
SOLA FIDE

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Conversion

As Christians, we have a starting point in our faith, regardless of age, background, gender and ethnicity. Conversion is the moment when we confess and believe wholly in the atoning work of Jesus Christ (Jhn. 3:3, Rom. 10:9-10).

1. Concerning Jesus Christ

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Rom. 10:17

Jesus Christ made it clear that he’s the only means of salvation when he said “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jhn. 14:6). That’s quite a different message than today’s culture that puts inclusiveness on a pedestal and says all religions are basically the same. The truth is that we’ve all sinned by falling short of God’s standard. And as sinners, we are destined to face the wrath of God, which is the reality of hell. But the good news is that Jesus, who is God, lived a sinless life so to save us through his substitutionary death on the cross. That’s the truth of Jesus Christ that we need to first understand and grasp clearly.

2. Our Response

“Who do the crowds say that I am?’ And they answered, ‘John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.’ then he said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God.’” Lk. 9:18-20

The disciples had personally been with Jesus, listening to his teaching and witnessing his miracles. They lived with him and knew him in person, yet what Jesus sought from them was a personal declaration of faith. The personal declaration of faith entails genuine repentance of our sins and heart’s confession that Jesus is the Christ, one’s personal Lord and Savior. Jesus did not seek superficial response of casual friendship nor mere knowledge about him, but a personal declaration of faith from his followers. And we are also called to respond in such way - only when we respond in our personal declaration of faith (of genuine repentance of our sins and heart’s confession that Jesus is my Lord and Savior), will our faith be authentic, which will be followed by Christian life in obedience to the lord.

3. Concerning the Holy Spirit

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost.” Lk. 14:27-28

The ripple effect

The recent passing of one of the most influential Christian apologists of his day, Ravi Zacharias has been greatly used by God in ways he would never have imagined.

Born in India, descending from Hindu priesthood family, Ravi grew up an atheist, and wanted to be a cricket or tennis player.

In his book *Walking From East to West: God in the Shadows*, Ravi tells his conversion story of when he was 17 living in Delhi where he tried to take his own life by swallowing poison in his bathroom. The academic pressure and his failure in school was too much to bear and it resulted in an attempt at suicide.

In the hospital a man gave Ravi a bible open to John 14:19 “Because I live, you shall live also.” That was his introduction to Christ, and before Ravi left the hospital he had fully given his life over to following Jesus Christ.

Years later, Fred (the man from the hospital) who was nearing his death, said to Ravi “the main reason God brought me into this world was to bring that bible to you.”

We don't know how God will use us, so let us be faithful and open to the leading of the Spirit.

We have to be real and understand that when we follow Jesus Christ (i.e. living the Christian life), the world will be against us. There'll be continual hardships we have to endure over the course of our life. The parable of the soils is a harsh reminder that the devil is actively working against people coming to God, using temptations of the world to lure us, and persecutions to strangle those who don't have a firm footing on being a disciple of Christ (Mk. 4, Mt. 13). But we aren't left to fight alone. The Holy Spirit resides in every Christian as our permanent counselor and strength to teach and comfort us upon conversion. His presence causes us to deny ourselves and bear our cross daily (Rom. 8:14-17). It's the Holy Spirit's inward working that will sanctify us daily as we submit ourselves to the Word of God. When counting the cost, we can count on the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).

4. Why in matters

“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into *the joy of your master*.”
Mt. 25:23

Paul says that if Jesus didn't rise from the grave, then our faith is useless (1 Cor. 15:13,14). However, if He did rise as in the gospel account, then we will face either Heaven or Hell as the eternal consequence. In the end, we'll all be accountable for how we've responded to Jesus Christ. And the danger in postponing our response to Jesus Christ, is that we will never know when we may face death. Especially during these times where Covid-19 has opened our eyes to just how fragile life can be, the most important decision in life shouldn't be put off until later. Don't waste this opportunity.

I was 28 years old before I first stepped a foot into a church. And it took 6 months of hearing biblical truth to cut through my misconceptions before my soul was pierced and I gave my life over to following Jesus Christ. I won't ever forget that moment, though while looking back on it, I sometimes wonder why God showed me such grace. I didn't bring anything to the table except my sins, and yet Christ loved me and paid for my life with his. I lived avoiding God, mocked believers, said and thought reprehensible things about Jesus. I was his enemy... Of all the things I've been forgiven, my deepest regrets come from the things I said and did that might have influenced people away from God. Now, so long as I'm here, I want to live each day with faith and point others to Christ.