

What We Believe (4): Must Receive Christ

John 1:12 (NASB)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name,

Revelation 3:20 (NASB)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Introduction

Recap

- Let me remind you of the reason why Jesus came to us. The name ‘Jesus’ means ‘God saves.’ So, He came to save us from sin, right? More specifically, He came to call the sinners to repentance. One day He was dining with the tax collectors and sinners at Matthew’s house. Seeing this, the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled to Jesus, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered them saying, “*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners*” (Luke 5:31-32). He hasn’t come to call those who consider themselves righteous enough that they don’t need a Savior. Jesus came to call sinners like you and me to repentance for the forgiveness of our sins.
- We cannot earn our salvation no matter how hard we try. Salvation is the gift of God, given to us freely by God’s grace. We receive salvation through our faith alone.
- We also talked about faith and good works. Faith and good works are inseparable. Faith goes first, works follow, not the other way around. Faith is the only thing required for salvation. Works are not. What is ‘the works,’ then, if it is not the condition for salvation? It is the fruit of our faith. We are called to bring glory to God and His name through our good deeds.

Content

Children of God

People today (both in the church and outside the church) misunderstand and misuse one phrase. That is, ‘child of God.’ Who is a child of God? What makes a person child of God? Without proper understanding of the Scriptures, many say that everyone is a child of

God. Sounds wonderful and very inclusive, doesn't it? Yet, they are mistaken, because that's not what God's Word says. The Bible clearly says this instead: *Not everyone is a child of God.* You heard me right. Let me say it again: God's Word doesn't call everyone a child of God. In fact, it calls some folks 'children of wrath' (Ephesians 2:3), 'children of darkness' (Ephesians 5:8), and even 'children of the devil' (1 John 3:10). E.g. Did you know that Jesus insulted some Pharisees by calling them 'children of the devil' (John 8:39, 44)?

Some of you might say, "Pastor Choi, that was 2,000 years ago, and now it doesn't apply to us. *Everyone is a child of God.*" Well, folks, all I can say is this: God's Word is the truth. It doesn't change from time to time. It was true back then, it is true today, and it will be true forever. Concerning the everlasting nature of God's Word, Jesus said: "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!" (Matthew 5:18). He also said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Remember: God's Word never changes. That same Word of God says: there are 'children of darkness' and 'children of the devil.' So, I believe.

Don't get me wrong. It is true that everyone is created and born with the image of God, but that doesn't mean that everyone is a child of God. Some folks simply choose to be on the dark side, remaining 'children of darkness.' Of course, our God loves them all, He's gracious to all even to the evil ones (He gives them life and health. He 'causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on them'---Matthew 5:44), and He wants everyone to be saved from their sins, yet when it comes down to who's a child of God, He is very clear.

So, the real question is: Who are the children of God? Whom does God call His children? Let's check it out in the Bible. John 1:12 gives us the answer. "***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.***" God gives the right to become His children to whom? To those who receive Jesus. To those who believe in Jesus' name. Do you get it? Only those who receive Jesus and those believe in the name of Jesus become children of God. Such people are born into God's family through their faith in Jesus. Only those who satisfy the condition of spiritual rebirth in Christ are God's children: 'Born again,' 'born anew,' and 'born from above' mean the same of spiritual rebirth into God's family. E.g., Folks, I love children. However, that doesn't mean that every child in the world is mine. Only the one that was born into my family through either natural birth or adoption is my child. Same with God and His children. Becoming children of God requires spiritual rebirth into God's family.

So, how can a person be born into God's family? By believing in Jesus and by receiving Him as Savior and Lord. Only those who **believe** in the name of Jesus and what He has done for their sins (John 1:12) and only those who **receive** Jesus as Savior and Lord become God's children.

Believing and Receiving

Let's talk about two aspects of 'believing and receiving Jesus' here. Believing is trusting. Receiving is obeying.

First, believing in Jesus means trusting in Him. In reality, many a believer only intellectually 'agree' what Jesus has done, yet fail to put their trust in Him.

E.g. Charles Blondin---a French acrobat walked on a tight rope over Niagara Falls. ----
"crossing the [Niagara Gorge](#) (located on the American-Canadian border) on a tightrope, 1,100 ft (340 m) long, 3.25 in (8.3 cm) in diameter and 160 ft (49 m) above the water, near the location of the current [Rainbow Bridge](#). This he did on 30 June 1859, and a number of times thereafter, always with different theatrical variations: blindfolded, in a sack, trundling a wheelbarrow, on stilts, carrying a man (his manager, Harry Colcord) on his back, sitting down midway while he cooked and ate an omelet and standing on a chair with only one chair leg on the rope." –
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Blondin). If you had been there in the audience, having witnessed all what he had done, and believing that he can do it all over again, would you place yourself on his back? Many of us believe Jesus can do so many things for us, yet when He asks to commit our ways to Him, we say no. Believing is trusting.

Next, 'receiving Jesus' means 'to obey Him as the Lord.' Sadly, some believers treat Jesus as their servant, not as their Lord. Others even take Jesus as an insurance policy for eternal life, yet never go beyond that point. In other words, if you look into their hearts, you will see them sitting on the throne while Jesus remains as their servant. To such will there be a rude awakening on the Day of Judgment, Jesus warns.

E.g. In Matthew 7, Jesus warns about such illusion among His followers, that is, 'calling Him Lord' without doing His will would guarantee their salvation: ²¹ **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.** ²² *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?'* ²³ *Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'"* (Matthew 7:21-23, NIV). Receiving Jesus means doing the will of our Father in heaven.

Now, let's go to Revelation 3:20.

Dine with Jesus

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3:20).

Imagine: Jesus is standing at the door of your heart right now and knocks.

He's still knocking: Do you hear His voice? Many fail to hear His voice. Why? Because of too many distractions and too much noise going on in their lives that drown Christ's quiet voice. We need a routine for our soul to catch Christ's calling. E.g. Worship on Sunday morning is a good start. E.g. 2. Spend time for God's Word and prayer in your room is an excellent choice (Remember: 15 minutes a day means only 1/100th of your day given to Jesus).

If anyone hears My voice: Christ invites everyone to salvation. No exception. No discrimination against any personal background. Jesus knocks at everyone's heart. He is knocking at your heart right now. Do you hear His voice? Would you open the door for Him?

Opens the door: means to ask Him in. If you invite Him in, He will come in. If you don't invite Him in, He will not come into your life. Jesus is very gentle and humble (Matthew 11:29). He does not break *"a bruised reed, He will not snuff out a smoldering wick* (Matthew 12:20). He is so polite that He never forces you to do anything that you don't want.

Will dine with him: Once you invite Him in, He comes in and dines with you. Dining with Him means to commune with Him. It means a close relationship with Him. It means to talk to Him, listen to Him, and to walk with Him. Consider here: the Middle Eastern hospitality. It emphasizes 'generosity' and 'abundance' at the table. That means, you provide your best to your guest not only with food but also in hospitality. You pay the utmost care and attention to the guest. You make sure your guest is well treated and fed. With your guest, you talk, you listen, or even exchange each other's concerns. That's how we ought to treat Jesus our Lord. By the way,

Communion with Him is a daily thing: not weekly, not monthly, not even yearly thing. As you know, there is a word in the Church today, '**Chriseasters,**' meaning, the believers who go to church only twice a year, Christmas and Easter. Furthermore, some

believers call Jesus only for emergencies. More others invited Jesus into their hearts alright, yet they never talk to Him afterward. It is the same as this: you invite a guest to dinner; your guest is seated at the table, yet you never pay attention to the guest, nor engage him in conversation. Worse, you go on your own business totally forgetting that your guest is still seated at the table!

Folks, let us stop mistreating our Lord and Savior. It is time that we renewed our communion with Jesus. Every day. More than once a day. If you do, you will be guided by the Holy Spirit and you will never be shaken or disappointed.

Conclusion

We all “*were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:8). We are transferred from eternal death to eternal life. Listen to Jesus one more time: “*Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but **has crossed over** from death to life*” (John 5:24, NIV). “Has crossed over” ---it is a past tense. It is done!

One last thing: your salvation is secure in Christ. Once salvation is given to you, no one or nothing can take it away from you, unless you reject Christ, voluntarily give up on your faith, or willfully disobey God. Let me say it again: your salvation in Christ is secure. Listen to Jesus: ²⁷ *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* ²⁸ **I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.** ²⁹ *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; **no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand*** (John 10:27-29, NIV). He assured us twice that no one can or will snatch us from the hand of God. Our salvation is secure in Christ. Praise and thank God for your eternal life.

Amen.

Notes: *Whoever believes in him is **not** condemned, but whoever does **not** believe stands condemned already because they have **not** believed in the name of God’s **one** and only Son* (John 3:18).