

## **What Now? Part 1**

### **“Please Him”**

We just finished a series that ran through Easter Sunday entitled “The Gospel”. We are now going to shift from “The Gospel” to a series called “What Now”?

How do you know that your Christian? Let’s review our foundational verses for “The Gospel” series.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.”

**Romans 10:9-10**, “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

I remember back to February of 1981 when I believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and was baptized as an outward showing of my inward faith.

Shortly after I believed in Jesus I pondered this question ..... what now? In other words, what was I supposed to do with this new-found faith? I had been attending church for about nine months and I knew that was something I should do. I had witnessed others and heard bible teaching about the importance of reading God’s word and praying. Then I started hearing phrases like “you need to be growing closer to God” or “you need to be growing in your relationship with Jesus”. These concepts were new to me, but I realized they must be important because they were talked about a lot in church.

This series of messages will hopefully address the question ..... What Now? What does God expect of us after we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior?

### **Being Like Jesus**

**Romans 8:29**, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

God’s predetermined plan is for those that are saved to be conformed to be like Jesus. I think and hope that we all understand that we will never attain sinless perfection in this life as Jesus did, but we are to strive daily to be conformed to His image.

Pastor Tim Keller shared this:

Being completely conformed to the likeness of God's Son is something that we look forward to in the future, although the transformation is happening now gradually. Being adopted among many brothers is something that we have now. The minute you become a Christian, you have intimacy of relationship. You have an unconditional relationship. You become wealthy, because everything that Jesus Christ has accomplished is transferred to you. You become beautiful and spiritually rich in him.

Some people are put off by Paul's language of adoption because it's gender insensitive. They argue, "Wouldn't it be better to say that we become sons and daughters of God?" It would, but that misses the whole point. Some time ago, a woman helped me understand this. She was raised in a non-Western family from a very traditional culture. There was only one son in the family, and it was understood in her culture that he would receive most of the family's provisions and honor. In essence, they said, "He's the son; you're just a girl." That's just the way it was.

One day she was studying a passage on adoption in Paul's writings. She suddenly realized that the apostle was making a revolutionary claim. Paul lived in a traditional culture just like she did. He was living in a place where daughters were second-class citizens. When Paul said—out of his own traditional culture—that we are all sons in Christ, he was saying that there are no second-class citizens in God's family. When you give your life to Christ and become a Christian, you receive all the benefits a son enjoys in a traditional culture. As a white male, I've never been excluded like that. As a result, I didn't see the sweetness of this welcome. I didn't recognize all the beauty of God's subversive and revolutionary promise that raises us to the highest honor by adopting us as his sons.

Our adoption means we are loved like Christ is loved. We are honored like he is honored—every one of us—no matter what. Your circumstances cannot hinder or threaten that promise. In fact, your bad circumstances will only help you understand and even claim the beauty of that promise. The more you live out who you are in Christ, the more you become like him in actuality. Paul is not promising you better life circumstances; he is promising you a far better life. He's promising you a life of greatness. He is promising you a life of joy. He's promising you a life of humility. He's promising you a life of nobility. He's promising you a life that goes on forever.

### **Pleasing God**

**II Corinthians 5:6-9**, “Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we live by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

What is the Apostle Paul saying in this passage of scripture?

First, he is saying when we believe in Jesus as Savior our citizenship is literally transferred from this life into a future eternal life with God. Our future home is in Heaven with God, but we must live in this life until that time comes. The time when these physical bodies wear out or the promised time when Jesus Christ comes back to gather together those who belong to Him because of their personal saving faith in Him. I think one of the temptations in this life especially for us who live in the westernized culture is to get so attached to this life and in doing so we kind of lose touch with what “God has prepared for those that love Him” and that is a home in Heaven with Him.

Second, Paul is saying that we live by faith and confidence in God’s promises about our eternity.

The world we live in now offers us a glimpse of the joys and pleasures that we will experience when God brings the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21).

In his book *Heaven*, Randy Alcorn explains, "All our lives we've been dreaming of the New Earth. Whenever we see beauty in water, wind, flower, deer, man, woman, or child, we catch a glimpse of Heaven. Just like the Garden of Eden, the

New Earth will be a place of sensory delight, breathtaking beauty, satisfying relationships, and personal joy.”

We will not live in a sterile environment or float about among endless clouds with nothing to do. We will live on an all-new earth—just like this one, except free from storms, earthquakes, drought, floods, or any other disasters. Things will grow easily, and weeds and thorns will not exist. Animals will not harm us but rather look to us benevolently as their leaders and benefactors.

Listen to what the Bible teaches about this place .....

**Revelation 21:1-7**, “Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup>‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” <sup>5</sup>He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup>Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.”

What a promise and what a life to look forward to for all who believe in Jesus.

Thirdly, Paul addresses living in this life and the over arching focus of what our lives should be until we go to our eternal home.

**I Corinthians 5:9**, “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

Right now, on April 28, 2019 we who believe in Jesus as Savior are away from home. Paul says, that our goal should be to please Him whether we are at home with Him in Heaven or living in this life while we wait to go home.

Paul says in this life we must have the attitude that everything we do and say must be to please Him.

Paul also, said this .....

**Romans 12:1**, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”

Offer yourselves to Him as pleasing to Him ..... Why? Because it is proper worship to those who believe in Jesus as Savior. It is a complete paradox for someone who believes in Jesus to live a life that does not please Him.

\*Right Now Media Video: “God at the Center” 2:51

If you believe in Jesus as Savior your life will never make sense until the primary focus of your life becomes to please God in ALL things and as the video so accurately depicts placing God at the center of life.

Let’s say you love someone deeply whether that is a spouse, family member, boyfriend, girlfriend or friend. Let’s say this loved person needs five dollars. Will you give it to them? I think all of us would answer yes if they were not going to do something foolish or sinful with it. What about if they need a ride to work? I think all of us again, would say yes, I will give them a ride to work if possible. Why would you do these things? Because you love them and want to please them.

Then how much more should we who believe In Jesus as Savior want to please Him? After all He promises that He will reward those that strive to live their lives to please Him.

## **Conclusion**

**Ephesians 5:8-10**, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.”

For those that believe in Jesus what we once were we are no longer. We must live to please Him because He has transformed us from the darkness of spiritual death into His glorious light of an eternity with Him through Jesus Christ. For that, how much should we want to please Him? ALL THE TIME!

