

HOW TO CONNECT TO JESUS

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HOW TO COME TO JESUS CHRIST

Introduction

There are two reasons for reading this booklet. First, you want to meet Jesus. You sense He is calling you and you are ready to answer His call. The other reason is that Jesus wants to use you to help someone meet Him. This booklet is written for everyone who wants to come to a relationship with Jesus Christ or would like to help a friend come to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls people to Him, and the first step in meeting Him is to know why He is seeking out people who have yet to meet Him. First of all, you need to understand that Jesus and God are one and He wants you to know Him. He created you for the purpose of knowing Him. As a matter of fact, the Bible says before the world was even created, God had developed a plan that would give you the opportunity to know Him and walk with Him. This plan is centered completely in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

God wants you to walk with Him and Jesus is the door through which we come to walk with God. So, Jesus is calling people to Himself because people were created to know Him and find themselves in Him.

Secondly, this plan of God, and everything He did to make it happen, He did completely on His own. The reason God did this is because He loves you. The truth is that God created you and He wants you to understand that your life has a purpose for being on this earth. God put this plan into action mostly because of who He is, not because you and I caused Him to do it. In other words, He did it because He wanted to do it, not because you or I wanted Him to do it. If you really think about it, there was nothing that you or I did to deserve this attitude of His. God has this attitude towards you and me simply because He has chosen to do so. The Bible calls this special attitude of God grace. Therefore, God's part in His relationship with you is His attitude of grace. Once you begin to understand God's attitude - or grace - towards you, you are faced with a choice: will I respond or not?

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The next step in having a relationship with God is to understand your part. Your part in this relationship is called faith. The Bible teaches that the only way to respond to God is through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 states, "8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - 9not by works, so that no one can boast."

So, if the only way to know God is through your faith, what exactly is faith? What does it look like? How does it feel? Where does it come from? What difference does it make in the way I experience the world around me?

1Read Ephesians 1:1-14 to see the details of the plan.

When it comes to experiencing real faith and having a relationship with God, the Bible is our greatest tool. The Bible not only talks about knowing God through faith, but it shows us practical steps we take in order to express and grow our faith.

So here are the steps a person takes in order to have a relationship with God through faith. You can walk them yourself, or you can help someone walk through them.

Step One: Evaluate What You Believe

What you believe makes a huge difference in life. The first step in faith is to evaluate exactly what you believe about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you believe that Jesus and God are one?² Do you believe that Jesus Christ surrendered His equality with God in order to die on the cross?³ Do you believe that God did this so that Jesus would pay your debt of sin for you? Do you believe this because you simply don't want God mad at you, or do you believe it because you are tired of trying to be your own God?

2John 10:30 ,3Philippians 2:5-8

Romans 10:9 says, "If you believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord, and confess with your mouth that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

Write out what you believe about God, Jesus Christ and why He died on the cross:

Step Two: Call Out to God

"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:21

The word "call upon" means to make an appeal. It has the sense that you are making an appeal to someone important, someone who can make a huge difference in your present circumstances. If you believe that Jesus Christ is God and that He died on the cross for your sins, then you believe that He is Lord. The Lord has the power and strength to make a huge difference in your life. When you call out, call out to the one God who can redeem and transform your life.

We encourage you to pray this prayer as a calling out to God.

"Dear God, Right now I want to call out to You to come into my life. I lived my life trying to be in charge. Right now, I want to surrender who is in charge of my life to You. Please come into my life right now and live through me. Please wash away all of my mistakes and failures, all of the things that bring me guilt or anxiety. I believe that Jesus is your Son and that You sent Him to pay my debt. I give myself to You completely and call out to You to be the Lord and Savior of my life. Thank you, Lord, for accepting me and giving me new life. Amen!"

Step Three: Confess

“If you confess Me (Jesus) before men, I will confess you before My Father who Is in heaven.”

Tell someone! First, tell those closest to you. Then tell the church. We want to help and support you in your new faith! What do you tell them?

In the space below, write out what you believe. If you need help, finish these statements:

- I believe Jesus is _____.
- I believe He died on the cross and God raised Him from the dead.
- He did this for me because_____.
- Because He did this, I have chosen to_____.

Step Four: Repent

“Repent and be baptized, everyone of you for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!” Acts 2:38

Here is the place where your faith begins to become an everyday sort of thing. When a person repents, they are changing the focus of their life. Before a person accepts the grace of God, their focus is on themselves. The world around them has told them to focus on their own needs and what they wanted in life. Often, this focus causes people to look at what the world has to offer and then make plans on how to get what the world has to offer.

When a person repents, they are completely refocusing their life. To repent means to take your focus off the world - off yourself - and place it on God, on His kingdom, and on what He wants to do in your life. Begin by taking the things in your life that have become too important and begin removing them. Remember, this is a journey of faith. Repentance is an active choice made each day to focus on God instead of yourself.

List below the largest things in your life that get between you and God, and then repent from them and turn to God.

Step Five: Get Baptized

“Repent and be **baptized**, everyone of you, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!” Acts 2:38

Baptism is a significant part of the process of establishing a relationship with Jesus Christ. In many ways it is similar to a wedding ceremony. The difference is that you are being joined to Jesus Christ. Notice how the Apostle Paul (one of the writers of the Bible) describes baptism in Romans 6:3-7:

“3Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We 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. 5If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. 6For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - 7because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”

Notice how the process of baptism simulates the very death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As you go under, you are dying to your old life and, therefore, as you rise up out of the water, you will rise up into a new life. It doesn't get any better than this!

You can be baptized anywhere there is water - and at any time. The church has a baptistery that can be filled (with warm water) in 20 minutes. The person who baptizes you is not important. It is in Whom you are being baptized: Jesus Christ. Grab a change of clothes (we go all the way under) and have your small group leader, a staff member, a pastor, an elder, your class teacher, an usher or a spiritual mentor perform the baptism. If you want someone to do the baptism and they have never done one, we will send a staff member or elder to help out.

Step Six: Get Connected

From before the foundations of the world were set in place, God planned on adopting people into His family. You might say that God's greatest desire is to build His family - one adoption at a time.⁴ The family of God is so important to Him that He calls it His Body. It doesn't make any sense to become a committed follower of Jesus Christ and not connect with His family.

There are over 60 smaller communities within the Foothills Christian community of faith, so find one that fits with you. If you do better connecting with people while working, then look for a service group or ministry team. If you are ready for a home-based small group, join one of those. If you think you need to work on some issues in your life first, join a recovery or support group. We have many groups and are constantly training people to begin new groups. Just make sure that you find a place to connect to the family of God and become a part of the Body of Jesus Christ.

⁴Ephesians 1:5

Conclusion:

I want to say a quick CONGRATULATIONS!

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

I want to congratulate you on your new life! I pray that God will cause His Holy Spirit to well up within you with power and strength. Go, live fully and grow in your new life! We are praying for you!

Dr. Douglas Peake

Lead Pastor, Foothills Christian Church

APPENDIX A

Why I Love Believers' Baptism

Introduction:

If you hang around our community of faith for any length of time, you will see people getting baptized. Watching all this might get you to thinking about baptism yourself; what it means, why people do it, if you should do it. We wanted to write this so you could understand what the Bible teaches on baptism and how Foothills practices the spiritual ceremony of baptism.

First of all, we believe the Bible teaches believer's baptism. Basically, this means that the person being baptized is a willful participant in the process of baptism. Secondly, we completely immerse a person under water.

Passages of Scripture That Talk About Baptism in the New Testament:

- The baptism of Jesus: Matthew 3:13-17. Notice how Jesus was an adult who willfully sought out John to be baptized.
- Also, notice how Jesus "came up out" of the water.
- Colossians 2:11-12: 11In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.

❖ Notice how baptism is the process of being buried with Christ. Baptism also is the act of identification with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

• 1 Peter 3:18-22, 18For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison 20who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21and this water symbolizes baptism that

now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him.

❖ Once again, baptism is the act of identification with the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person is immersed, it is a powerful act of identification.

• Acts 2:37-38, 37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, 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.

❖ What I find interesting in this verse is the answer Peter gives the people after they ask him what they must do in order to receive Christ. Peter does not say to pray, to come forward, to ask Jesus into your heart. He says, "Repent and be baptized."

• Acts 8:12-13, 12But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

❖ Notice once again the stated response to belief and commitment to follow Jesus Christ: being baptized.

• Acts 9:17-19 17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here - has sent me so that you may see Him again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19and, after taking some food, he regained his strength.

❖ This is the conversion of Paul. Notice how his first response was to be baptized.

• Acts 10:46-48, 46For they heard them speaking in tongue(s) and praising God. Then Peter said, 47"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

❖ Once again, we see the accepted response to belief being baptism. We also see the added component of it being water.

In every one of these cases, baptism is considered to be the appropriate response to belief.

I also want to share with you why I love believer's baptism:

- It identifies me with Jesus Christ. The goal of Christianity is to become like Jesus Christ. The bible teaches that God's desire is for us to become like Jesus. Romans 6:3-4 says, 3"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4We 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." What a great picture! I was buried with Jesus so that I will have a new life!
- I am able to experience the same things Jesus experienced. In becoming like Jesus, I want to walk in the same way He walked. I want to experience the activities He experienced. Jesus chose to be baptized and was immersed in the Jordan river by John the Baptist when He was approximately 30 years old. As an adult, I want to experience my baptism in the same way. I want to have that sense where God is looking down on me and saying, "You are my child, in whom I am well pleased."
- It gives me a day to remember. Being baptized as an adult, and being a willful participant in the process, gives me a day I will never forget. Similar to a wedding day, I have a memory of going forward, giving my confession of faith, getting into the water, hearing my Sunday School teacher say, "Based on your confession of faith, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of your sins. Rise, and walk in the newness of life." It is a great memory. Every person should have such a memory!

- If you were baptized as an infant or young child, Believer's Baptism honors the spiritual heritage of your parents. If you were baptized before the age of eight (8), it was mostly due to your parents' choice for you. They placed their complete faith and trust in God to watch over you, protect you and guide you. You might say that it is because of their prayer, witness and mentoring that you are the person and follower of Jesus Christ that you are today. The spiritual heritage they gave you is a great gift; without it, you would not be where you are today. Being immersed as an adult builds on the spiritual heritage your parents gave you. It is saying, "I am taking the choice you made for me and completely embracing it as my own. This is my choice."