

The Triune Nature Of Our Conversion

In the past studies we have meditated on many areas that are important to our new life as a Christian.

But before we progress any further I would like you to think about what “conversion” really means.

Acts 2:36-38 [NIV] *“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made **this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, **“Brothers, what shall we do?”** Peter replied, **“Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

After Peter’s powerful spirit-filled message all the people were deeply moved and asked “*what shall we do?*”

John 3:16 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Having accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a substitute for our own deserved death due to our rebellious sins, there are three areas of our life in which we must take action.

The human side of our conversion

Mark 1:15 [NIV] *“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe the good news!**”*

This is the simple message that Jesus preached, and this is what we must do to enter into the Kingdom or created family of God.

Repentance

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Repentance takes place in our mind, the human spirit that gives us intellect.

We have to allow God to remake the way we think.

This produces a change of attitude and a change of direction in our lives, with new priorities.

To start this process we first have to admit to God we are going the wrong way in life and have the wrong priorities.

Tell God we are sorry for rejecting Him and be willing to turn away from these wrong directions.

Faith

John 15:5 [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

We have to accept this fact and trust Jesus Christ to cleanse us and begin to work in us to produce lasting, spiritual fruits.

John 15:7-8 [NIV] *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, **that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**”*

What are the fruits and how are they produced?

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] *“But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature** with its passions and desires. **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**”*

The result of the Holy Spirit living in us and leading us.

What did Paul mean by “*crucified the sinful nature*” ?

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

Offer our whole life as a living sacrifice, as an act of worship.

John 15:12-14 [NIV] *“My command is this: **Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.** You are my friends if you do what I command.”*

Love, the first fruit of the Spirit is the end result of laying down our lives, that is our time and substance.

We do this for our friends and our chief friend is Jesus Christ.

All this is done by faith, this is our human side of conversion.

The next step we have to take is to accept what God desires to do in us.

God’s side – forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit

When we call upon our Saviour Jesus Christ in His great mercy, compassion and faithfulness to forgive us, two very wonderful things happen.

Forgiveness

1 John 1:8-9 [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

This is a promise we can claim from God.

Jesus forgives us for our past sins when we ignored and rejected His offer of love.

The penalty for our sins Jesus dealt with on the cross.

The punishment due for our rebellion is paid in full.

Isaiah 43:25 [NIV] *“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”*

Not only is the record of our sins wiped clean, but God blots them out of His memory.

We now can have a brand new start.

The Holy Spirit

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And **I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”*

Claim this promise that our Saviour made.

What will happen with the Holy Spirit in us?

John 16:5-15 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Counsellor** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.** “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.** All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”*

This is the remaking of our mind and thus the way we live as “*born again*” Christians.

The changes that will be made in us by the Holy Spirit, if we let Him, will be like a rebirth.

1 John 5:10-12 [NIV] *“Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. **And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.** He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

If Jesus is living in us, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then we already have eternal life.

We have started a life that will go on forever.

The church’s side – baptism and commitment to the body of Christ

This third side of our conversion is as essential as the other two.

We have not completely obeyed God without it.

Baptism

Romans 6:1-4 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? **Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was **raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.**”*

Baptism is the outward public sign of what has happened in our heart and spirit [mind].

This is the “*body*” part of the complete “*living sacrifice*” mentioned in **Romans 12:1**.

As we go down into the water and are submerged beneath it, we are saying “*goodbye*” to the rule of our old self-life.

As we rise out of the water we are entering a new life where Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master.

We are asked three questions before we are baptised.

Have you confessed and repented of your sins?

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and His death as a substitute for our own deserved death?

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master?

We need to honestly say “*yes*” to all these three questions.

The minister will then baptise us into the name [authority] of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As we come up out of the water the minister will remind us that we are without condemnation as all our past sins have been cleansed and forgotten by God.

Note we are **not** baptised into any denomination of the church.

Commitment to the body of Jesus Christ

Having declared our commitment to Jesus Christ through baptism, our next step is to commit ourselves to the body of Jesus Christ on earth, the Christian church.

Ask Jesus to help us find a church fellowship where He wants us to mature and serve.

What should we look for in the Christian fellowship we need to join?

A fellowship that is spiritually alive: that is, there are signs that the members are developing and expressing the fruits of the Spirit. Especially love for one another shown in attitude and action, not just words.

A fellowship where God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is central to all that is taught.

A fellowship that is deeply involved in fulfilling the commission that Jesus gave to His disciples, just before He left to be our High Priest at the right hand of God, the Father on His throne in Heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] “*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*”

Our duty is to teach and nurture those whom God is calling at this time.

Acts 1:8 [NIV] “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*”

Allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through us.

When we find such a church fellowship we should commit ourselves to that group of Christians and look for opportunities to serve Jesus Christ our Lord and Master in and through that group.

These are the three sides or natures of our conversion.

We all need to ask:-

Have I really been “*born again*” ?

Have I worked through all three of these parts of conversion properly?

Or have I only gone part of the way?

In order for us to experience fully what God has planned for us, each of these three stages need to be completed.

This is **not** the end of what God wants to do in and through us, it is only the beginning.

This is the firm foundation we all need on which God can build the work He has for us during the rest of our life.

Are we laying this firm foundation?

Memory verse:

Acts 2:38 [NIV] *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Next time we will see what we need to start doing next, having laid this firm foundation to our lives.