

Program Transcripts

November 2023



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY®

SEARCH PROGRAMS

November 2023

Topics subject to change without notice

NOVEMBER 5 – YOUR OPINION

When people don't know how to answer an argument that comes straight from Scripture, they often say, "Well, that's just your opinion!" They do not realize the Scriptures speak plainly about many important topics.

NOVEMBER 12 – JUDGING

One of the best-known passages of Scripture is "Judge not, that you be not judged." Knowing when this passage applies and what other passages of Scripture teach about judging helps us to see the bigger picture on judging.

NOVEMBER 19 – COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

When the Lord is with us, we have more blessings than we imagine. It is helpful now and then to sit down and count our blessings and realize how great is our God to us each day. Blessings are new every morning.

NOVEMBER 26 – CONVERSION

How does God reach into our hearts to bring about a change of heart and soul? What does God do to cause us to believe, repent, and obey the Lord and His gospel message? The Scriptures help us to understand.

That's Your Opinion

Occasionally people who disagree religiously with others try to end the discussion by saying well, "That's just your opinion!" In this lesson we're looking to Jesus to teach us what is fact and what is opinion.

The Lord Jesus said in John 18:37 to 38, "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. (And) Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" People are still asking the question, "What is truth?"; but Christians realize the Lord Jesus came to earth to testify to the truth. And "Everyone who is of the truth hears his voice"; Jesus is the truth, and we must listen to Him. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

There's a big difference between facts and opinions, between the truth and what people imagine to be the truth. And just because someone believes something doesn't make it true. Many religious beliefs are only opinions or human customs, while the truth is rooted in the revealed word of God. A fact is undeniable, because it has evidence to show it is true; but an opinion is merely what someone thinks is true. Calling a fact an opinion doesn't make it an opinion, and calling an opinion a fact doesn't make it a fact.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:31 to 32 that, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." He promised the apostles in John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth." Christians turn to Jesus for the truth. And we can trust Him. His word is proof of what He wants His people to know, and His words bring freedom and eternal life.

Our reading today comes from Acts 28 verses 3 to 6. Paul and others had just gone through a ship wreck. And landed on the island of Malta. They were wet and so they were building a fire. And this is what happened.

"But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, 'Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.' However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm. But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god."

Well, Paul was neither a murderer nor a god. But God was with him. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your love and for Your mercy and for Your grace. And Father we're thankful for these stories of old that help us to see how easy it is to jump to conclusions which are not true. Help us always to read Your will, to love it and to serve You. In Jesus name, Amen.

As we mentioned, some folks think simply saying well, "That's your opinion" or "That's your interpretation," is enough to end a conversation about the meaning or importance of a passage of Scripture. They believe if they suggest truth is not settled in heaven but subject to whatever someone thinks. They can believe that any view of Scripture is as good as any other. That they can just kind of end the conversation. Now this is a popular view in our postmodern culture, but it really doesn't change God's revealed will. Some things are so plain that they're not subject to popular opinions. God is still the authority, not our subjective opinions.

For instance, Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death." Well, what does that mean? Well death is a word that reflects separation. Physically, death is the separation of the body from the spirit (James 2 and verse 26). Spiritually, sin causes a separation of our souls from the grace of God. Isaiah 59 and verse 2 says, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." Ephesians 2:1 and 2 explains, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." Now sin doesn't make one sick, inappropriate, or mistaken. Sin separates us from God and His grace.

Sin not only causes us to be separated from God, it also enslaves us. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:34, "Truly, truly, I say to you, (that) everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." Thankfully, the Lord also gives us an answer to the enslavement of sin. The Lord said in verse 36, "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Well how does this take place?

Well, the Lord Jesus said in John 3:17 to 18, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now we can be saved from sin by faith. And of course, we're saved by the grace of God that was shown by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is God's plan and God's way; it's not an opinion. We don't believe in the name of the Son of God, if we don't believe rather in the name of the Son of God we really have no hope of salvation. Faith is necessary! And that's not opinion. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

The Scriptures are also clear about repentance: repentance is necessary! Paul told the people at Mars Hill in Acts 17:30 to 31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." Those who refuse to repent of sin will face judgment, this declaration is clear and applies to all people everywhere. That's not opinion; that's God's word!

Now whether we're willing to accept and confess Jesus publicly is also important. Some people are afraid to say they are Christians. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10:32 to 33, "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." Customarily, those who become Christians confess their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The Lord Jesus clearly says confessing Him before others is essential to a right relationship.

Now beyond faith, repentance, and confessing Christ, the Lord Jesus clearly taught everyone who wishes to be right with God needs to be baptized into Christ. In John 3:5 to 7 Jesus told (Nicodemus), "Truly, truly, I say to you, (that) unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" Now Jesus said we must be born again, and that includes being born of water and the Spirit. It's not optional if we wish to enter the kingdom of God. From the earliest times, people understood this was a reference to being baptized, which includes both water and Spirit. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:16 that, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Ananias told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Baptism is without a doubt necessary to salvation and to enter God's kingdom.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 that, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Now obeying the Lord means listening carefully to what He says and doing what He says rather than offering alternatives or editing His instructions. John 3:36 in the New American Standard Bible says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Again, the Lord Jesus said in John 8:51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48 that, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."

Now careful obedience to the Lord is not legalism; it's how we show our love for Jesus. The Lord Jesus said plainly in John 14:15 that, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Now the Scriptures explain more in Mark 3 verses 31 to 5 when it says: Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother." Now all relationships with Jesus depend upon listening closely to the ones that we love. Whether it's to our family or to Jesus. But in the case of the Lord Jesus, we must listen carefully and be obedient to show our love for Him.

The Lord Jesus must come first in our lives. Scripture emphasizes how important the Son of God truly is. Matthew 17:1 to 6 tells of an experience where God makes it clear: Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified." We must understand that the Lord Jesus is truly Lord of all. We must learn to give Him the respect that He deserves.

Jesus understood that those who follow Him will suffer persecution. The apostles certainly suffered for their faith, and many faithful Christians today are still suffering for what they believe. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Holding fast to our faith even in the face of persecution and death is vital. There is nothing more important than holding fast to the Lord Jesus.

The Lord explains what will happen one day when He returns to raise the dead in John 5:26 to 29, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." Now every person will one day be raised from the dead and face the judgment. Those who did good and obeyed the Lord will receive life with God, but those who committed evil will face an eternal judgment away from the presence of the Lord.

People who follow Christ for a time but turn away from Him need to understand that they are putting their souls in danger. Many people today are just in that very situation. They once followed Jesus but they have turned to a life of sin without Jesus. Hebrews 3:12 to 14 says, "Take care, brethren, (now he's talking about people who have been members of the church. People who have been Christians) Take

care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." Only those who remain faithful to the Lord will be able to have a home in heaven. Those who fall away and follow sin and unbelief will lose their promise from God.

There is certainly an end to the patience of God. God no longer blesses those who turn away from Him and continue sinning willfully. Hebrews 10:26 to 27 says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." Now that's God's warning, and we must take God seriously. God loves us and wants something better for us than to be lost. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

The Lord Jesus promised His disciples in John 14:1 to 3 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." If you'll love and follow Him, He'll prepare a place in heaven for you too. Please don't let anything keep you from accepting and embracing the salvation, which Jesus provided for you on the cross with great love. And so love Him and serve Him!

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so grateful that Your Son Jesus was willing to pay the price for our sins. To die on the cross so that we might have the hope of everlasting life. Father help us to love You to follow Your Son Jesus. To do His will so that we might live with You forever. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Hebrews 2:1 to 3 says, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" The suggestion that any opinion is as good as any other of the acts and words as if God hasn't really made Himself clear. Is nonsense. The Hebrew writer noted the tendency of people to drift away from the word spoken to be disobedience. And when people offer the excuse, "that's just your opinion," what they're doing is drifting away from the plain clear word into disobedience. They're showing they really don't believe what God has said.

Now if Jesus is Lord—and He is, we need to obey Him by listening carefully to His words rather than drifting away from them. We must abide in the words of Jesus if we wish to know the truth and to be set free. We've been given through Jesus a great salvation. And ignoring what the Lord says means that we're neglecting this salvation. And if we neglect our salvation, we have no hope of living with God in heaven.

To become a Christian, put your trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as your Lord! Repent of your sins and turn your heart toward Jesus to live according to His will. Confess the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and be baptized into Christ. Now being baptized is that new birth of water and the Spirit. When we're baptized God forgives our sins (Acts 2:38) unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3 to 7). And so don't neglect salvation and doing the will of God.

Judging

One of the most well-known Scriptures is “Judge not, that you be not judged.” Is it ever right to judge? What does Jesus mean, “Judge not”?

Life is filled with making decisions and judgments. People frequently make judgments about right and wrong. And even those who don't believe there is such a thing as sin criticize and condemn others for saying that we're accountable to God for our sins. Those who think it's alright to lie are offended when someone lies to them. Sin gets personal when you're the one sinned against. It's a law of life: that those who sin are guilty of sin. And people who say you should never judge anything will nonetheless judge when someone has wronged them.

Galatians 6 verses 7 to 8 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Many imagine that they can sin with no consequences, but there are always consequences to sin. The Lord will one day judge us all. The wages of sin is still death (Romans 6:23), and that's why we need the forgiveness that comes from God.

Our reading today comes from the gospel of Matthew chapter 7 verses 1 to 5. And of course this is the last part of the last chapter of the sermon on the mount.

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us Your will so that we may know what pleases You. Father help us to obey You instead of trying to be judges of others. But Father we pray that You will help us to judge rightly. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

It's important to understand the background of Matthew 7:1 to 5. Pharisees highly influenced the religious life of ancient Israel. And the Lord Jesus said the hypocritical Pharisees would “tie up heavy burdens and lay them on other men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them even with so much as a finger.” They developed an oral law out of their human traditions and then condemned others when they broke their made-up laws. Some Pharisees and scribes said to the Lord Jesus well, “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” This is from Matthew chapter 15. You see they were condemning the disciples for breaking their tradition. Judging them. Well, this is the kind of judging that Jesus was condemning.

Many people make judgments when they don't know all the facts and when they fail to give the one they judge an opportunity to explain. Nicodemus said in John 7:51, “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

Well, Paul then told the Jewish Christians in Romans chapter 2 verses 1 to 3, “Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, (he says) you (actually) condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same (things) yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?”

Other Christians were criticizing and condemning the apostle Paul. And Paul responded to this criticism in 1 Corinthians 4 verses 3 to 5. He says, "But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

Further we see in James 4 verse 11 to 12 says, "Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?" Well, pretty straight forward.

Having said these things about unfair judging, there are times when Christians must make judgments, but not the kind of judgments the Pharisees were making by turning their traditions into laws and then condemning anyone who didn't keep their human traditions. The problem with total non-judgmentalism, that we hear about today, is that no one can consistently practice it. The decision to be non-judgmental is itself a judgment. Condemning all judging is itself a moral judgment. If someone says that we must never judge, let him simply become the victim. People tend to downplay the sins that they themselves commit but they change their thinking when they've been the victim and sinned against. "My" harmless talk about you is no big deal, they think, but "your" cruel gossip about me is unforgiveable. Well, drugs are a victimless crime, so say, until "my" loved one overdoses from a drug. Let someone hurt you or your loved one, and you know what, your attitude begins to change. The offender and the victim don't see things the same way. Reality begins to wakes us up. And those who have adopted "moral correctness", kind of like political correctness, haven't considered the consequences of this ideology.

It might surprise you that not all judging is wrong. No it's not. The Lord Jesus also said in John 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." Now righteous judgment means listening to what God calls wrong. If the Lord calls a behavior or an attitude wrong, then we should respect God's judgment. Isaiah 5:20 to 21 says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!" We may think culture can turn right into wrong and wrong into right, but we're only deceiving ourselves. God cannot tolerate what He calls sin. As a just God, He's going to condemn it. Habakkuk 1:13 says that, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor."

Being non-judgmental about everything does not make us morally better; it makes us morally weak. We may think we're more tolerant by never judging," but this tolerance robs us of the authority to correct anything immoral. When a society refuses to correct its wrongs, evil will flourish. When Jesus said in Luke 13:3 that, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish," He was telling us that we must leave sin and turn to righteousness. And that there is such a thing as sin and righteousness. Sin will ruin us. Sin will condemn us. And it is right to point out something is wrong and sinful. You see repentance is a guard rail that keeps us from perishing. Repentance is a necessity; and we must judge what is right and wrong and then turn from what is wrong to what is right.

People who don't know God or the Scriptures will often teach false doctrines. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that they must beware of what people teach. He said in Matthew 7 the same chapter we studied earlier, verses 15 to 16, "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. And you will know them by their fruits." Christians have an obligation to

study the word of God and to reject false teachers. What we believe matters, and false doctrine can cause a person to be lost in sin.

Many Christians have decided to keep their mouths shut about religious error. Some think all religions can lead to heaven. And they're willing to say oh, 'Yes, I believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe in an immersion of baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I believe we are saved by grace through faith.' And these preachers, what they're saying in these messages are true. The problem is they're unwilling to speak out against what is false. The things that are wrong. Oh they're willing to be positive, but they're not willing to say anything that's negative. An unwillingness to condemn error leads people to be vulnerable to false teachers.

The world around us will gladly tolerate a Christianity that doesn't teach anything distinctive. It'll gladly allow for a gospel emptied of doctrine and meaning; but true Christians can't teach a gospel like that. There's still only one gospel, one Lord, one baptism, one body, and one faith. And a gospel devoid of emphasis on sin, and judgment, and salvation, a gospel like that can't save anybody. Such a gospel is welcomed by many. And sadly, many Christians have adopted the ways of the world and they have forgotten what is written in the Scriptures.

I tell ya God takes us seriously and God judges sin. He judges all sin. And He'll not tolerate those who continue in sin. 2 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 to 9 says, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and (He also knows how) to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." God will condemn the unrighteous.

So how do Christians approach those who have been sinning? Well true Christians grieve over sin. And they grieve over its consequences. They realize that sin hurts everyone it touches. Galatians 6 and verse 1 says, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted." Even Christians can be weak to sin. When someone is caught in sin, spiritual people aren't malicious judgements when they gently and humbly seek to restore him. These caring Christians realize, "there but by the grace of God, go I." They care enough for the soul of their brother in Christ, that they gently act to restore him to faithfulness to Christ. True Christians have empathy and understanding for the weaknesses of others. They realize their own weaknesses. And they don't want anyone to be lost.

James 5:19 to 20 says, "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." God uses Christians to reach out to the lost with the gospel and His love. Christians point out sin is sin, not to be malicious or self-righteous, but to help souls caught up in sin and error to see the truth. Like the apostle Paul, true Christians never forget what God has done for them. He said in 1 Corinthians 15:9 to 10, "For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain."

Oh the Lord Jesus died for all people and He wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth. And true Christians realize their weaknesses and sins are real and they regret the wrongs they've committed.

They also know that God's mercy and grace is available. And they understand the price that Jesus paid for their forgiveness. They wish others could enjoy the love and grace that they experience. And they want to share the love that God has shown them and give people hope. They love others in the hope they can persuade them to leave the darkness of sin and follow the Lord Jesus to the light. Sadly, some Christians have a self-righteous attitude and are unkind. Oh this is wrong.

Many critics of Christianity look at past atrocities in church history that are led by power-hungry and proud men who had contempt for others. And they fail to separate true Christianity from the ungodly acts of self-described Christians. True Christians never delight in the sins of others. They don't evangelize with a sword. They deeply long for all people to be saved and know the truth.

2 Timothy 2:24 to 26 says that, "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." This passage doesn't excuse sin, but it does teach Christians to approach those who are in error to approach them in a kind, humble, patient, and gentle way. And may God help us to do so.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we're so thankful for Your love and we're thankful that You have been gentle and gracious to us. Help us to be gracious people towards others who are in sin. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says that, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Now the One who saves people from sin will one day be the Person who judges all people for their deeds, good or bad. Jesus went to great lengths to save us from sin. Jesus "Himself bore our sins in His body so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2 and verse 24).

Now when the Lord Jesus offers such a loving and gracious salvation, how can anybody reject such love? People either choose to serve the Lord in righteousness or serve sin, which results in spiritual death. The day will come when people must give an account for the choices they've made. What choices are you making? The Lord Jesus knows you and knows how you're thinking, speaking, and behaving.

And if you have unresolved sin in your life, isn't it time that you came to the Lord for forgiveness? The Lord Jesus will welcome you when you put your trust in Him, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. And when you're baptized, the Lord will forgive your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). And then, you'll belong to the Lord Jesus, you'll be a born-again child of God, and be an heir with Christ, so stay faithful to the Lord to the end. Don't let anything or anyone rob you of your inheritance in Christ. You won't want to lose the imperishable place that God has prepared for you.

Count Your Blessings

One of the best things you can do today and this week is to count your blessings. God is so good to us, and counting our blessings will give us hope.

We all have good days and bad days. And the older we get, the more our health challenges us. You might think of your health, your personal circumstances, or the chaotic and confused society that we live in and think, "what is there to be thankful for?" James 1:17 answers that: "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." Every bite of food, every drop of water, and every breath of air comes from the Lord Jesus. We live and breathe because of the goodness of God. God has given us much good.

And regardless of all the evil and suffering in the world, we can rejoice in God and in all that He has done for us. If you focus only on the foul and the evil, then your heart will be miserable. If you focus on what God has done and is doing, you'll give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:16 to 18 says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." See the beauty of God in this world. He still leaves His glory in the stars, the rainbow, the flowers, and the sunset.

Our reading today is a psalm of David, Psalm 103 verses 1 through 5. And here he blesses the Lord.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
 And all that is within me, bless His holy name.
 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
 And forget none of His benefits;
 Who pardons all your iniquities,
 Who heals all your diseases;
 Who redeems your life from the pit,
 Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
 Who satisfies your years with good things,
 So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

What a wonderful, wonderful God we have. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for all the good things that you do to us. Help us to never forget the kindnesses that You've shown the love that You have and the grace that's given to us. And help us to do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Psalm 34 verses 1 through 3 says, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its' boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice. O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together." Philippians 4 and verse 4 reminds us, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" and we will rejoice when we look to the Lord and count our blessings.

Now each person chooses where we focus our hearts. We can let all the ugly things in this world overwhelm us to the point we become blind to what is good and beautiful. We focus on misery, and we'll become miserable. And when we focus on the good, we have hope and we find peace. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8 to 9, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things that you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

I tell ya the true is better than the false, the honorable is better than the dishonorable, right is always better than wrong, the pure is better than the defiled, the lovely excels above the unlovely, good repute

is better than a bad report, moral excellence or virtue is better than compromise or corruption, and the things praiseworthy are better than the things blameworthy. Dwell on what builds you up with what is good, not on what tears you down with disappointment and discouragement. This sinful world has always been filled with darkness, but the Lord “gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Galatians 1 and verse 4).

Now our God and Father promises something better than what this world offers. We have hope of a place in heaven, where the miseries of this life won't bother us. Paul said in Romans 8 and verse 18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” All that is in this world is temporary, but what God has in store for His people is eternal. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 4:16 to 18, “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

This life is not all there is, and for this reason we have hope. If we set our hearts on the blessings of God, we're much better able to cope with the disappointments of this life. Colossians 3:1 to 4 advises us, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” If we set our minds on Christ, we won't get so caught up in the present evil world. We have a hope in heaven of an eternal life of joy and peace.

Have you become a Christian according to the teaching of the Scriptures? Do you believe Jesus Christ is really the Son of God and your Lord? Have you put away your sinful ways and decided to take up a cross and live for the Lord? Have you confessed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and made Him your Lord? Have you been baptized (that is immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ) for the forgiveness of your sins? If you have obeyed the gospel, you're now in Christ. There is a big difference between those who stand in the grace of God and those who don't. Ephesians 2:12 to 13 says before one becomes a Christian, one is “at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Being saved by Christ matters greatly. Being brought near to God by the blood of Christ changes your life and your destiny. Ephesians 2:19 describes the person who has come to Christ: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household.” God no longer sees you as a stranger but as one of His own citizens with the saints. God sees you as family; you're God's son or God's daughter!

Now as God's faithful child, the blood of Jesus washes away your sins, God hears your prayers, and promises you an eternal home in heaven. Ephesians 1 and verse 3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Yes, we have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Lord Jesus promised in John 10 and verse 10, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” Yes the Lord gives us life, newness of life, an abundant life, and eternal life. We have no one who can do so much for us as our Lord Jesus can.

When we're baptized, that is born again of water and the Spirit, we have newness of life. Romans 6:3 to 4 says, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been

baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." When God our Father unites us with Christ, everything changes and becomes new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." I tell ya there is a big difference between what one was before Christ and what one becomes when one is in Christ. One dies to the old life of sin and is born to a new life of righteousness.

Now a new Christian can say, "I'm thankful I'm not what I used to be! And I don't want to be that person anymore." You see this change from the old life to the new life will give you peace and hope you long for. Romans 6:20 to 22 says, "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification of he's being made holy, and the outcome, eternal life." Being enslaved to sin will never, never, never bless your life like living close to God.

Titus 1 and verse 15 says, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." You see sin weighs down your conscience with regret. Some people hate themselves for what they've done. Guilt and shame always follows sin. Some may want to ignore it, but it lies hidden inside our souls. We know it and you know what, God always knows. The only answer to that shame inside is the forgiveness of God. That's what allows us to find peace with ourselves. You can deny your guilt, but it won't go away. You can blame everyone else, but you're responsible for your sins.

You don't have to live in guilt and shame. You can have a good conscience, which is a foretaste of heaven. You can change and come to God. Romans 6:6 to 7 says, "knowing this, that 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; for he who has died is freed from sin." Free from sin, free from guilt, free from the shame that arises from a sinful life. This takes place, of course, when we're baptized into Christ and into His death. 1 Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of the dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Our greatest blessing as members of the body of Christ comes from knowing that we are right with God and stand in His love and grace. Walking with God brings us promise and hope. 1 John 1:6 to 9 says, "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Walking in the light with our Lord means we can be cleansed from all sin, and being honest enough to confess our sins is always the right thing to do. If we confess, God is trustworthy and He is just, or righteous, to forgive us.

God's blessings are enormous, not only in this life but also in the life to come. Ephesians 2:4 to 7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God has promised to show in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness.

I don't know what all that means, but we'll find out in the ages to come how great our God's love and grace truly is. If He is gracious and kind in this life, He will surpass it in the ages to come. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

Christians have “an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1 verse 4). And that inheritance is a prepared place. The Lord Jesus told the apostles in John 14:2 to 3 “In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

Will Jesus prepare a place for you? Your soul and your eternal destiny matter. Can you count being with God forever as one of your blessings? Do you belong to Christ? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus? Why not come to the Lord, be forgiven, and become a child of God with an inheritance in heaven?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for all the blessings that You give us. Those that are outside of us, that are physical, and those that internal and spiritual. And Father we're thankful You have prepared for us. Help us to be prepared for You and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they didn't honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:20 to 21). The God who made this world, the sun, the moon, and the stars also made you with a free will. You can choose to acknowledge God and be thankful or refuse to acknowledge God and end up alone without His blessing. Think carefully about your choices. Care about God because He cares about you.

Recognizing God's love and being thankful is a way of life that leads us to love and serve Him. Being thankful for our blessings, for the cross of Christ, for our forgiveness, for answers to prayer, and for the hope of heaven is merely seeing how very much God loves us. Being thankful and serving Him is how we love Him. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Do you love God?

Why not turn your life to God today in faith and love. If you need to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, don't put it off. That's always been God's way to salvation; it's what Peter who spoke by the utterance of God said in the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost. Now if you've drifted away from God, come back to Him. God hasn't moved, and He still loves and He still wants you to be close to Him. Don't miss out on God's blessings. And don't let anything separate you from God.

Conversion

How does God bring about a change of heart and soul? How are we converted? Today we're looking at how God converts our souls.

For many conversions are a better-felt-than-told experience. They assume in conversion the Holy Spirit miraculously changes the heart from a sinner to a saint; but this concept is foreign to the Scriptures. They believe God arbitrarily chooses who will be saved and who will be lost and miraculously changes the hearts of those that He wants to be saved. This idea first arose in the early 1500s. It's not found in Scripture.

Instead, the Scriptures teach that every person is a free moral agent. And God offers salvation to whosoever will. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only (begotten) Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Later in that same chapter, verse 36 says that, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." You see God offers salvation to all who will believe and obey. And conversion takes place when out of love and faith one changes one's heart and he changes his life to leave worldliness and sin and then follow the teaching of Jesus Christ. You have a choice whether to follow the ways of this world or to follow the gospel of truth found in the words of the New Testament.

Our reading today comes from the inspired apostle Peter who writes about how a person is converted, how they're born again, and by what process in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 22 to 25.

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For,
 'ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,
 AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.
 THE GRASS WITHERS,
 AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,
 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.'
 And this is the word which was preached to you."

That's a reading from God's holy word about how people are purified in their soul by their obedience to the preaching of the word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that Your word is always so clear. And helps us to understand how You work in our lives. And Father we are thankful for Your word for the message of the gospel. Help us to be obedient to Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

We're born again not from some miraculous experience but from learning and obeying the truth. That truth is the imperishable seed, the word of God. Luke 8 and verse 11 reminds us that the seed of the kingdom which is planted in hearts is the word of God, not some emotional experience. In the conversion of people to Christ, faith come by listening to the word. Paul said in Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of (God or the word of) Christ."

2 Timothy 3:16 to 17 says that, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." We must understand Scripture is inspired and carries with it the wisdom of God himself; the Scriptures are all-sufficient. They teach us all we need to know, all we need to stop, all we need to correct, and all the training that we need to do every good work.

We also have God's providence to help us to change as we ought to change. The blessings of God, the events of our lives, the true Christians that we meet all give us the opportunity to hear God's gospel

of hope and salvation. The example of Onesimus comes to mind. Though he was a slave of Philemon, Onesimus left home and made his way to Rome. While there he met Paul, from whom he learned the gospel and became a Christian. Well in time Paul rightly sent him back to Philemon with a letter encouraging Philemon to receive him as a brother.

In the letter Paul says that “perhaps” the providence of God played a part in his conversion. “For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (Philemon 15 to 16). While we do not wish to attribute more to God than Paul does, neither do we wish to rule out that God’s providence works in the world today.

Wives, for instance, who cannot teach their unconverted husbands by a spoken message may nevertheless win their husbands to Christ by their living godly lives. 1 Peter 3:1 to 2 says, “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.” While the written word is the seed of the kingdom, people who live out the word of God can and do influence others.

If we wish to convert others, we must recognize our responsibility to preach the gospel to them. Paul said in Romans 1:14 to 17, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it (that is the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”

Paul then said in 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” Later in verse 21 of 1 Corinthians 1, he says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:1 to 2, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”

Again James 1 verse 18 says, “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.” Now he explains more in verse 21 when he says, James says, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, (that is to repent he says) in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

In the parable of the sower, the seed of the kingdom, according to Matthew and according to Luke, is the word of God (Luke 8 verse 11). Now scattering the seed is actually preaching the Word. Owen Olbricht said, “Without the Spirit there would be no Word; without the Word there could be no life or birth; and without life and birth no one could become a member of the kingdom.” There’s no indication a direct operation of the Holy Spirit brought about conversion; rather than the seed of the Word which brought about our life.

In the conversion stories of the book of Acts, one thing stands out clearly: those who were saved first heard the preaching of the gospel. Though Peter and the apostles even though they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, it was their preaching about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that pricked people’s hearts and led them to conversion. Acts 2:37 says, “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and (they) said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’” You see preaching the gospel touches hearts! This is why we

have the great commission! Acts 2 and verse 41 says, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." Receiving the word, not having an experience, is what led them to be baptized and to be added to the believers in the church.

Likewise, Acts 8 and verse 12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." In Acts 8 and verse 35 to 36 Philip taught the Ethiopian Eunuch. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" The Ethiopian eunuch acted after hearing Philip preach Christ.

Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus to capture Christians and bring them bound back to Jerusalem. Acts 9 verses 3 to 6 says that: As he was approaching Damascus, a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." Now the Holy Spirit didn't save Saul on the road; and nothing is said here about Saul's salvation. Jesus told him to go into the city, "and there it will be told you what you must do."

According to Acts 9 verse 9 and also verse 11 Saul, who was blind, went into the city. He didn't eat or drink anything for three days and was praying. His prayer, no doubt, was very sincere and fervent, but his prayer did not save him. Well how do I know this? Well let's examine Acts 22:12 to 16, which says, "A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, (that is to Saul of Tarsus later the apostle Paul) and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him. "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'"

Now after three days Ananias revealed to Saul what he must do. He told him to get up, be baptized, and wash away his sins. Wash away his sins? You see, Saul was still in his sins. He was not yet saved. Now when people wash their dishes or wash their clothes, they wash them because they are dirty. And though he had seen the Lord, though he had fasted, and prayed fervently for three days, Saul still had a dirty soul that needed to wash away his sins in the blood of Jesus! He was not free from sin until Ananias told him what he must do. Saul was baptized that day (Acts 9 verse 18) because baptism into Christ was necessary, urgent and for the forgiveness of sins.

Now Cornelius and his family were the first Gentile converts. Peter told Cornelius in Acts 10:34 to 35, "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him." Now the angel who spoke to Cornelius did not save him; instead, the angel told him to send for Peter "and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household" (Acts 11 verse 14). You see Cornelius and his family were not saved by a miraculous gift but by hearing the gospel of Christ and obeying it. Peter "ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10 verse 48). The miraculous gift that they received when Peter began to speak was given to convince the Jews that Gentiles could then come to Christ according to (Acts 11:15 to 18).

Our conversion must last for a lifetime. It requires a complete change in our thinking and in our behavior. And no one can claim he is converted apart from repentance. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:23 to 25 that, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For

what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? (or his soul)” now denying ourselves means leaving the worldly and sinful life behind. We deny our fleshly passions so that we can take up our cross and follow the Lord. We start living for the Lord and following His teaching. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of ways.

Repentance is a cleansing of our hands and a purifying of our hearts. We'll no longer focus on the sinful ways that ruin lives and then we begin living a Christ-like lives that's different. And of course when we live for Christ that makes the world a better place. Romans 6:1 to 2 says, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” The idea of being saved and then turning back to sin is completely against God's will. Some say if a person turns away from Christ, he was never converted in the first place; but this is not true.

Hebrews 3:12 to 14 says, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.” Oh, you can harden your heart and lose your salvation. We must continue as long as we live to turn away from sin and live for the Lord Jesus.

Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You can change our hearts and change our lives through the preaching of the word. And Father we pray that we will listen carefully and be obedient to Your word out of faith in love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Have you repented? Have you changed in your heart from one who loves sin to one who loves the Lord Jesus? Have you changed your ways? Paul urged Timothy in 1 Timothy 4 verse 12 that we should “set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” Can people look at your life and see that you're setting an example of godly behavior? Titus 2:11 to 14 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Are you that kind of person?

Becoming a Christian is a complete change of heart and life. When you believe Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again, you realize that you can't live in sin but must change your heart and life in repentance. You want Jesus as your Savior and as your Lord. A convert is not ashamed to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God in the presence of others. People who convert to Christ fulfill the command to be baptized into Christ and into His death. They repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). Now they stop arguing with the Lord but out of love keep His commandments. Why not repent and be baptized today, so that your sins will be forgiven?