



PART ONE OUR SALVATION

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on
Christ like a garment. There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or
female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
-Galatians 3:26-28

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing “WHY?” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God’s purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, “What is the meaning of life?”

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways

- ...Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions.
 - ...Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure.
 - ...Some look for happiness by gaining prestige & power
- But real happiness comes from understanding my _____

I. Why Am I Here?

1. God made me to _____ me!

God says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love!” Jer. 31:3

“Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ...because of His love. God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children – this was God’s pleasure and purpose.” Eph. 1:4-5 (GN)

2. We were created to _____ a personal relationship with God and to manage all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special!

“So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said,...live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.” Gen. 1:27-28 (LB)

“God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” 1 Tim. 6:17

Jesus said, *“I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness!” John 10:10*

3. When we know and love God, and live in harmony with His purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our lives:

Clear Conscience Rom. 8:1	Life & Peace Rom. 8:6	Help with Weakness Rom. 8:26
Purpose Rom. 8:28	Confidence Rom. 8:31	Security Rom. 8:39
Power & Strength Phil. 4:13	Fulfillment Phil. 4:19	Freedom John 8:32,36

II. What’s the Problem?

Man has a natural desire to _____ and to ignore God’s principles for living.

“Look out for #1. Do your own thing.”

“If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it.”

“It’s my life and I’ll do what I please!”

The Bible calls this attitude: _____

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." Isaiah 53:6

*"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth."
1 John 1:8*

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God." Isaiah 59:2 (LB)

"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal." Romans 3:23

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives – marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.

"There are ways that SEEM right to man, but they only end in death." Proverbs 16:25

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- "My mother was a Christian so..."
- "It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere."
- "I'll give up all my bad habits."
- "I'll work real hard and earn it."
- "I'll be religious and go to church."

III. What's the Solution?

Jesus Christ said, "I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!" John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!

*"The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Rom. 6:23*

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

"God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8

"God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind." 1 Tim. 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits

for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. What Does God Want Me to Do?

1. _____ that God has not been first place in my life and ask Him to forgive my sins.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:9

2. _____ that Jesus died to pay for my sins and that he rose again from the dead, and is alive today.

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

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

3. _____ God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.

"For it is by grace you are saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. _____ Jesus Christ to come into my life and be the Lord of my life.

"To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! – not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!" John 1:12-13

"Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...'" Rev. 3:30

You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian."

"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

THE SYMBOLS OF SALVATION: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by _____

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ _____ it.

"Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matt. 28:19-20

3. It demonstrates that I really am a _____.

"...many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8

"We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands." 1 John 2:3

II. What is the meaning of baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's _____ and resurrection

"Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again." 1 Cor. 15:3-4

"For when you are baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ. Col. 2:12

2. It illustrates my _____ as a Christian.

"When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand-new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!" 2 Cor. 5:17

"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a new life!" Rom. 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

III. Why Be Baptized by Immersion?

Because _____ was baptized that way.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.” Matthew 3:16

Every baptism in the _____ was by immersion.

(Example) “...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...” Acts 8:38-39

The word “Baptize” means to _____ water”.

The Greek word *baptizo* means “to immerse or dip under water”.

It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection!

Historical church leaders agree:

Martin Luther...“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin...“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley...“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

IV. Who Should Be Baptized?

Every person who has _____ in Christ.

“Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized...” Acts 2:41

“Simon himself believed and was baptized...” Acts 8:13

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:12

At MFBC, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

At MFBC, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though they may have been “confirmed” as children.

V. When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as you have believed!

“Those who believed...were baptized...that day!” Acts 2:41

“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized receive appropriate counsel from a church leader.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a *personal* statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them and delays *your* obedience.

What should I wear when I am baptized?

This is explained very clearly verbally and in a letter to each person being baptized.

Will I have to say anything?

Yes. At the beginning of the service, the one baptizing will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. Once you enter the baptismal pool, you will be asked to reaffirm your decision to follow Christ. At a later time, you will receive a certificate of your baptism. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.

Special Needs?

These can be discussed with out pastoral staff.

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

I. What Is the Lord's Supper? (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

1. It is a _____.

"The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread..." (vs. 23)

2. It is a _____.

"...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of me.'" (vs. 24)

3. It is a _____.

"In the same way, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.'" (vs. 25)

4. It is a _____.

"For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes back." (vs. 26)

II. Who Should Take the Lord's Supper?

Only those who are already _____ . (Mark 14:22-26)

"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself." 2 Cor. 11:29

III. How Do I Prepare Myself for The Lord's Supper?

"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup." 1 Cor. 11:27-28

By...

1. Self-Examination
1 Cor. 11:27

2. Confessing My Sins
1 John 1:9

3. Recommitment
Rom. 12:1

4. Restoring Relationships
Matt. 5:23-24

IV. When and How Often Should We Observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night. Since it is a 'supper', it may seem more appropriate to observe it at an evening service but is certainly not limited to this time. Our constitution and by-laws state that it should be observed once every quarter.