

FIRST STEPS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE LECTURE 1

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

“Are passed away” is in the aorist tense. What does that tense suggest?

“Passed away” means to pass from _____.

“Are passed away” is also in the Indicative Mode. That means it is a straightforward assertion; that it is a _____.

The new Christian is something **like a happy child let loose in a big**
_____.

When a person receives Jesus Christ, he or she becomes a brand-new person. He comes alive spiritually and spiritually brought forth out of a dead state!

I. WHAT DOES THE SINNER DO?

A. Acknowledges need as a sinner.

If a person is one, and all people born of Adam’s race are, then it is best to face up to it and admit that what God said about our spiritual condition is true.

Romans 3:23

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 3:10

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Isaiah 53:6

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2- He acknowledges he is wrong and that God is right.

Zephaniah 3:5

“The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.”

It does no good at all to argue with God. We had just as well, if we disagree with Him, acknowledge that he cannot do any iniquity or wrong; it is impossible for Him.

3- He agrees with God that he is spiritually _____. He tells the Lord of the poverty of his soul. Luke 18:10-14

4. He prays a prayer for forgiveness-- "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). It does not have to be certain words but a reaching out by faith for God's salvation. God looks more at the attitude of a repentant heart by faith than He does hearing certain, specific words come from our lips.

The sinners first step was to acknowledge his need as a sinner.

Dead and lost are the two Bible words used to describe your past life. Dead things are unresponsive. Dead things can't grow. You do not grow into grace; you grow once you are in it.

Nothing is so completely helpless as that which is dead, and as far as God is concerned, all people through natural birth are spiritually dead.

It is going from spiritual death to spiritual, eternal life.

The Bible describes the spiritual transformation that takes place in this way:

Ephesians 2:1

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

The sinner's life has been changed from a dead to a living _____ in Christ.

Lost is a descriptive word. The Bible states, *"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

Without Christ we are lost like sheep without a shepherd—helpless, hopeless, and defenseless; we are lost like the prodigal son—separated, destitute, and disgraced. The sinner is lost to salvation.

By the sinner trusting Jesus, he is changed from a lost to a _____ condition, changed from an enemy of God to a _____ of God, changed from a stranger to a _____ of God. Salvation is revolutionary in a person's life.

The Bible plainly says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

II. The believing sinner has acknowledged Jesus Christ as His Savior.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to meet our basic need. Christ was born to die. *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Timothy 1:15). This purpose was accomplished when He _____

Repeatedly, Jesus told His disciples of His intended death. On the night of His betrayal by Judas, He broke bread with His disciples. (Matthew 26:28).

Paul simply and clearly wrote, "For He made Him who knew _____ to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

See Isaiah 53:5.

Our basic need is the _____ of sin.

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might _____ to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

The word "confess" is interesting. It simply means "to speak the same thing." It means "to agree or _____."

It comes from two words "homo" _____ and "logos" _____ or _____.

III. What The Believer Does

The sinner first recognizes his need as a sinner, but then he recognizes Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.

What should the sinner do? He has "have believed" (John 20:29).

The sinner turns from sin to the Lord.

He begins to acknowledge Jesus Christ before others. The believing sinner may ask, "Do I have to publicly confess Christ?" I must answer, "Yes, Jesus Christ requests a public confession. See Romans 10:9-10.

Jesus plainly said, "Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). If a person sincerely trusts Christ, he will want to tell others about it.

This new life will be obvious, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34).

Some new Christians try to be "secret" believers, but this is unwise and wrong. Imagine Dr. Jonas _____ keeping his polio vaccine a secret! This would have been criminal.

Both _____ and _____ of Arimathea tried to be secret disciples. It took Jesus' _____ to bring them to the place of openly begging His body from Pilate. John 19:38-40.

Do not let your fear of others rob you of the joy of _____ allegiance to Christ. It is _____ to be silent when to confess would help another person come to personally know the Lord.

We should never be ashamed of the Lord.

Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38) (I Pet. 4:16).

To be reproached for Christ now is to be _____ later.

A failure to acknowledge Jesus often results in _____ living.

The fact that others know of your decision will help guard you against _____.

Following Jesus begins a happy, lasting change. It is then a person is ready to build a new life for the glory of God.

IV. WHAT THE NEW CONVERT MUST DO NOW

As a newborn baby is cared for in the physical world, you need to be helped spiritually. Let me list a few things that I will say more about in this course.

1. Read the Bible systematically.

The gospel of John is a good place to begin. Remember, at least a chapter a day!

D. L. Moody said, "The Bible will keep you from sin or ____ will keep you from the Bible:"

2. Learn to pray.

Prayer is the communion of the believer with God; we speak to God, but He also speaks to us.

3. Use every opportunity to confess Christ before the world. In a winsome way, immediately the born again Christian should tell someone of your salvation experience. Activity strengthens.

4. Become part of a local church.

If a mother permits her children to grow up in idleness, the result will be unprepared children. A good mother does not have a child and after it is born leave it lying in the streets or along the road. She will _____ that child that is might not only grow physically but also spiritually.

Since the Christian's responsibilities toward other believers is clear, waiting only forms _____.

See Heb.10:25.

The Bible says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some" (Hebrews 10:25). Your faithful church attendance will help you in spiritual growth.

If you follow these four Bible steps, Christian growth is promised. You will be sure to meet temptations (I John 4:4).

Confession of Sins

See I John 1:9. If you do fall, ask for _____ forgiveness.

In view of verse 8, Christians ought to be ready at all times to acknowledge any failure which God's light may expose to them. Thus John wrote, **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Naturally only God knows at any moment the full extent of a person's unrighteousness. Each Christian, however, is responsible to acknowledge (the meaning of "confess," *homologōmen*; cf. 2:23; 4:3) whatever the light makes him aware of, and when he does so, a _____ and _____ cleansing is granted him. There is thus no need to agonize over sins of which one is unaware.

Forgiveness which is promised here is both absolutely assured (because God "is faithful") and also is in no way contrary to His holiness (He is "just"). The word used here for "just" (*dikaios*) is the same one which is applied as a title to Christ in 2:1 where it is translated "the Righteous One." *Dikaios* is also used of God (either the Father or the Son) in 2:29 and 3:7. Obviously God is "just" or "righteous" when He forgives the believer's sin because of the "atoning sacrifice" which the Lord Jesus has made (see 2:2).

As is already evident from 1:7, a Christian's fellowship with God is inseparably connected with the effectiveness of the blood which Jesus shed for him.

What is considered in 1 John 1:9 may be described as "family" forgiveness. It is perfectly understandable how a son may need to ask his father to forgive him for his faults while at the same time his position within the family is not in jeopardy. A Christian who never asks his heavenly Father for forgiveness for his sins can hardly have much sensitivity to the ways in which he grieves his Father.

First John 1:9 is not spoken to the unsaved, and the effort to turn it into a salvation requirement is misguided. It may also be said that so long as the idea of walking in the light or darkness is correctly understood on an **experiential level**, these concepts offer no difficulty.

"Darkness" has an _____ meaning (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. "skotos," 7:444). When a believer loses personal touch with the God of light, he begins to live in darkness. But _____ is the way back into the light.

If a new believer falls, he should not remain defeated but get up and go on.

Another important lesson for successful Christian living is to keep your eyes on Jesus. The best of Christians will fail you, but never forget—"Jesus never will!"

When a person receives Christ, he or she should strive to follow these first steps. Starting right is a key to spiritual growth. Dead things cannot _____. You do not grow _____ grace; you grow once you are _____.

Conclusion:

How does a plant grow? What does it need to grow?

It must have four things Light, air, _____ and nutrients.

Let's relate that spiritually:

Light _____.

Air _____.

Water- _____.

Nutrients- Comes from partaking of the whole counsel of the word of God through private study, the _____ of God and the ministry of God's _____.

1 Peter 2:2 says: "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*"

Conclusion: