

Conversion Luke 13:1-5

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

About three fourths of the people in America claim to be Christians, but many who claim this don't _____ or _____ like Christians. Today, we're going to talk about conversion. Nothing in life is more important than a sincere _____ of the Word of God. God has spoken to us so that we can know His will and make the _____ to our attitudes and our behavior that pleases Him and blesses us. God gave His Word for our _____. It teaches us, guides us, protects us, rebukes us, and encourages us. The Bible is our only _____ for eternal life, and we must understand what it says.

Matthew 18:1-4 speaks of an encounter that Jesus had with his disciples. The Bible says: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who then is _____ in the kingdom of heaven?' And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are _____ and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then _____ himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" Conversion is not a childish act, because only the _____ can choose to set aside their fleshly desires and become like children.

The Lord knows our _____. He knows that we need to make conscious _____ in our thinking in order to be the kind of people who can enter heaven. We must turn from what is _____ to what is _____. We must have the humility and the faith of a child, who looks to the Lord rather than _____ on his own ability. Being converted turns our hearts from our fleshly _____ to what God expects. Repentance is deeply involved in conversion. We must have a change of heart that leads to a change of _____.

Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to Luke 13:1-5.

Occasionally I encounter people who are Christians in _____ only. They claim to be Christian, but you couldn't tell it from the _____ they think, or talk, or act. They say they're Christians, but they don't _____ the way a committed Christian behaves. They rarely pray, rarely go to church, rarely read their Bibles, and rarely talk about Christian beliefs. By listening to their language or watching their behavior, you might not be able to distinguish them from someone who _____ goes to church. Christians in name only are as likely to gamble, or drink alcohol, or watch sexually explicit movies, or use four-letter words as people who say they have no faith at all. In fact, many of these folks have _____ living for the Lord altogether.

If you ask them if they are Christians, they might be offended; but you couldn't tell it from the way they act or talk. For them Christianity is more inherited than _____, more assumed than embraced. They were told when they were young that their _____ was Christian.

They say they are, but one wonders if they were _____ converted to Jesus.

On other occasions, I've encountered folks who were once _____ church members but fell away from the truth of the _____ to follow popular religion, where worship is replaced by entertainment or the inspired gospel is replaced by man-centered doctrines or human traditions. One wonders how someone who was once strong in the faith could leave the _____ of the Scripture for a _____ or forget Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. One wonders how they could follow things that are _____ mentioned in Scripture but were innovations of men and then imagine that they're acceptable to God. Didn't Jesus say, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not _____ shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Matthew 15:13-14). How can they say they are converted to the Lord Jesus?

Conversion is a life-changing event, a transition from darkness into _____, from the fleshly to the _____, from the deceptions of men to the truth of God in Scripture. Like a child, we choose to trust what God says is true and right, trust how He wants us to live, and determine how we will do whatever He commands. This change of heart is enlightening; it opens our hearts to a _____ and _____ way than the sinful ways of the world. The Lord wanted Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in order "to open their _____ so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18).

To be converted means that you will change what you _____, change how you will live, and leave _____ to walk in righteousness. God doesn't save us merely to _____ our sins. He saves us to _____ our hearts so that we can pursue a holy and righteous life! **Read Titus 2:11-14.** Conversion means that I _____ die to myself, die to my desires, and die to my sin. I can't _____ to sin and still remain right with the Lord. Paul asked, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who _____ to sin still _____ in it?" (Romans 6:1-2). We just can't do that! Becoming a Christian means that I die to sinful ways. I don't _____ sin; I don't think sinful thoughts, or at least whenever I'm tempted I don't stay there; I don't give in to my sinful feelings; or say sinful words anymore. I'm no longer what I _____ to be. When we're baptized into Christ, "our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:6). Our attitudes and our behavior must change.

Paul concludes, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:12-13). Some people are baptized but _____ to repent, to stop their sins, and to serve the Lord in righteousness, they never get around to that. Again, Paul says, "So then, brethren, we're under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you're putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:12-13). Those who call themselves a Christian but live sinfully after the desires of the flesh will die spiritually and be _____.

Read the words of Colossians 3:5-11 that we need to follow. Oh, that, my friend, is conversion! It's a change of heart and life, turning from the _____ way of sin to a _____ and righteous way that follows in the steps of Jesus.

Even a _____ spoken in private matters is important. We may think we've spoken or acted in secret, but secrets don't always _____ secret. God always sees, hears, and knows. Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." The wicked person discounts God, ignores God, and assumes "God has forgotten; He's hidden His _____; He'll never see it" (Psalm 10:2-11). But God does see and hear. Words also matter, because they _____ our inner person. The Lord Jesus said, "The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matthew 12:34). Christians should speak words that edify and _____. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is _____ for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it'll give grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29).

This world is darkened, callous, ignorant, sensual, impure, and greedy. **Read Paul's explanation in Ephesians 4:17-24.** Oh, what a terrible situation. God certainly wants something _____ for us! What Jesus teaches is better than what the _____ offers. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). Jesus expects his converts to _____ His Word and believe God sent Him to be Savior, if they want eternal life.

Don't say, "I believe in Jesus," if you're not _____ to believe what He says. Jesus once asked, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). To call Jesus "Lord" and yet never be willing to do His will is _____. God distinguishes between a man who claims to believe and a man who actually _____ out what he believes. First John 2:4-6 explains: "The one who says, 'I've come to know Him,' (that is, I'm a Christian) and doesn't keep His commandments, that person is a _____, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the _____ of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we're in him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." We _____ our faith and our love for Jesus by keeping His commandments and abiding in His Word. Claiming to love Jesus while ignoring his Word is merely a delusion. Oh, my friend be real; be genuine.

We must recognize and treat Jesus as our _____ as well as our Savior. Only then do we have the kind of faith to be saved. Be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves. James said that in humility we're to "receive the word that's implanted, which is able to _____ your souls" (James 1:21). The faith that _____ the Lord is first humble,

realizing that God is God, who knows all, sees all, and is wiser than we are. Let's love and trust Him enough to _____ and to do all that He commands. Considering what Jesus did for us, that's the _____ that we can do.

Faith leads a person to _____ the Lord in every respect. If I believe in the Lord, I will love and trust Him. That means I want to be saved and live with Him _____. If I believe in Jesus, I'll _____ that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God and my Lord. If I call Him Lord, I'll change my _____ and I'll change my _____. I'll repent of every sin. I'll stop my rebellion and I'll honor Him by being obedient.

If I believe in Jesus, I'll be _____ in water for the forgiveness of my sins (Acts 2:38). I'll be _____ of water and the Spirit in baptism to enter into His kingdom (John 3:5). I will be baptized to have my sins _____ away (Acts 22:16). I want to be _____ with Him in baptism so that I can rise to _____ in newness of life (Romans 6:3-7). With humility I'll do what the Lord says without trying to _____ that I can be saved a different way. I'll trust Him to the point that whatever He says, I'll do.

When we're converted to Christ, we'll think like Jesus thinks, love like Jesus loves, act like Jesus acts, and obey like Jesus obeyed. We'll _____ pleasing the world and _____ pleasing God. Jesus said, "for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). When we're converted, we'll _____ what people teach with what the Bible says. There are a multitude of religious _____ in our world. Conversion to Christ means I'll stop listening to the human doctrines and start _____ everything by the Word. First Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; and abstain from every form of evil." We must _____ religious teaching and it's practices to see if those things come from God or from man.

The Bible says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but _____ the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Don't believe everything that you _____ some preachers say. Be like the noble Bereans. "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures _____ to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

When we become servants of Christ, we cannot _____ every idea that comes along. We must _____ what we hear with a Scripture! If it doesn't agree with Scripture, don't follow it. True disciples _____ in the words of Christ (John 8:31). We want everyone to be a _____ disciple. So believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and out of love repent of your sins, confess Jesus, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Conversion doesn't end with a change of heart; it also changes the relationship with God. When you're baptized you become a child of God! The Lord adds you to His church! God unites you with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection so that you can walk in newness of life. Oh, my friend won't you be converted today?