

What It Means To “RECEIVE CHRIST”

Introduction: Text: Colossians 2:6

1. Paul said the gospel had come to them at Colossae as it had gone into all the world.

In Colossians 1:7 he says "As ye also learned of Epaphras..." The word translated "learned" in v.7 is the Greek word for "disciple". They had been "discipled" by Epaphras.

Jesus had commanded the apostles in the great commission in Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (NASV).

What is involved in becoming a disciple? What are the steps?

When we look at the book of Colossians we can see what the steps were in being "discipled" by Epaphras.

2. But let's notice another verse, in 2:6 we read "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."

The Colossians had "received Christ", what does that mean?

What is involved in receiving Christ.

In this lesson we want to notice what the Christians at Colossae had done in "receiving Christ" and in being "discipled" by Epaphras.

I. THE COLOSSIANS HEARD THE GOSPEL 1:5b, 1:23

The good news of the Gospel was not native to their city. It had been brought to them by Epaphras. He was himself a citizen of Colossae (4:12-13), but he had come in contact with Paul and had been converted to the Lord Jesus.

This was probably during Paul's great three year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).

Once Epaphras had received the gospel he shared this "good news" with his relatives and friends back home.

Perhaps it would have been exciting for him to stay with Paul in Ephesus where so many wonderful things were taking place, but his first responsibility was to take the Gospel to his own home city. (Compare Mark 5:19.)

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ has solved the problem of sin through his death, burial and resurrection. Paul says in verse 5 that they had "heard" the gospel."

The gospel, or good news they heard, was "the word of truth." This means that this message came from God and can be trusted.

"Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17). There are many messages and ideas that can be called true, but only God's Word can be called "TRUTH".

Satan is a liar; to believe his lies is to be led astray into death (John 8:44), but Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6).

Paul says in verse 5 that they heard the word of God, and in verse 6 that it brought forth fruit. The word is

likened unto seed in the parable of the soils in Luke 8:11.

Seed has life in it, and the Word of God has life in it (Hebrews 4:12).

When the Word is planted in good fertile soil it brings forth fruit as it did at Colossae.

II. THE COLOSSIANS BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

It is possible to hear and not believe. Jesus spoke of many who have their ears closed to God. He spoke of the seed falling on the wayside soil, and on rocky ground.

But the Gospel brought forth fruit at Colossae, 1:6. They became believers.

Paul said in verse 3-4 that he gave thanks to God when he heard of their faith in the Lord. They (1) heard the Gospel, and (2) they believed in the Lord Jesus.

III. THE COLOSSIANS REPENTED OF THEIR SINS

At one time these Gentiles at Colossae were aliens to God (1:21). In time past before they obeyed the Gospel they participated in "wicked words" but now in Christ they were changed men.

They had turned from their former ways of sinful living, and were not reconciled to God. This is what repentance is, turning away from sin, and turning to God.

Another evidence of their repentance is found in 3:5-7, where Paul names a number of sins they had once participated in, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Then Paul says in verse 7, "in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them." They had lived in these sins in times past, but what about now?

"But now ye also put off all these" (3:8).

They had put these practices aside, they had turned from them, and that is repentance.

What do we see in the steps of conversion for the Colossians so far?

1. They heard the Gospel from Epaphras;
2. they believed the truth which they heard; and
3. they turned from their sins, or repented.

IV. THE COLOSSIANS HAD BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

What else did "receiving Christ" (2:6) involve? What else did their being "discipled" by epaphras involve?

It included baptism, an immersion in water in the likeness of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Colossians 2:12,13).

There are three points Paul makes in 2:11-12 in regard to baptism and their salvation.

First in verse 11 he compares baptism to a kind of circumcision.

In circumcision there is a removal of the flesh.

In baptism, (this circumcision made without hands) there is the putting off of the sins of the flesh.

Second, in v.12, in baptism we are buried and raised with Christ.

God raised the Lord from the dead, and when we are baptized, we are raised from the death brought by sin, raised to a new life.

(Paul uses this same language in Romans 6:4-5 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.")

Third, Paul's point in verse 13, is that we are dead in our sins, but in being baptized into Christ, we are made alive together with him, and forgiven of our trespasses.

Now what is the relationship of baptism to salvation?

First, we know that it is not the water that cleans us, we are forgiven by the washing of the blood of Christ (1;14).

But baptism pictures the time element, the point when our relationship to God changes, from being OUT of Christ to being IN Christ.

The water does not save us, but before baptism we are DEAD in our sins, AFTER we are alive in Christ.

Baptism is pictured as a death, burial and resurrection.

When we come up from the watery grave, we are raised IN Christ (Rom.6).

Paul wrote of the Galatians (3:27) saying they were baptized INTO Christ.

V. THEY WERE INSTRUCTED TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH

These steps 1) Hearing, 2) Believing, 3) Repentance, and 4) Baptism, were not of themselves enough to insure a heavenly home.

Paul said that being presented before the Lord, "holy and unblamable and unproveable in his sight" depended on "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled."

So a steadfast faithful life is an expected part of conversion (1:23). "...walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (1:10).

1. We must give heed to the way we walk, i.e, the way we live.
2. We must be fruitful in good words, (they don't save us, but we are saved to be fruitful in good works, and they manifest our continued faithfulness.)
3. We must continue to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God and his will for us.

Are you converted to the Lord the way the Colossians were?

Are you steadfast in your faith as they were?