

Who is Jesus Christ and why did he come to earth?

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God has a plan and purpose for every person who has ever been born and those who will come into the world in the future. He isn't willing that any should perish but that all should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We cannot come to this knowledge without his Spirit drawing us. (John 6:44) Those of us that have heard the call of God and answered it have an obligation to fulfill the requirements that God has set forth for our maturity. It is not enough to say a sinner's prayer and then go on with our lives without making changes that reflect Jesus Christ in us.

The first thing that God requires to be in the family of God is faith. How do we get faith? Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing comes from the word of God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that without faith, it is impossible to please God; for those who come to Him, must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Are you diligently seeking to know Jesus Christ and to take on his characteristics in your own life? You only learn about his character by studying his word.

Matthew 17:20 is a story about the disciples who came to Jesus and asked why they didn't have power to cast out evil spirits. Jesus told them that it was because they didn't believe. "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you shall say unto this mountain, move to another place and it shall move for nothing shall be impossible with you."

What mountains are standing before you and hindering you from moving forward in the Lord's work? Is it bitterness, shame from the past, guilt for wrongs done, anger towards others for wrongs done towards you, or feelings of inadequacy that holds you back from being and giving your best to the master? Satan desires to bind you and render you useless but Jesus desires to set you free! Why allow your stinking thinking to hold you down?

Weed out carnality from your heart and the fruit of the Spirit will spring forth allowing living water of the Holy Spirit to flow freely in your life and everlasting life. Jesus came that you may have life and have it more abundantly. (John 10:10). When Jesus offered the Samaritan woman living water she said, "Give me this water that I won't have to come and draw from this well ever again." She only understood natural things so Jesus explained what he meant so she would desire the living water that satisfies the soul. Everything that is offered in this world comes with a price tag but the soul never gets lasting satisfaction from earthly pleasures. No amount of wealth, pleasure, accumulation of goods, popularity or fame satisfies the inner man. Carnality desires more, bigger and better. Leroy and I notice it most when we go camping. People will say, "I started out with a tent, then I bought a pop up camper, than I traded for a camper and then I bought a big truck that hauls the home on wheels. The next one that I get will have". There is always something more to reach for. Material things never

bring the satisfaction that a person hopes for. The newness wears off and something has to be there to replace it. Only Jesus satisfies the soul.

The Bible tells us that God will supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. People don't take in account that the Lord doesn't need anything from us; he desires to build our faith so we trust him with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all our might. He doesn't need our money for he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Look at Psalms 50:9-15. "I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goats out of your flocks. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I was hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is mine and all the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you shall glorify me." He wants us to honor and glorify him with thankful hearts.

The Apostle Paul spoke to believers about the fact that he only asked them for a helping hand so that their account with God would be great. What you do for the least of God's children, you do it for him! (See Matthew 25:34-46). Christianity infiltrates every aspect of a believer's life. The Old Time Religion makes us love everybody, causes us to seek the old paths that led our forefathers close to God; causes us to reach out to the lost and be concerned about their destination, and puts a fire in our soul that burns and never goes out. The Scriptures burn in our hearts, pricks our consciences, causes us to give and give as the blessings of God return to us in multiples. The more we trust God, obey his voice, and learn not to question his leading, the more we obtain the abundance of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives that enriches not only us but those that God has ordained for us to serve. An amazing thing happens the closer we get to see Jesus' face. His reflection comes through our countenance and his desires become our desires. We forget that we want to be first, we want to be the greatest in the kingdom of God for soon we desire to promote others and to see them grow and become strong in their faith. The disciples argued among themselves who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. Jesus had his focus on the glory that was set before him following his suffering and death. He was the greatest, the Most High, the Almighty, the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, and all authority had been given to him in heaven and in earth. (See Matthew 28:19). Jesus took upon himself the form of a servant and in the fact looked forward to serving his disciples the last supper before he died. John 13:1-9 says this: "After he had served the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own and who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And, supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He rose from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel,

and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded."

Simon Peter asked Jesus, "Do you intend to wash my feet?" Jesus told him that he wouldn't understand what Jesus was doing now but he would understand later. Peter said "You will not wash my feet". Peter understood that Jesus was the Creator of heaven and earth, he is the Messiah, and this job of washing feet was the responsibility of a servant. Oh, no, he wouldn't allow Jesus to be humbled in that manner, not on his watch. Jesus said simply, "If I don't wash you, then you won't have any part of me."

Simon Peter said, "If that is the requirement, then wash my hands, my head and my feet." Jesus let the disciples know that they were clean but not all of them for Judas was there in their midst waiting to leave so he could betray his Master. Jesus washed his feet. When Jesus had finished, he spoke to his disciples about the call of God that was on their lives. He told them that as he had done to them and for them, they were to do for one another after he was taken away from them. He set an example for them to follow and all the things that he had taught them, they would be happy if they followed the example he set for them. Humility did not come easy for the disciples and it doesn't come easy for us. Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us. If we love him we will keep his words and his Father will love us and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will come to us and abide with us. In John 14:26 it says this, "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He went on to tell them that they would rejoice that he went back to his Father in due time because they would understand the significance of his sacrifice for their salvation by his death on the cross. He would send them the Holy Spirit to fill them with holy boldness, courage, with a purpose to fulfill the plan of God in their lives and would spread across the world and be passed down from one generation to the next. They wouldn't feel the need to be competitive with one another for those who desire to be great would become a servant. In Matthew 23:8, Jesus warned about those who desired to place themselves above others. We have one master and that is Christ Jesus and we are all brethren. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Studying the life of Paul will give you a picture of the amazing grace of God as well as the awesome responsibility he received from his calling by God to Apostleship. One of the first things that Ananias told him after praying for him to receive his sight was that he was going to suffer for the cause of Christ. God sent him to pray for Brother Saul for he was a chosen vessel unto Christ. He would bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel; for Jesus would show him how great things he must suffer for his name's sake." Saul had great credentials as far as his culture went. He was circumcised at 8 days old, as was according to the Jewish custom, he was from the nation

of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin. He was a true Hebrew and as a Pharisee, he strictly obeyed the Law of Moses. He was very zealous concerning the Law that he made trouble for the followers of Christ. He did everything the Law demanded in order to please God. But Christ revealed himself to Saul and showed him that what he thought was valuable was worthless. Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. Saul gave up everything else and counted it as waste that he might know Christ and to be a child of God. Obeying the Law of Moses wasn't the way to God. His faith in Jesus was his salvation. All he desired was to Know Christ and the power that raised him to life. He wanted to suffer and die as he did so that he would be raised to life eternal.

James and John desired to sit next to Jesus in his kingdom, one on his left hand and one on his right. They even got their mother to request it of the Lord. Jesus asked if they were able to drink of the cup that he was going to drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with. They said they were able but they didn't know what they were asking for. They only saw it as a coveted position of power and authority in the kingdom of God. They didn't see the price tag attached to it. Their mother didn't see the mockery, the cruelty inflicted by soldiers, the piercing of Jesus' side, the stripes on his back and the torture that was cause him to no longer be recognized. She didn't understand the price Christ would ultimately pay for the salvation of mankind. She only saw the glory of a position that she desired for her sons. She wanted them elevated and honored but she didn't understand the hardships attached to that place of honor. (Matthew 20:29). Jesus told the disciples that they would suffer for his name, but the positions that they both desired would be given to those that his Father had designated and made worthy of.

There is a cross for everyone who claims the name of Christ to bear. Suffering is part of the regimen of becoming Christ like. Christ learned obedience from the things that he suffered. (Hebrews 5:8). James, the brother of Jesus, wrote for the brethren to "count it all joy when one falls into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and will not correct you for asking, and it shall be given to him. Ask in faith without doubting, for the person who doubts is like an ocean wave tossed around in a storm. If you are that kind of person, you can't make up your mind, and you surely can't be trusted. So don't expect the Lord to give you anything at all."

I pray that each one of us will learn from Christ's teachings and his example that was set before us to follow in his footsteps and leave the result of our labor to his blessings. Pray for each other that we fulfill the calling that has been given to us to glorify God. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31). Christ has placed each of us in his body as he sees fit and we are called to be good and faithful servants. Nobody has anything to boast about; all glory belongs to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.