

BREATHE➔

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What Just Happened to Me?

Welcome To Our Family!

What Does It Mean to Be a Christ Follower?

You have just made the most important decision of your life. Now that you have done so, I want to walk with you on your journey as you think about what it means to enter into a relationship with Jesus and all of His followers.

There was a man who had purchased a ticket on a ship to cross the ocean. He had little money left, and so he stocked up on cheese and crackers to eat on the voyage. He dreamed of the good things on the other side and just endured the trip. As the ship was docking, he told one of the ship's stewards that he had been eating cheese and crackers for two weeks. You can imagine his frustration when the steward said, "Didn't anyone tell you that all the buffets and huge meals were included in the price of your ticket."

Like you I am looking forward to eternity with Christ. But our Lord has an important feast for you to enjoy NOW. Don't miss out!

LET'S BEGIN WITH A REVIEW OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU...

First, you have been adopted into the family of ...GOD

The Bible tells us He is powerful. His power is available to you. Scripture says He can heal our diseases, control circumstances, and release us from problems that have controlled us for years. That is great news.

We are also told that God is personal. He loves "YOU." He wants you to think of Him as your heavenly Father. You don't have to do anything to make Him

love you more, He loves you just the way you are. You cannot do anything that will make him love you any less, for His love is unconditional. You are now His child and He will care for you.

Do you know how to talk to God? We call this prayer. Talk to God in the same way you share with someone you trust. Don't worry about the selection of your words, just talk to Him. He loves when we speak to Him. When we pray and read His Word and listen quietly as He guides our lives. He becomes our best friend.

Now let's look at the word...MAN

The Bible tells every one of us that we are sinners. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23 It would be nice if we could say, "You know, man isn't so bad, there is some good in him," but this is not true. You hear people say, "I keep the 10 Commandments as well as the next Guy." This person is hoping to impress God...it doesn't. Isaiah 64:6 says, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our good acts are like filthy rags."

Even when we keep every single command and obey all of His Word, God would not be impressed. God loves you no matter what you do. Romans 5:8 says that God loved us and demonstrated His love to us while we were still sinners. His love is unconditional!

In order to understand man's problem, we have to look at the meaning of...SIN

If you can picture in your mind a tree; a tree has a root system and then it has the part that we can see. Sin is like the root of the tree; and sins are the fruit that stem from the tree. Man's problem isn't related to the FRUIT of his life; his problem is at the ROOT of his life! He has a sin problem.

The Bible refers to the root of man's life as the "heart." Man, simply put, has a heart problem. SIN is an amazing word. The real problem is actually in the very word. Write the word SIN on a piece of paper. Now cross out the S and the N. What you have left is the root of the problem. When "I" am on the throne of my own life; when I am the master-- the king-- the owner-- the boss of my life, the rightful owner, the creator, the savior is left outside. That makes us unacceptable to God. He never intended for us to own ourselves. The Bible actually tells us that we have been bought with a price. We belong to God.

That rebellion against God's ownership of us brings...WRATH

Romans 2:5 says, "But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed." Some people want to avoid this point, saying that God is supposed to be a God of love, not wrath and judgment. If we look at what the verse is saying, we realize that WE are the ones storing up wrath for ourselves. God isn't doing it to us; we are doing it to ourselves. If a man commits murder, do we accuse the judge of being unreasonable when the sentence is declared, and the man is condemned? OF course not! The murderer was personally responsible for his destiny.

Here is an illustration that describes the problem man has...

This poor fellow began to swim across a lake. Of course, he was confident when he started that he could accomplish his goal. He needed no help. But now, something terrible has happened-- a cramp in his side has made it impossible for him to swim. He is not having problems breathing. He is in trouble.

Let's imagine for a moment that he makes a decision to "keep his problem to himself" and "find his own solution." How long is he going to last before he drowns? He realizes he has no choice, and cries out, "HELP!" Unless someone comes to save him, he is doomed. Fortunately, he is willing to admit he has a problem. Because of this, there is a possibility that someone who is nearby will rescue him.

WHAT KIND OF A PERSON WILL BE REQUIRED TO SAVE HIM?

First of all, it will have to be someone who is able to share his environment-- in this case, water. Second, this person will have to be strong enough to care for his own needs, PLUS meet the needs of the drowning man. Such a savior may not be easy to find. A SAVIOR COMES TO THE RESCUE and safely delivers you on the shore. The previously drowning man now shares his thanks with the one who rescued him. You understand that Jesus is the ONLY Savior who has the ability to rescue us? Acts 4:12 says, "Salvation is found in No One Else., for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Luke 19:10 says, "The Son of Man (Jesus) came to seek and to save what was lost." You are the one that was lost, that He sought to save. Thank

Him for doing so right now. Tell Him how much you love Him. How grateful you are.

You made the most important decision of your life, based on this truth:

"That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Rom. 10:9

But there is more to it:

Let's go back to the problem of the swimmer in the lake. For him to be saved, he had to be removed from the water, didn't he? ...What did we say the problem of man was? As we make spiritual application from this illustration, we realize that man was going to die because of his "I" controlled existence. Therefore, what did Jesus save you from when you prayed to Him?

The condition He saved you from was a self-owned, self-directed life.

Jesus will never, ever just become your "Savior." At the very moment He saves you from your self-owned life, He takes over the throne in your heart. It cost Him his life on the cross to come to you as your Savior. As you meet Him at the Cross, it will cost you YOUR life, for He will now also become your LORD! I Peter 2:24 says, "He (Jesus) himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wound you have been healed."

Why not take a moment right now to give Jesus the complete right to be not only Savior, but also the LORD and master of your life....

Pray: Jesus, all I know about myself, I give to all I know about you. I now place my trust in you alone. I accept your free gift of salvation and I want to be your child. I want to follow you and surrender my life to you, knowing that you will always do what is best for me as my loving Father. It is important that you settle this matter right now.

You will now begin the most exciting part of your entire life.

As you presented your life to Jesus, He immediately placed His presence within you. You will never be alone again. But there is another truth you must know: Others around you have also made this decision. Your decision has joined you together with many others. You now are a part of a very large family. Together with them, you become the body of Christ. You enter relationship with them to build each other up, to care for one another and to worship God. We are now a

part of the "Church." The Church is not a 'place' or a 'program', it is the Body of Christ and His family and you are now a part of that family. WELCOME!

I hope you find a healthy group of believers who will serve the needs of one another. I am here to walk together with you on your new adventure. Your life will never be the same again.

You have been grafted into a new 'root' system and your fruit will be different.

Remember the "Root" problem. Who is at the 'root' of your life? Who is at the 'center' of your life? Before you made the decision to place your faith and trust in Jesus, you were in 'control' and Galatians 6:19-21 says the fruit of that reality is this: 'When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissention, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties and other sins like these.'

At the point of your decision to place your trust in Jesus you were adopted into His family and grafted into a new 'Root' system. Jesus is the vine we are the branches. As long as we are connected to Jesus the source of life, we should bear a different kind of fruit: Galatians 6:22,23 says, 'But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'

Jesus breathed His life into you. He now wants you to share and breathe that same Life into the lives of those you love...your family and your circle of friends and colleagues. The Bible says we are to love God and to love our neighbor, the same way He loved you. Jesus wants you to tell your story to the people in your life. That does not need to be a fearful thing. After all you are actually offering them a free gift, Life itself.

Welcome into the Family!!!

Your new brother/sister and friend!

THE GOSPEL

“The GOSPEL is not complicated. Jesus said it is “childlike faith”.

Here it is:

G - God Loves YOU...just the way you are...unconditionally.

There is nothing you can do that will make Him love you more and there is nothing you can do (or have done) that will make Him love you any less. (John 3:16)

O - Our sins separate us from the Love of God

(Romans 3:23; 6:23)

S - Sin cannot be removed by good works/deeds.

(Ephesians 2:8,9; Isaiah 64:6)

P - Paying for our sin required a perfect sacrifice

JESUS paid the price (Romans 5:8)

E - Everyone who places their trust in what Jesus did will have eternal life

(John 14:6; Mark 16:15,16)

L - Life and relationship begins the moment you place your trust in Jesus and lasts forever. (John 5:24; John 10:10; John 3:16)