

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 3

BELIEF, FAITH AND REPENTANCE

As we learned in our study on The Holy Bible, we have been called by God. Remember though,

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

(Matthew 22: 14)

It is up to us to proceed as God speaks to and leads each of us.

We have learned we can rely on God’s written inspired word, the Holy Bible which is comprised of the Old and the New Testaments. We also learned the God Family is comprised of God the Father and God the Son-Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the power God uses to complete His work and not a co-equal part of the God Family. It is also a free gift to us after we are baptized and have hands laid on us. It is then we can grow more spiritually and as we learn and grow God reveals more to us.

So now we have a basic background and our foundation is growing, where do we go from here? We have to *believe* that God is. We have to have *faith* in Him and His word and we have to *repent* of our past sins. These steps will then lead us to Baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Make sure this is what you want and desire. Once you take that step and begin understanding the truth and are baptized, spiritually, there is no turning back.

BELIEF and FAITH

This may be hard to understand. Not because it is difficult but because it is so basic you will be looking for more. One of the most important parts of this journey you are setting out on is that you believe that God exists. Even though we can look around us and see evidence of Him everywhere we must truly believe He exists and is working with us.

“This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.”
(John 6:29)

We have to believe in Jesus Christ. His sinless life, His scourging and crucifixion and His resurrection. We must also acknowledge that even though we are called by the Father, Jesus tells us,

“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(John 14:6).

There is no compromise in this. You must believe God, and Jesus Christ completely. That means realizing that Gods Laws and ordinances are still in force. His Holy Days and Sabbaths are still in force. They were not done away with nor were they just for the Jew’s. It cannot be, “Well, I get most of this but the Saturday thing, I don’t know, that’s not the way I understand it.” Or, “I really don’t think we are supposed to be keeping these Jewish days. We’re Christians.”

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘Concerning the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My appointed feasts.”

(Leviticus 23:1-2)

Notice what God said. “...the appointed feast of the LORD ...even these are My appointed feasts.” God plainly and directly tells Moses these are His, God’s feasts, not once but twice in the same verse. Not the Jews or Catholics or Muslims or mans. These are His feasts. Jesus Christ and the apostle’s and the first century church with the converted gentiles kept all of God’s feasts and holy days. This included the weekly Sabbath.

“And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

(Genesis 2:3)

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.”

(Leviticus 23:3)

“And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them. And also I gave them My Sabbath_s to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies them.”

(Ezekiel 20:11-12)

Only God can sanctify, set apart and make holy. He sanctified the seventh day and if we obey His statutes and ordinances and keep His Sabbath_s He will sanctify us.

Following and keeping God's holy days and Sabbaths and believing His word takes *faith*. We have to believe that He is and that He has set out a path for us to follow that will lead us to sanctification.

How does God define faith?

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. For by this kind of faith the elders obtained a good report.

(Hebrews 11:1-2)

We are also told,

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

(Hebrews 11:6)

We have to believe in Him, God the Father and His Son-Jesus Christ. We have to believe they exist, that Their laws and ordinances are true and just. We have to believe enough to actually practice and honor Them not just agree they exist and leave it at that. We must be doers of the word.

"Then be doers of the Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves."

(James 1:22)

Just about everything we know about God comes from other sources. That is, other people, pastor's, minister's, priests and friends. Very few actually take time to know God or His written inspired word. We must personally get to know God. If you are here He has probably called you. It is now your duty to proceed as directed by Him.

The elders noted in the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, and Enoch all knew God personally and when called they acted on faith. The children of Israel also saw evidence of God first hand during the Exodus. They heard from Him, saw His miracles and experienced His truths. We for the most part are dealing on faith, as did the elders. Faith in God and Jesus Christ. Faith in His written inspired word and His laws. This we must do so that we may be accepted by the Father.

As we noted above,

“And Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”

(John 14:6)

The picture should be getting clearer. We have been called by God. We are realizing we need to believe Who Jesus truly is. He is *the way, the truth and the life*. Ok, good. What does that mean, exactly?

Jesus is *the Way*: It is through Him we reach the Father. He told us He has given us an example.

“For I have given you an example, to show that you also should do exactly as I have do to you.”

(John 13:15)

Jesus is *the Truth*: The revelation of God’s Truth is found through Jesus Christ.

(John 14:6, above) and;

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you have known Him and have seen Him. The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, who dwells in Me, does the work. Believe Me that I

am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves."
(John 14:7, 10-11)

You must believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior and God before and after He came to earth as the perfect sacrifice.

"That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins."
(John 8:24)

REPENTANCE

After Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist and had spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan He came to Galilee to begin His ministry.

"Now after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
(Mark 1:14-15)

What did we just read? "...repent and believe the gospel ...". Gospel comes from a Greek word that means "good news". And what is this good news? It is the good news about God, about His Son, our Savior, about the forgiveness of our sins and that through Him, our intercessor, we have access to the Father.

Here is how we will go about accomplishing this.

"..."The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart." This is the word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one

believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation."

(Romans 10:8-10)

We must confess and believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He was the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. We must "talk the talk and walk the walk", so to speak.

Next thing-we have to recognize that we are sinners. God laid all the sins of mankind on Jesus Christ. Our sins killed Him.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

(Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Romans 6:23)

When we realize we are sinners and confess with our mouth and believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord we are then on the road to acceptance and repentance.

Repentance is not saying "I'm sorry" and that's it. We have to be continually repentant and accept the fact we are sinners. True repentance is complete remorse and sorrow for your sins. We have previously learned that sin is the transgression of God's law and commandments.

True repentance begins when God the Father opens our mind, calls us, to understanding. When we repent to God we are to confess our sins to Him and ask for His forgiveness and remission for them. True repentance will produce a change in our mind and attitude. This process is called conversion and will result in our desire to change and live by every word of God.

We will find that even though we go through this process and eventually become baptized there will be times we slip. This is why we will find ourselves in a continuing state of repentance which results in our spiritual growth.

What we will discover is we want to live a new life in Christ, we have a new thought process and we will act differently than we have in the past. We will be motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit.