



Many years ago, when I was involved in ministry, there came to church a couple from Trinidad. I really did not know them when they came. However, in a short period of time they became very close friends and members of the church. Ultimately, they became assistant pastors along with me and we did a lot of ministry work together in the church. I remember we went to Israel together and marveled at the things the Lord had shown us as we were there.

Then we moved down to Florida to do the work of the ministry there. In 2012, I had left that ministry and they were still a part of it. A few years later, for church financial reasons, they needed to go back into the labor force. We lost touch for a while but low and behold, about a year ago we were able to get “reacquainted” and began to have relationship again.

In that time, the man, my good friend, had become ill and was no longer able to work. Myself, now retired, was able to go over to their house and spend some time together simply speaking about God and His Word. We would reminisce the past a little but it always got back to God and His Word.

Sadly, my good friend is not doing very well. I am able to spend time with him at his home where he is in a “hospice” situation. His wife takes care of him with such love and care. She and I sing worship songs and he would join in at times. The one thing that makes an impression on me the most is that he is so looking forward to soon being with his Lord and Savior. Yes, it is very difficult for his wife and I must admit it is difficult for me. However, I will always remember the joy that he has down deep within his heart and his spirit, despite what he is going through, knowing that he soon will be with His Father and with Jesus. I always will remember that.

It makes me think of the very fact that my friend has a hope and an assurance that it is never over. He knows that he is going to enter into eternity and be forever in the presence of our God. This is the same assurance that all those who truly believe in and have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior have – that one day we will be with our God forever and ever.

This is the Good News!!! The Good News being that the Son of God came to this earth over 2000 years ago and willingly went to the cross and took all of our punishment for all the sins that everyone in this world had ever done, sins that we still do and sins that we will continue to do. Yes, the Son of God, Jesus, came and died on that cross for every single person. Those who would truly be “saved” are those who believe that God, the Father sent Jesus to do this for all those who truly accept and believe on Him.

The unfortunate thing is that most of the world’s people do not truly believe that this really happened. Most of the world does not truly believe in the love that God had sent to the world in the form of a man. That “Man” was known as Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary and then died on the cross taking the sin of the world upon Him. Then, the great fact of the matter was and still is that Jesus rose from the grave and is now seated at the right hand of the Father waiting to one day return to this earth to rule and reign for 1000 years. After which, our God will then usher in the New Jerusalem.

Yes, many do not truly believe this. I am not simply speaking of just those people who believe in other faiths. I am not speaking only of the Jewish people. I am not simply speaking of those who believe in the many variants of the Islamic religion. I am not only speaking of anyone who is not a “Christian.”

Unfortunately, I am also referring to many people who even now call themselves “Christians.” There are many different aspects of the Christian faith and there are many people who call themselves “Christians.” However, the truth is that it really doesn’t matter what you call yourself. What really matters is what is in your heart and that you have true belief and faith in the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit.

The ways and lifestyle that Jesus taught were not really “new things.” They were and are still all found in the “Jewish scriptures” to what many refer to as the Old Testament. The only aspect that Jesus did not refer to when He walked this earth were the aspects of the sacrificial system found in the Old Testament. This was because Jesus became the “final sacrifice” when He took the cross and died for all of us by taking all the sins of the world – past, present and future – upon Him.

He literally became “sin” for our benefit and took the punishment for every single person that was and would come into being. He willingly took that sin upon Himself. He willingly became and actually was the **final sacrifice** that was to pay for the sins of all who lived and are now living in this world.

Salvation was made available to anyone who believed in the promise given to us by the Father. Salvation was made available to anyone that believed in Jesus while He walked on this earth. Salvation was available to all those who believed in Him after He left this earth. Salvation is still available to each of us who are now on this earth today. Salvation will continue to be available to anyone who will truly believe in Him until that day when Jesus returns at His second coming.

That is where the problem lies. Many of the “Christians” that were and are now on the earth are simply “Christians” by name only. Many who are called “Christians” do not truly follow after the Jesus that is in the Bible. Rather they are simply called “Christians” because of their heritage and not because of their faith in who Jesus really is. Actually, we were never to call ourselves “Christians” but rather we were to simply be God’s people known as the “children of God.” The early believers called themselves “the way” referring to the fact that it was Jesus who was “the way” to the Father.

I am not getting caught up in “names.” What I am simply saying is that we are who we are because of **whose** we are. We are what we are because of who we truly and fully believe in. You may call yourself something and you may think you are something but are you truly what that “something” is? When it comes to being a child of God, it literally means recognizing that I am no longer “of this world.” That may seem a little strange to us. However, that is what it truly means. That is why Jesus tells us that we must be “born again.”

In John 3 we get this teaching from Jesus Himself as He was speaking to Nicodemus. As we read this encounter, we sometimes see Nicodemus as asking silly questions. However, they are real questions. They are questions coming from a man who was seeking after truth and he was open and honest with His questions. After all, Jesus was saying what seemed to be “new things” to Nicodemus.

Actually though, they were not new things. They were all found in his scriptures, the Old Testament, but Nicodemus was blinded to them. In John 3:7, Jesus tells Nicodemus that, *“You must be born again.”* However, Nicodemus could not see or understand that. Jesus told Nicodemus this very thing as we read in John 10:10, *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and you know not these things?”* Jesus was now explaining it very carefully, meticulously and truthfully to him.

He tells Nicodemus and all of us today in John 3:16 and 17, *“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

This was the same message that God told the devil (and all of us today) back in Genesis after Adam had sinned and broken the relationship between God and man. We read in Genesis 3:15, *“And I will put enmity between thee (the devil) and the woman, and between thy seed (all the forces of darkness) and her seed (Jesus); **it (Jesus) shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his (Jesus) heel.**”* This was the prophetic word spoken by God, Himself, which immediately would bring forth the plan of salvation that would ultimately bring forth Jesus as the Savior of the world as John 3:16 and 17 tell us.

Yes, we must be “born again” which literally means “born from above.” If a person truly accepts and receives Jesus into their heart and into their life they “miraculously” become a new species of being which is very foreign to anything that is born upon this earth. If an individual truly accepts and believes in all that Jesus did and will do and truly accepts and receives Him into their heart and into their life, then and only then, that individual becomes truly a **new species of being**. They become a child of God.

Now, I know that may sound simple and it may sound as if you already know that. I guess what I want to make sure of for myself and for everyone else is that we truly **know** that we are a new “species of being.” That this earth and anywhere on this earth is no longer my home. It is not where I come from any longer.

Why? It is simply because I am a “new creature.” The old (who I was) is passed away and behold all things have become new (who I am now) - brand new. I am no longer a citizen of this earth. I am now a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Heaven has now become my “homeland.” I am simply “passing through” in this life. My final destination, my home, is now the Kingdom of God.

My hope should be and is, to share and bring as many with me to my “homeland” – the Kingdom of God – that I can. The only way that can happen is by those individuals becoming a “new species of being” themselves and being “born again. This only happens when an individual truly accepts and receives Jesus into their life. Unfortunately, they cannot just come with me. No, they must become and be a citizen of the Kingdom for themselves. Our job is to tell them about Jesus and the new life they can now have in Him.

We see this in operation by the last parables that Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 25. We see this in the “Parable of The Ten Virgins,” the “Parable of the Talents” and Jesus’ last parable known as the “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.” Jesus begins with the “Parable of the Ten Virgins” in which we see what will take place in the end times.

The “Bridegroom” (Jesus) will come. Yes, He will. All will think they are ready and waiting for His return and to enter into the marriage feast with Him. However, we see something very different. As we know, not all of the “virgins” went into the wedding feast. Only those that were truly ready and had the “oil” of the Holy Spirit within meaning that they truly had a born again spirit. Only five were ready to enter in with the Bridegroom.

The other five thought they were ready and thought that they were to be a part of the feast. They thought they were ready for the Bridegroom. However, they did not have the “oil.” They looked as if they did and even hung out with those who were truly ready. Yet they were not. They ran to get the “oil” but it was too late. Hmmm....

Unfortunately, for them, they were not ready. They had been with those who were ready. The truth will be revealed. There will be those who **will not** be ready. Neither will they be able to enter into the Wedding Feast with the Bridegroom. The problem was that they thought they were ready. Or they may have thought that they were ready according to their own “ideas.” Or they may have thought that if they hung out with those who were ready that they would be able to “sneak by” and get in. As we see by what Jesus said, it did not work for those virgins nor will it work for anyone else.

The truth will be revealed in the end. As we see in the Parable of the Talents. There will be those that will try to get in by trying to outwit and even lie to God but unfortunately for them the truth will always be revealed. As that parable tells us, we all will come, individually before our God. He will know our hearts, individually. And – it will be revealed for all to see.

In Jesus' last parable He reveals in no uncertain terms what will take place. There will be a separation between those who are truly His (the sheep) and those who are not (the goats). In Jesus' last parable He states it very clearly. There will be many who think or many will lie and cheat to try and get into the Kingdom. However, the truth will always prevail. God knows the heart of every individual. The real question we must ask ourselves is, do we know the heart of God and do we really know our own heart? Hmmm....

The heart of God is love. He loves all of His creation. He loves us so much that He allows each of us to choose our own ultimate destiny. He loves us so much that He allows us to make up our own minds – will we accept, receive and believe God and His Word or will we go our own way and be led by the enemy into total destruction.

Referring back to my friend, he truly knows who his God is. I believe he will be as “one of the virgins” who will be allowed to enter the Marriage Feast. I will be saddened by His “passing” but then I will rejoice. Why? It is because he has “passed” from this temporary dwelling place into his permanent residency in the Kingdom of God.

I know many that have “gone home” and I am looking forward to seeing and greeting each one of them. Most importantly I will be greeting my first wife, Evelyn, who went home to be with the Lord some 17 years ago. I look forward to seeing my father and mother and many of the saints that have gone on before me. I know and I am so blessed that my wife now, Trish, will be in Heaven with me along with all those who truly believe and know our God in this day. We all will be rejoicing and praising our God together as one. Oh what a day that will be!!!

As we enter into this season of the birth of Jesus, I pray that all who read this little article will take time to really see where they are within their heart. Do you truly have that relationship with the living God or are you living on someone else's relationship? Are you living on your religion's thoughts or your church's relationship with the living God or is it your own personal relationship with the Living God? The time is growing short. Whether we go home by passing from this life or if we see Him coming in the clouds, we need to always take stock and see where we are with Him. Are you truly, 100% totally His?

In this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, I pray that Heaven will celebrate the birthing of more people that will go to be, one day, with the Father. My prayer is that each of us will pass from this temporary place of dwelling and that we will see each other at our true home – God's dwelling place. Heaven and earth will pass away but God's Word **never** will. Yes, this is the Good News!!!