

January 23, 2011

Born Again Series - Discipleship

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “What just happened?” – Part II

INTRO...

NOW...I need to warn you...that we are going to be covering a lot of territory this morning...

- ...fairly quickly...and I want you to just listen carefully and do your best to follow along...

Remember...the things you are going to be hearing in this series...on Discipleship...

- ...will ultimately be in written form...for you to use at your leisure...for your benefit...
 - ...and the benefit of those whom you may be discipling...

As the written notes are being turned into the final ‘Discipleship Book’...

- ...they will be made available each week on our website...or we can email a copy to you...
 - ...or you can come by the office and pick up a copy of them...

>>>>>>>>>>

This morning we are going to be finishing our first study in the Discipleship portion of our Born Again series...entitled...**“What just happened?”**

- ...AND...if you remember from last week...we looked at the reality of being a new creation...
 - ...remember we compared it to...Dorothy winding up in Oz...and how it went from B & W...to Color...

NOW...what we didn’t do last week...but I want to do this week...and from here on out...in this series...

- ...is identify Christian terminology...or language that you will be hearing...that you are probably not familiar with...

- ...and it will help you...to better understand your faith...

Some of the terminology may seem obvious...and I don't mean to insult your intelligence...

- ...BUT again...as a New Creation...practically everything is going to be new...
 - ...not to mention the fact that I personally...spent literally years not knowing what these terms met...

If you recall...we looked at...

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) — **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

We talked about how this is what literally happened...when you gave your life to Jesus Christ...

- ...when He became your Lord and your Savior...the term **Savior**...describes who Jesus is...because of what He did...

When we became a new creation...we said goodbye to old person...and began living in new life in Jesus...

- ...when we made that heartfelt profession of faith...we were literally **adopted** into God's family...with all of the rights that Jesus has...

This is an incredible truth that we must think upon...often...

Romans 8:15–17 (NKJV) — **15** ... you received the Spirit of **adoption** by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then **heirs**—heirs of God and joint **heirs** with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Remember we looked at...what the angel said to Joseph...

Matthew 1:21 (NKJV) — **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will **save** His people from their sins.”

- ...Jesus is our Savior...because He **saved** us from our sins...

When that happened...we not only became New Creations...BUT...we were **born again**...

- ...**born again** – refers to that supernatural process of leaving the old life behind...and becoming a new creation...
 - ...at which time we go from being a **non-believer**...one who doesn't believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior...
 - ...to being a **believer**...one who does...believe in Jesus...which is why Christians are often referred to as...**believers**...

You will often hear people say...are you a **believer**...to which you can say "*Absolutely!*"...

- ...these terms **believer**, **saved** and **born again**...should all be synonymous with the term Christian...

BUT...unfortunately that is not always the case...as our society has broadened the path to Christianity...

- ...in contradiction to what Jesus said...

Matthew 7:13–14 (NKJV) — **13** “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. **14** Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

If you want to know if someone is a true Christian...which means a follower of Jesus Christ...

- ...ask them if they are **born again**...which will open up a door to share with them what it means to be a Christian...

Jesus died on the cross...shedding His blood for the forgiveness of our sins...this is what we mean when we say...

- ...I have been **purchased by the blood**...it sounds like a rather morbid thought...but that is precisely what He did...

At the last supper...on the evening before He went to the cross...Jesus said...

Matthew 26:28 (NKJV) — **28** ...this is My blood of the new covenant [...holing up the cup of wine...], **which is shed for many for the remission** [...for the removal...] **of sins.**

The apostle Paul...one of the early church leaders...was encouraging other leaders to take care of the people in the church...

Acts 20:28 (NKJV) — 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd [...to take care of...] the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.**

Sometimes...people will refer to Jesus' blood as...**the blood of the Lamb**...which is another reference to Jesus...

John 1:29 (NKJV) — 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The **Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

One word you will hear a lot as a Christian is the word **atonement**...

Psalm 65:3 (NKJV) — 3 Iniquities [...another name for **sins**...] prevail against me; As for our **transgressions** [...another name for sins...], You will provide **atonement** for them.

When you think of the word **atonement**...simply think about what Jesus did for you on the cross...

- ...the ED definition for atonement is *satisfaction or repair for wrong...to make amends*...
 - ...in the context of Christianity...it identifies what Jesus did on the cross when he shed His blood and dies for us...
 - ...He satisfied the wrong...He repaired the broken relationship we once had with God...

He **justified** us...another word you will often hear...which means...that through His death...he declared us to be innocent...

- ...no longer guilty of the sin that once condemned us...it is an amazing word...
 - ...because of who we are...as a new creation...we stand before God...**justified**...JUST-AS-IF-I'D...never sinned...WOW!

We deserved God's wrath for our disobedience...and Jesus went to the cross and took the sins of the world upon Himself...

- ...He took the **wrath**...that we rightly deserved...because of His great love for us...

1 John 4:10 (NKJV) — 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.

This word...**propitiation**...which you won't see as often as some of the others we have

been looking at...

- ...is another incredible word that describes what Jesus did for us...it means...*to satisfy the wrath of someone...*
 - ...in Christianity...it means...*to satisfy the righteous wrath of God...towards sinful man...*

In all of this...the bottom line is...we will be able to stand before God one day...pure and holy...

- ...not by anything we have done...but by what Jesus has done on the cross for us...

One of the most amazing verses in all of the bible about this is found...

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) — 21 For He [...God...] made Him [...Jesus...] who knew **no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the **righteousness** of God in Him [...Jesus...].

- ...I could think of that verse ‘all day long’...and never get tired of it...

LET’S LOOK AT OUR TEXT...Ephesians 2:8...

We talked last Sunday about the fact that there was nothing we could ever do to get into heaven...

- ...and that we are saved by **grace**...and this is the verse we looked at...

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV) — 8 For by **grace** you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God, **9** not of **works**, lest anyone should boast.

There are four words in this verse that are critical to understanding our salvation...and what happened when you became a Christian...

- ...**grace**...**gift of God**...**faith**...and...**works**...

#1...The word **grace** means ‘unmerited favor’...in other words...in Christianity it means...receiving...**salvation**...

- ...that is...being saved from hell and receiving eternity in heaven...because of what Jesus did on the cross...
 - ...even though...the sin which we could do nothing about...should have sent us TO HELL...we get heaven instead...that is God’s **grace**...

- ...and it is how we are saved...NOT...by anything we have done...

So...simply put...**grace**...is ‘receiving something we don’t deserve’...

- ...which brings up the word **justice**...something that we do deserve...and then **mercy**...something we don’t receive...even though we deserve it...

ILLUST: Let’s say you run a red light and get pulled over by a policemen...

- ...you know you did it...you know you deserve a ticket...because that is what the law says...that is **justice**...

BUT...you happen to have gotten pulled over by a very nice policeman who is having a good day...

- ...and he shows you **mercy**...by not giving you the ticket you deserve...OR...let’s say he is having a bad day...
 - ...and gives you a big ticket...and you go the judge...admit your guilt...and the judge likes you enough...
 - ...that he pays it for you...that is a picture of **grace**...getting something...the money to pay the ticket...though we didn’t deserve it...

Q: What does that have to do with Christianity?

- ...we are **born into sin**...nobody had to teach us how to be naughty...we naturally figured out how to do it on our own...
 - ...this is also called **original sin**...because it originated with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden...
 -and every human being from that time forward is **born into it**...

NOW...what we deserve from a perfect and holy and sinless God...is condemnation...

- ...that is the **justice** of God...He would be perfectly just in sending us to hell...because we violated the things He told us not to do...
 - ...BUT...in His **mercy**...we don’t receive hell...we don’t receive what we rightfully deserve...

- ...and instead...we...through our **faith** in Jesus Christ and his **atoning** death on the cross...
 - ...we experience God’s **grace**...the gift of eternal life...from God...something we certainly don’t deserve...

We are saved by grace...the bible says...**#2**...through **faith**...

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) — **1** Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things **not seen**.

Faith is an awesome thing...something we were once afraid of...because we naturally wanted to be sure of things...

- ...**BUT**...are no longer afraid of it...because we were changed into a **new creation**...
 - ...when we believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior...by faith...

Jesus...who we have not yet seen...saved us...and we know that it is true...because nothing else could have changed us...

- ...the fact that we are changed human beings...is the evidence of things not seen...
 - ...our New Birth...being born again...is the evidence...that Jesus is everything that was declared about Him...

Though it can be scary at times...we must never quit taking steps of faith...

- ...and we must always look at what happened when we took the greatest step of faith ever...
 - ...leaving the miserable life of an un-believer...and becoming a new creation...
 - ...a believer...a Christian...a follower of Jesus Christ...

The bible says we can’t please God without faith...

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) — **6** ...without **faith** it is impossible to please Him [...to please God...], for he who comes to God **must believe that He is**, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Once you understand the step of faith you took...in turning your life over to Jesus...

- ...you will find it easier to trust Him with everything else in your life...

ILLUST: Edgar Martinez Porsche...

- ...*“I would trust him with the lives of my own kids!”*...Edgar trusted me...whom he had not seen...
 - ...with something very valuable to him...because of the words of my friend...
 - ...**faith**...is trusting God for things...without having any physical evidence that it is going to happen...

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus...we will grow in our faith...because we realize...

- ...that EVERYTHING Jesus has said will happen...we will learn...that we can count on it...

We are saved by grace...through faith...it is **#3...a gift of God...**

- ...we must always remember that our salvation...our assurance of eternity in heaven with God our father...
 - ...AND...with Jesus our Savior...is a **gift of God**...and by nothing we ever could have done...

If we could have done something to save us...to rid us of our sins so we could go to heaven...we would have...

- ...but for many of us...after years and years of trying and realizing there was nothing we could do...
 - ...we gave up...and...thanks be to God...turned it all over to Jesus...the Son of God...

If there were something we could do to earn this gift...it would no longer be a gift...

- ...a gift isn't a gift if you have to give something for it...

We are saved by grace...through faith...it is...a gift of God...NOT...of **#4...works...**

- ...NOW...here is the interesting thing...that can get a little confusing...as you are reading the bible...
 - ...because eventually...you will come across the words of James the brother of Jesus...
 - ...one of the early leaders of the church...in fact the pastor of Jerusalem...who said... *“Faith without works is dead.”*...

AND SO...that you are not confused...I want to give you a heads up...

Q: What does James mean by works?

- ...there are two types of **works** in the bible and it is very important that you know which work someone is referring to...

The first...is that **work** that you have already done...the work of accepting Jesus...

John 6:28–29 (NKJV) — **28** Then they said to Him [...Jesus...], “What shall we do, that we may work the **works** of God?” **29** Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the **work** of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Jesus was always talking to people about eternal life...and this was no exception...

- ...and the people asked him...paraphrased... *“What **works** do we need to do...to be assured of eternal life?”*...
 - ...and Jesus said...again paraphrased... *“There is only **ONE** work you need to be concerned with...in regards to eternal life...”*
 - *...believe in Me...believe in Jesus...whom God has sent.”*

You got saved...when you believed in Jesus whom God had sent...

John 3:16 (NKJV) — **16** For God so loved the world that He **gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

NOW...having been saved...there is the second kind of works...and these are the works that James is talking about...

- ...not to be confused with the initial **work** of salvation...these works would also be referred to as...**working out our salvation**...
 - ...simply doing the things that help you grow into a mature Christian...

TURN WITH ME...James 2:14...

James 2:14–20 (NKJV) — **14** What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him [...he is talking about intellectual faith...not saving faith...]? **15** If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? **17** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have **works**, is dead [...its just an intellectual exercise...versus a heart transformation...]. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **19** You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble [...even the demons have intellectual faith...but not heart faith...]! **20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without **works** is dead?

The second type of **works**...are those things we do...NOT...to earn favor with God...

- ...so we can **stay saved**...BUT...rather out of gratitude for God’s grace...His unmerited favor...
 - ...in providing a way for us to be saved...**God’s gift**...when...because of our sin...we deserved condemnation...

NOW...I want to conclude this first part of Discipleship...“**What just happened?**” ...

- ...with a couple of very important distinctions about Christianity...that IF...you will understand them...
 - ...you will NEVER have to worry about being misled...

The first...is this... “*When Jesus was born...God became man.*”

John 1:1–3, 14 (NKJV) — **1** In the beginning was the Word [...another name for Jesus...], and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ...**14** And the Word **became flesh and dwelt among us**, ... [...the word **incarnation**...refers to Jesus becoming flesh...becoming a man...]

NOW...here is where **faith** comes into play...because the incarnation...Jesus becoming a man...doesn’t make sense to the intellectual mind...

- ...it is something we accept by faith...without the visual proof...because of what the bible says about it...

AND...it is easy to have faith in this truth...as long as we keep reminding ourselves...

- ...that our faith in what Jesus said...transformed our lives and made us into new creations...
 - ...faith comes easier...when we use our ‘transformation’ as a reference point...

Jesus has always been!!!...from the creation of the world...Jesus was **with God**...and Jesus **was God**...

- ...AND...even though He was man...He never gave up His Godhood...which is referred to as his **deity**...deity means ‘god’...
 - ...this is so important...because even the religious leaders...and many false religions believe that only God...can forgive...or deal with sin...

Two things separate Christianity...from all other non-Christian...false religions...

ONE...who Jesus is...He is God...

- ...ALL non-Christian religions discount put into question the **deity** of Jesus Christ...
 - ...that is that Jesus is God...which is what the word **deity** means...they say He was just a prophet...or a god like other types of false gods...
 - ...AND...it is because they reject the God of the bible...and develop their own religious system...

The **SECOND** thing...that separates Christianity from all others...which we have already looked at...is this...

- ...Christianity is about nothing we have done...and all about what Jesus has already done...on the cross...
 - ...while every other religion...is about what we **HAVE** to do...to earn a relationship with a Holy God...

FINALLY...I want to address the question...“Can I lose my salvation?”...

- ...and the answer to that is...NO!

Jesus said...we looked at it last week...

John 10:27–30 (NKJV) — 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 And **I give them eternal life**, and they shall never perish; **neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.** **29** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.** **30** I and My Father are one.”

NOW...there has been great debate over this issue of whether or not you could lose your salvation...for centuries...

- ...and there are two groups...one who insists that you cannot...and another that you can...with some variances thrown in there...
 - ...don’t get caught up in those discussions...which quite often turn into arguments...

TURN WITH ME...John 15:3-8

Jesus said...

John 15:3–8 (NKJV) — **3** You are already clean [...a new creation...] because of the word which I have spoken to you. **4** Abide [...live your life...] in Me, and I in you [...just stick close to me...]. As the branch cannot bear fruit **of itself**, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. **5** “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for **without Me you can do nothing.** **6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. **7** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. **8** By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

You will NEVER...EVER have to worry about this issue as long you keep abiding in Jesus...

- ...I have been living as a Christian...for over 30 years...and I don’t remember... EVER warring about whether I was saved or not...
 - ...AND...you need not worry as well!!!

PRAY...

WORSHIP...