

LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT DECISION

The longer answer:

“Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:14-15)

In Mark 1:14-15, when Jesus referred to “the **Gospel**” (meaning, “good news”), Jesus meant to believe the “good news” that God’s promised Messiah had come, that Jesus, Himself was God’s Son sent from the Father to save His people.

AND by “repent,” Jesus meant to seek God’s forgiveness from personal sin by acknowledging one’s own sin, asking God’s forgiveness (i.e., confessing one’s own sin to God) and then turning away from sin.

Jesus message, summarized by these few words, was the same to all; it was simple, specific and very direct. Jesus first called people to repent of their sin and second, to receive by faith His word and wholly, singularly follow Him.

However, both Jesus and His message were utterly rejected, even despised and hated. Ultimately, Jesus Christ was charged worthy of death for making Himself the Son of God, which in-effect made Him equal with God (John 5:18; 19:7). In Isaiah 53, the prophet had foretold Messiah’s death 700 years in advance, saying “He was pierced for *our* transgressions; he was crushed for *our* iniquities; and with his wounds *we* are healed and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of *us* all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

The Gospel message at Christ’s coming 2000 years ago was this: Immanuel is here (i.e., “God with us”); believe Him and follow Him. Now, after Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death and victorious resurrection the Gospel message is: “Jesus paid it all!” For indeed, He came and lived a sinless life, He died an agonizing sacrificial death, but He is now risen and alive; Victor over sin and death! “Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him [i.e., Jesus Christ], since He always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrew 7:25, NIV). Jesus gave these instructions to His disciples after His resurrection: “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations. You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46-48).

This then is precisely the message that the apostles of Jesus carried forward and the message that has been faithfully proclaimed to this very day. The apostle Paul summarized his lifelong ministry: I have testified “both to Jews and to Gentiles of repentance toward God and of faith in our *Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:21). This Gospel message is also the same message Paul expounded in much greater detail in the book of Romans:

Romans 3:10, “As it is written there is none righteous, no not one.”

Romans 3:22-23, “For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in *Christ Jesus our Lord*.”

Romans 5:8, "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 10:9-13 "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved for there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [i.e., the Lord Jesus], will be saved."

The Gospel is God's answer to man's sin and its inevitable consequence of physical and spiritual death. Spiritual death results in an unending separation from God. But "God so loved the world (that is, "us"), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him (i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ) should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

So, in simple summary of the above verses, God's word reveals our desperate need: ALL have sinned and *all* need a Savior. God's word also reveals that God Himself sent His Son the Lord Jesus Christ to take upon Himself the punishment for *our* sin; and that by simply and sincerely seeking God's forgiveness and trusting in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, God's forgiveness is received, eternal life in heaven is promised, and one is born to a whole **new life** in Christ plus so much more!!

If you sincerely desire to repent of your sin and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, call on Him today with a heartfelt prayer something like this:

Dear Lord Jesus, I confess my sinful disobedience to God, and truly seek His forgiveness. I know that because of my sin, I stand totally guilty before God. I thank You Jesus that in Your death on the cross You died for me; You took the penalty of my sin that I deserve and paid the just penalty of sin for me. I acknowledge my own sin and receive You alone as my Savior from sin. In Your death You died for me; and, in Your resurrection You showed that You are the true answer for life. Lord Jesus, help me to wholly follow You and live for You from this day forward. Thank You dear Jesus for saving me from God's just judgment on my sin, and for giving me new life and eternal life in Christ. In Jesus name, amen.

If this is the prayer of your heart; and if you received Jesus Christ as your Savior, **Praise God!** NO decision in life is more important than trusting Jesus Christ as one's Savior. A person's eternal destiny depends on this *one* decision. Now, however, your decision for Jesus Christ begins a whole "New Life in Christ!" In other words, it is what the Bible calls, being "born again." Indeed, "if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

How does one begin to live out their new life in Christ?

GREAT QUESTION!! Here are some simple first steps:

Begin with learning more of God's word. Read:

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 2:40-42

Romans 12:1-21

Read the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Mark,
The book of Proverbs, Psalm 119, and Philippians.

These are just some suggestions.

Also, please let us know so we can help you grow in Christ!
Call or email us on the CONTACTS page.

Coming Soon: Our "First Steps" material under "Resources".

God Bless!
Pastor Ron