what Christ did.*

1) Obeying Christ –

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Jesus gave commands to share Christ. With that command came a promise that “I am with you always, even unto the end of the age”

Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2) Allowing Christ to be our example

In 2 Peter 2:21, we are told that Christ is our example in all situations. We know that His life was focused on “seeking and saving that which was lost”^{Lk19:10}, and “bearing witness of the truth”^{Jn18:37}. What Christ did, must become our example. Who He helped, must be our focus as well. How He ministered must also become our example of loving service, as we seek to help and offer the Living Water of eternal life.

Sharing God’s love means....

B Loving the Lord and your neighbor (Lk.10:27

Luk 10:27-29 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (28) And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. (29) But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (*Good Samaritan*)

Good Samaritan – Luke 10:29ff – Who is my neighbor?

Christ Evangelical Free Church

is committed to **demonstrating** God’s Word
through His unconditional love
to reach people and
develop mature disciples
in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the Good Samaritan, Serve Saegertown is about....

Serving our community - helping to meet basic needs, as did the Samaritan when he bandaged the man's wounds and paid for his extended care.

Like the Good Samaritan, Serve Saegertown is about....

Building Personal relationships - establishing trust and

credibility. As the Samaritan did taking personal interest and involvement in the needy man's situation

Like the Good Samaritan, Serve Saegertown is about....

Showing compassion – physically demonstrating Gods' love. The Two religious men purposefully avoided even coming into contact with the wounded man, showing no sign of genuine compassion or mercy. However the Samaritan could not ignore the man's situation, but became an example for all of history to look back on as one with whom God was pleased.

Like the Good Samaritan, Serve Saegertown is about....

Sharing lives – praying and communicating the gospel message. Whether he knew it or not, the Samaritan is now an example of how we are expected to love and care for others.

Like the Good Samaritan, Serve Saegertown is about....

Reaching our families for Christ – obediently living Christian lives, partnering with God in the great commission. Our intent and purpose is to reach those with whom we come into immediate contact, but also their families.

** Serve Saegertown is making personal contacts and praying that God transforms those contacts into relational connections, that opens the door for the gospel to be shared and souls to be saved.*

APPLIED

Serve Saegertown is a Christian life application opportunity for anyone interested in obeying God and pointing other to Christ at every level of ministry.

There will be opportunities for

Working, serving, helping, caring, teaching, praying, supporting, encouraging, organizing, administrating, cleaning, sharing the gospel and many other areas in which we will be demonstrating God's love through our lives, and helping them connect with Jesus Christ.

This is our church's mission and God's invitation to partner with him in the business of souls.

Questions Worth Considering

Executable Outlines, Mark Copeland www.executableoutlines.com

v.15-16) How should one prepare themselves for possible persecution? _____

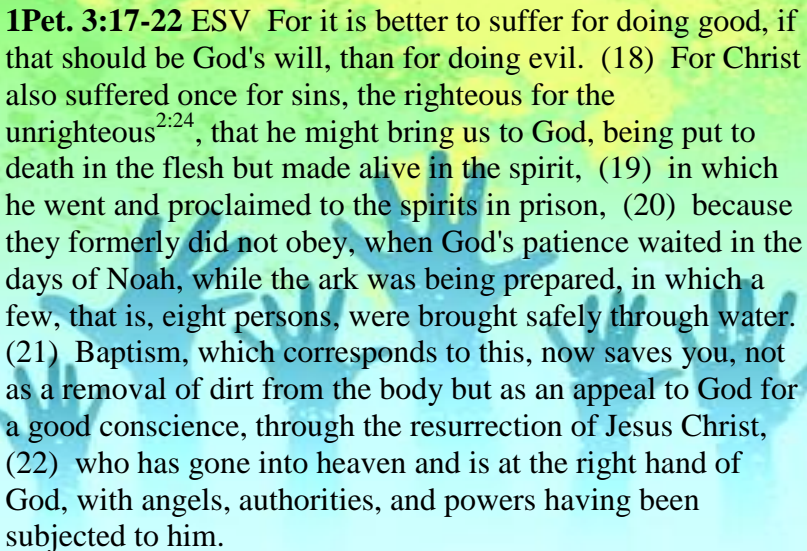
v.16) If we maintain good conduct, what will happen to those who defame and revile us?



“Salvation: A Theological Word Puzzle”

1 Peter 3:17-22

February 5, 2012



1Pet. 3:17-22 ESV For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (18) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous^{2:24}, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (19) in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, (20) because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (21) Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (22) who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Peter writes, addressing, what some say are a barrage of unrelated theological concepts. He refers to some things that are difficult to sort through and he presents a bit of a theological puzzle for us.

Some believe when they are saved they stop sinning completely. Some believe when they are spirit filled or baptized with the Spirit they reach a level of spiritual maturity and sanctification that they cease to struggle with sin. The Bible doesn't seem to teach that.

One introductory thought is that it is often God's will that we suffer. For some this may be hard to believe. Turn on the TV and people

are teaching that God doesn't want you to suffer, to be poor, to be afflicted, to have hardship. Instead many teach it is God's will that we enjoy good health, prosperity, freedom of problems and stress and live in a personal dream fulfilling, utopia of self pleasing circumstances.

....That is false Christianity!

Peter Himself warns us about thinking it strange when we experience fiery trials (1Pet.4:12). James tells us to count it all joy, when we face various kinds of trials in life. (James 1:2). Some suffer just because they are a Christian. At least one of our missionaries lives and ministers in a country that is very antagonistic towards Christians, and even more so to those who convert to Christianity out of the Muslim religion. Some suffer just because they are believers in Christ.

Some Christians suffer because they choose to live righteously and obey God, rather than involve themselves in sinful activity, that for some, that righteous living brings about persecution.

Our family just watched the movie "Courageous". In the movie a Christian named Javier, was attempting to live a Christ honoring life. He was called into the office of the mill where he worked. He was informed that he had been selected to be their new division manager. His first assignment was to oversee a new shipment of crates that was scheduled for arrival. He was also instructed by his superiors to receive 17 crates, but only mark 16. Perceiving this to be dishonest and dishonoring to God, Javier struggled with the fact of possibly having to suffer for righteousness. He thought about losing his job and the loss of money to support his family. Nevertheless, he told his superiors he could not do such a thing. The result was, they stood up, said, "I see". Then they said, "I hope you realize what this means". "It means, you get the job!"

The whole scenario was a test. They had already run the same test with 5 other people, and they all failed the test, because they were willing to be dishonest. Javier was willing to suffer for righteousness, yet in stead of suffering, he was rewarded.

With this concept of suffering, Peter relates the suffering to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Today we need to be reminded of....

I The Importance of Good Bible Study INTRO

* *I believe knowing God's word is more important than knowing God Himself.* I'm not talking about simply a *knowledge* of the Bible but an understanding of Scripture which results in obedience.

As Christians, we must mature in our knowledge and faith in God's word, beyond simply knowing what we have been taught, to the point that we know first-hand what the Bible teaches, know first-hand what we believe and why.

A. Too many Christians are satisfied with being spoon fed.

* That is depending on others to do for them, what they ought to be doing for themselves.

As infants, we are fully dependent upon someone to feed us. They have to tease and entice us to open our mouths to take in the necessary nutrition.

But as we grown, we begin to learn to feed ourselves. We through away the baby spoon and get a man sized spoon so we can take in man sized portions of food.

The intake of God's word is similar. We must grow beyond the level of always needing someone else to spoon feed us spiritually, to the level of being able to feed ourselves spiritually. The is part of growing up as a Christiain.

2Tim. 2:15 ESV Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be *ashamed*, rightly handling the word of truth.

“Do your best” – some versions read, “Study”, or “Be diligent”. Accurate knowledge of Scripture and its application to our lives, is

The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

crucial in becoming “workmen” who do not have to be ashamed. In other words, if we fail at being diligent students of the Word, we run the risk of one day, being ashamed before God. For any Christian, this should be ample motivation to work hard at pleasing God in our knowledge acquisition and our practical application of our intake of Truth.

In the book of acts there was a group of people who were diligent students of the Word.

“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” -- Act 17:11

During one of our recent men’s gatherings, a fellow was telling me about his small group Bible study he was attending. He mentioned his concern that they had enjoyed a long term, in depth study in the book of John. However, some had complained that it was too in depth and drug on too long and as a result several have left.

It seems many believers are not interested in being diligent students of the Word of God.

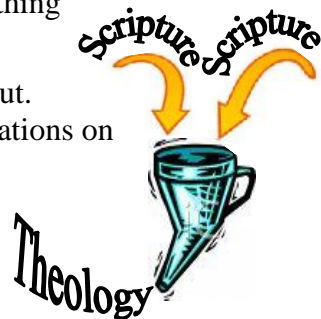
1 Peter 3:18-24 poses several questions and presents a couple of challenging theological concepts. The biggest question is “why does Peter mention baptism as the means of salvation?”

1) is he referring to water baptism or spirit baptism?

2) In v.21, what does the phrase, “the like figure” refer to? It is “the like figure” that the salvation of baptism appears to refer to. Is the figure Peter refers to a figure of the ark (v20), or the water (v20), the whole salvation concept (v21) or something else?

No doubt your Bible’s study notes have some input. Good commentary’s have many varying interpretations on this passage.

Everyone is a theologian, some are better theologians than others. Bible study is like pouring various ingredients into a funnel. What



The Church God Always Wanted, 1 Pet. pt.2

comes out the bottom make up the recipe. We take Truth from one part of the Bible and Truth from other parts of the Bible and pour them all down the funnel of our research. When it comes out the bottom it is our theological understanding of a given Biblical topic.

B. Too many Christians are not willing to spend the time and put forth the effort, in order to experience the joy of learning what the Bible says, “first hand”.

2 Tim. 2:15 says Be diligent, work for it, be approved of God, don't be ashamed of how you handle God's word. It will show how much you truly desire to know God. This is the beauty and importance of good Biblical theology

** We must not underestimate the importance of God Bible Study.*

We also need to be reminded of....

II The Importance of Salvation by Grace (18)

* Ultimately, our salvation is a joint endeavor. God the Father calls and ordains us. God the Son, Jesus, obeys the Father and dies for our sins. The Holy Spirit baptizes and unites us with Christ – all that coming together when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are saved.

A. Salvation is not a work, but a Gift!

It is possible Peter is referring to water baptism as a close – very close symbol of being born again, through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is also possible Peter is referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which case the Holy Spirit places the believing Christian into the body of Christ, or the family of God or the Church.

Remember our need for good Bible study and accurate theological understanding. We can use Scripture to help us understand Scripture. We understand that salvation is a gift from God that cannot be earned or deserved.

Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

* *This is a repeat of Eph. 2:5.*

Jesus came to do for us, what we could not do for ourselves, that is, provide forgiveness for our sins.

In v18, Peter states that Jesus died the “righteous for the unrighteous”.

The issues of Christ’s sacrifice for us and our eternal destiny should make us soberly think and fearfully consider our own personal spiritual state.

John MacArthur states it this way.

“Precisely where [does] our fear lie? Anybody with a rational mind should be terrified to be held guilty before a Holy God, sentence to eternal punishment, and catapulted there by death. But that is the truth. But Jesus comes and Peter says his sacrifice deals with each of those three areas.”

Rom 5:6 ESV For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (I.e. the just for the unjust)

B. It is not an issue of good works, but of trusting in Christ’s finished work on our behalf.

In John 6:29 a crowd of people were asking Jesus, what kind of works should they do? His response was, “The *work* of God is this, to *believe* in the One He has sent.”

Regarding Peter’s theological puzzle, consider this question.

If Peter or Paul or Jesus ever had the opportunity to share with someone how to be saved, and if only once they omitted Baptism – *if Baptism was indeed necessary for salvation* - then they would be guilty of preaching a false gospel and leading many astray in their faith.

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Scripture teaches it is the Holy Spirit that performs the spiritual baptism for the true believer in Christ, which brings about salvation. It is the new believer who takes that 1st step of obedience as a new Christian, by water baptism. It is the new believer who takes the first step of obedience as a new Christian by water baptism

** We must not underestimate the importance of Salvation by Grace.*

We need to be reminded of....

III Christ, the gospel and Noah (v19)

** God's means and message of salvation has always been "gospel" focused.*

A. Did Jesus give dead people another chance?

"Spirits in prison" (v19- Some people take that reference together with the Eph.4:7-10 passage below to teach that when Jesus' body was in the tomb, His spirit descended to hell to preach the gospel to the dead, evidently to give them one last opportunity to repent and come to faith in Him.

Eph 4:7-10 ESV But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. (8) Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (9) (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? (10) He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Two things:

1) That idea rejects the teaching that death closes the door on any "last chance" salvation experiences. Consider Hebrews 9:27

Heb. 9:27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

2) Secondly, there are other interpretations to the two above passages.

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1 Pet. 3:19 – “in which (i.e. the Spirit, v18) He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison”

It was through the Holy Spirit that Noah, a preacher of righteousness, proclaimed the gospel message of Christ to the disobedient unbelievers of his day. It was to these unbelievers, that the Spirit of Christ preached to, through Noah, as the preacher of righteousness. It is the spirits of these OT unbelievers of Noah's time, who are referred to as presently being in prison. Jesus did not preach a second chance to the dead. It is reference to the people who are now in the prison of death and hell, who rejected the message of the Spirit of Christ, which was communicated through Noah, when the ark was being built.

2Pet. 2:5 KJV And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

What about the Ephesians 4 passage? Doesn't this indicate that Jesus descended into hell to preach the gospel of second chance?

In Eph.4:8, it is stated that Jesus ascended, i.e. into heaven after His resurrection. It then refers to Jesus descending into the lower regions of the earth (v9). The fact that He descended into the earthly regions was a description pertaining to the incarnation - His not considering equality with God something to be grasped or his position in heaven something to be held onto, but He humbled himself, (Phil. 2), and descended out of heaven to the earth to be found as a man and to take on the form a servant, unto death on a cross.

That is what the descending refers to.

This is why it is so important that we must....

B. Be Good Students of the Bible

* We must defend the Truth of God's word, not the teachings handed down to us through traditions or other means.

The fact is, the people who taught us the Bible could have been wrong. The things that “I was always taught”, may or may not be accurate. We would do well to be like the Bereans who searched

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the scriptures daily to see if what they were being told was actually true.

Or the example of Ezra.

Ezr 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Ezra committed in his heart to study God's Word, to obey it and then to pass that Truth on to others. His source of Truth was Holy Scripture.

As a result of those to whom Jesus preached, in Noah's time, they did not believe the "gospel" as it was preached and as a result, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, because they did not believe.

Gods message of salvation and forgiveness has always been faith coupled with repentance.

** That is what Christ, the gospel and Noah have in common – they were all involved in the preaching of righteousness to those who would listen.*

We need to be reminded of....

IV The Importance of Christ's resurrection life (v21-22)

** Just as God the Father, Jesus God's Son and the Holy Spirit each share a key role in our salvation, so does, both the death and the resurrection of Christ.*

Without Christ's death there is no death payment for sin . w/o Christ's resurrection life, there is no life for those who believe.

A. Jesus died to pay our sin payment (v18, 21)

Romans 6:23 teaches that eternal death is the payment for our sin.

In 1 Peter 3:18, Jesus died, the righteous for the unrighteous or the just for the unjust.

He did all this to bring us back to God.

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Jesus died for our sins, but was raised from the dead that we might receive eternal life. He has life, and He alone has the power to give to us eternal life.

Rom. 5:8-10 ESV but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

I encourage you to read through these passages to understand the work of God through Christ, on your behalf.

Rom. 10:9-13 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (11) For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (13) For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Have you called on the name of the Lord for forgiveness from your sins and salvation for your eternal soul?

Rom. 5:15-19 ESV But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (16) And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. (17) For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (18) Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (19) For as

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by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

** WE must never underestimate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

APPLICATION

Two important things:

1) Trust Christ as your personal Savior today.

Don't put it off - don't make excuses - once you die it is too late for any more second chances.

2) Commit in your heart to live for Jesus.

Jesus died for your sins. He was raised from the dead for your life.

Romans 6:4 – “Christ was raised from the dead that you may walk in newness of life.”

Jesus was raised so you could have a new life. Your spiritual life is a gift from God.

Trust Christ and receive that gift of life and commit to live it for Jesus.



Don't close this booklet yet...

without considering this all important question.

**Is Jesus Christ the Savior of *your* soul
and the Lord of *your* life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short
of the glory of God; --*Romans 3:23*

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to
die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness
for your sins and citizenship into God's family and His
kingdom.

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A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

*It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be,
your
greatest purpose, your highest calling, your soul's
source and joy, and your all-consuming passion.*

Other Free Booklets downloadable at www.ChristEFCA.org

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1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*

A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

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