

First Principles

Mike Connell



Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

Smashwords Edition

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First Principles

The Foundational Principles of Christianity, according to Hebrews 6:1-3.

Jesus is saying we need to get off foundations and move into maturity, not laying again the foundation. Then he begins to describe the foundations, which are explained in depth through this seven-part teaching.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of: repentance from dead works; and of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms; and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.”

[Repentance from Dead Works \(1 of 7\)](#) This is not talking about repentance from sin, but from living a self-centred life at the core of our being, a life lived out of duty, obligation, legalism, my efforts to be loved, needed, valued, feel good. The life of God flows out of a vital love relationship with God. He is the centre, not us. Our identity is with him. His life flows through a life that's yielded and open, and in love with God as a father.

[Faith towards God \(2 of 7\)](#) What is Faith? How would I know if I had it? How do I get it? Can it be grown and developed? How can I grow and develop it? Turn towards God to receive his love, receive identity in Him, receive positioning in Him, so you can bring forth good works, living works.

[Baptised into Christ, Baptism in Water \(3 of 7\)](#) A foundation of believing that causes you to step up to the reality of who Jesus says you are. I am immersed into something that I was not in before. I am a totally new person, connected to God vitally, and connected to the body of Christ. Water Baptism is my testimony to the world that to the spiritual powers, that old person died, I'm joined to the living God, the power of sin is broken. I'm a free man, there's a new person risen up, born again.

[Baptism in the Holy Spirit \(4 of 7\)](#) Immersion into the person, and power and presence of the Holy Spirit, so it lives around you, and is on you, and flows freely from within you. The entrance into a supernatural living.

[Laying on of Hands \(5 of 7\)](#) In the laying on of hands, in the spirit, there is a flow from one person to another. God has called you not just to experience Him, but to connect to people tangibly, and release what He has given you.

[Resurrection of the Dead \(6 of 7\)](#) There is a difference between a person being raised from the dead, to extend his life and then die, and the teaching of resurrection. Jesus was the first-fruits, the first-born to be resurrected from the dead, and appear to many in a resurrection body - immortal, incorruptible, able to vanish in and out, no longer constrained by the physical world. He was a pattern for all that is to follow. This teaching covers the first resurrection, 1000 year reign of Christ on earth, and the second resurrection. Which one will you be in?

[Eternal Judgment \(7 of 7\)](#) Sometimes we focus a lot on the grace of God, the goodness of God, the mercy of God we forget or overlook that there is another side, that God is also holy and He's just. His justice requires that He deal with how we've governed our life and what we've done in our life. All of you have an appointment to keep with this. There is no exception. Matt 16:27 I come and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work.

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Repentance from Dead Works (1 of 7)

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This is not talking about repentance from sin, but from living a self-centred life at the core of our being, a life lived out of duty, obligation, legalism, my efforts to be loved, needed, valued, feel good. The life of God flows out of a vital love relationship with God. He is the centre, not us. Our identity is with him. His life flows through a life that's yielded and open, and in love with God as a father.

[Prelude]

Open your Bibles with me in Hebrews 5:12, I want to begin a new series. Last week we shared with you about the parable of the unforgiving servant, and we saw how a person experienced the grace of God, came into what you'd call salvation type experience of the grace, the forgiveness, the blessing of God and then did not stay in that place of grace. By being unloving and judgemental to fellow believers in the house, he shifted himself out of being under the flow of grace, and ended in his own life under judgement and demonic torment. There's a tremendous principle to understand of the need for us to remain in the grace and the light of Jesus Christ, so we're going to do a series in this coming seven weeks called First Principles, or the foundational doctrine of Christ.

[Message]

Hebrews 5:7 - "Jesus, who in the days of His flesh, when He lived on the earth, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of

His godly fear. Though He was a Son (the Son of God), He learned obedience by the things He suffered, and having been made perfect, He became the author (or the originator or the one who brings a flow of salvation) of eternal salvation, to all them who obey Him. Called by God as a High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek (so Jesus is a High Priest within a particular supernatural order called the order of Melchizedek), of whom we've a lot to say but hard to explain, since you've become dull of hearing."

In other words, Paul is saying: Jesus Himself was ushered into a priesthood of supernatural life and power. We want to talk to you more about that, but because of your immaturity, you can't handle the truth! That's virtually what he's saying: you're dull of hearing.

So now he starts to talk about spiritual immaturity. "Now by this time you've been Christians for many years, you ought to be teachers. You need someone again teaches you the first principles of the doctrine of God; you need milk and not solid food. For everyone who takes milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness. He is a babe." (and that's not kind of "babe" babe - this is a "baby" baby)

"...and solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the discussion of the doctrine or the first principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection". Jesus was made perfect. Jesus grew into that maturity.

He's saying: "we need to get off foundations and move into maturity, not laying again the foundation" - then he begins to describe the foundation: "repentance from dead works; faith towards God; the doctrine of baptisms; laying on of hands; of resurrection of the dead; of eternal judgement - and this we will do if God permits." What we will do: we will go on to maturity - IF God permits. It's possible God will not permit you to come to the fullness of what you're called to, unless the foundations are properly laid, so let's open our heart on this.

The key in this particular passage is the challenge of the apostle for us not to remain childish or baby, but to actually grow to maturity; and so this is about the first principles of Christ - the foundation of Christ. It's not just about Jesus Christ and what He's done, it's the foundations for us to become what God wants us to become. If these foundations are not laid properly in our lives, we will wrestle, struggle, we do the best we can; but never get to where God wants us to get to. This is why this is called "foundations".

So there are many things that are basic in the Christian life, so I might ask you what's basic to the Christian life? What would you say? Well you'd say: prayer; read your Bible; come to church; get fellowship - you'd say a whole lot of things. You notice none of them are mentioned there? So this is nothing to do with that - these are the foundations for building. It's about how your life is built, and you becoming all that God wants you to become. These must be put in there. These are not just a set of teachings. It's not just six steps and now I'm away. It's not that at all. It actually is a foundation.

You notice when a building is first being constructed, they lay a foundation. You don't see the foundation, but it carries the whole weight of the building. Now you never remove the foundation. It always remains there, and the stability of the building depends on the foundations being present, being strong, and being able to support what you're building. So what he's saying is: this doctrine of Christ, or the first principles of Christ, is a body of teaching on how to live your life in such a way, we can corporately become what God wants us to become. Christian life is never a single or alone life; it's always lived in community. It is what you call a "living foundation", so each part of this is something to be living inside you. It's something you live out in your daily life. It's not something - I heard that tape, I'll pass it on. This is something that needs to be operative continually in your life if you want to progress.

If any of these areas are not operative in your life, you can't progress. You'll be around a long time, but there's a huge difference between: being a 10 year old Christian; and a Christian who's had one year's experience 10 times - just repeated the same stuff. So you notice then, the first things are these are the foundations to Christ, the anointed life, the anointed one; and we know there is Jesus Christ who is the pattern, but it also refers to the body of Christ of which you and I are a part. That's the first thing.

Second thing is, it's foundation to your identity, and how you do your life with Jesus. It's foundational - the foundational substructure. Notice he calls it the First Principles. The word first comes from the word arché, from which we get principality. It's something which is the beginning. If this isn't there, you don't go any further. You just keep busy, but you don't go further.

Notice these first principles - the word 'principle' means: a foundation on which, or the beginning of something from which, everything else springs. Or putting it simply like this, it's your ABCs. If you don't learn your ABCs, then you remain illiterate. It doesn't matter how hard you try - and I'm sure you try real hard - but if you haven't learnt your ABCs, you experience a sequence of failures. You can't put your finger on what's wrong - it's not because you aren't trying; it's the foundations aren't there.

It's like learning your times tables. You know, one of the things we had to learn was our times tables. You just had to learn it. If it wasn't learnt, and it wasn't in you, then you could not proceed in maths. You'd get so far, you'd try the best, and you struggle as much as you can. No matter how well intentioned you are, no matter how much effort you put in, you just don't get anywhere. You just have a sequence of failures. Why? The foundations essential to going forward are just not there.

Now this happens with believers as well - if the foundations are not there, the consequence is immaturity. Notice what he says: "you are dull of hearing". You're not actually spiritually sensitive to the things God is saying. In fact, the Bible tells us that in the last days, people will want to hear teachings that tickles their ears, and makes them feel good - not teaching that forms Christ in them. God's plan is not you just get saved and go to heaven. God's plan is that His Son, and the nature of His Son, and His loving life, is formed in you. So the foundations are absolutely essential.

Notice it says that a person who hasn't got the foundations in them - the Bible calls them a babe. That word babe means: one who's so young, they can't talk properly - a spiritual babe. It doesn't mean they don't make sounds; it's just actually there's not a maturity, spiritually, around them. To be of full age means you lack nothing; you've actually been completed in the things God wants to build into your life.

Maturity has to do with being able to exercise your senses to discern good and evil; so a person who is growing in their Christian life - this is what they can do. They have developed their spiritual sensitivity, because their foundations are laid, and they can discern good and evil. Now of course you'll be thinking straight away: well I know good and evil... If someone gets drunk, that's evil; if someone gets sober, that's good. If someone steals, that's evil; if someone gives out, that's good. That's very true, all that's true, but that's not what it's referring to here. It's referring to something different to that.

What was the name of the tree that Adam and Eve ate from, that led them to substitute their relationship with God for something else? It was the tree of good and evil - so you need to compare this with the original - Paul's referring to that. What did they do? They substituted a relationship - a love relationship with God as a Father and provider; they substituted that, with knowledge about what is right and wrong. I'll show you exactly the nature of the fall, because if you don't understand what the fall is, you won't understand why this needs to be laid so strongly.

So to discern good and evil is very simply this: it's the spiritual capacity to tell what is the motivation of something; whether it flows with the life of the spirit, or whether it's just someone putting on a good. Is this real, and the life of God is in it; or is there something at the core of this, you can tell this is just someone really trying hard? In other words, it's the ability to discern what is religious, from what is the flow of the spirit. Many people come into a meeting, they can't even tell the flow of the spirit. Many people don't know how to live the life of the spirit.

If you don't know how to live the Life of the Spirit, you will be living out of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil. God wants us, in this coming season, to grow inside - by putting foundations in us, and then learning how to engage, live in, and bring the life of the Holy Spirit into our daily life - but there has to be some foundational things put in.

Notice now it describes the foundations - it gives an overview, and it describes six of them. The first one is repentance from dead works. Notice it doesn't say there: repentance from sin. Most people when they read it read that - repentance from sin. They think: that's for a sinner; that's someone who's just come into Jesus. No, this is a foundation to be a believer. It's something you have to live in. Repentance from Dead Works - we're going to look at that today, and then: Faith towards God.

So repentance from dead works is, turning away from a life which is: I will do it; it's my way; I will do this - it's out of the will, it's out of the flesh. It actually doesn't have the life of God in it. It's a life lived just out of yourself, trying to do the best you can; and you turn to God - faith towards God is to turn towards God, to receive His love, receive identity in Him, receive positioning in Him, so you can bring forth good works, living works. So it's not stopping doing things, it's actually repenting from the inner motivation of wrong things.

The third is Doctrine of Baptism, which is about separating your life from worldly value systems, a world system governed by the devil, a life of sin and independence of God; and being a part of - connected to God vitally, and connected to the body of Christ; and flowing in a new life, community life, where you love people and you share your life with people.

The fourth one is the Laying on of Hands, which is the impartation by people who are anointed - five-fold ministry, elders - into your life, to active and impart giftings, to get you up and going, to help you go where you need to go. That's part of body life.

The next one is the Resurrection of the Dead – there are many aspects to it, but we'll just keep it at this level - It's about how to flow in resurrection power. You notice the testimony Graham gave today, the feeling of resurrection power coming into his body, caused death to be restrained; and he lived when he should have died - Resurrection power.

Finally, Eternal Judgements, which means a number of things, but one thing it includes is judging the things which are not originated in the spirit of God; and that brings us back to Repentance from Dead Works.

So this is a living foundation. There's a lot in it, but I want to try and keep it down to something you can apply in your life. So the first thing then is to recognise that this is about setting you up to: live and flow in the life of the spirit; to become connected to God and to people; and to show what God is like. That's what Jesus came to do - to reveal God, reveal His love, reveal His nature, reveal His power. So it's about walking in a new identity.

If you don't get established in who you are in Jesus Christ, what you'll do is you'll just try hard to be a good Christian, and you'll find it's incredibly frustrating because the power isn't there, so this is foundational. Before we move on, I want you to have a look just at the fall of man, Genesis 3, and see why Repentance from Dead Works is so necessary.

Genesis 3 – “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field the Lord God had made.” Serpent is an embodiment, a physical embodiment of Satan. “And he said to the woman: Has God said you shall not eat every tree of the garden? And the woman said to the serpent: we can eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but not the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, which God said: you shall not eat it, you shall not touch it, lest you die. Then the serpent said to the woman: you shall not surely die. God knows in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened. You'll be like God. You'll know good and evil.”

Notice – “You will be like God”. He didn't tell them that there was a down side to all of that. “so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, it was pleasing to the eyes, desirable to make one wise, she took the fruit and ate, and gave it to her husband with her; then the eyes of them were opened, and they knew they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, made coverings, and when they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

God said to Adam and Eve, He called them and said: “where are you?” “I heard your voice in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.” Now before Adam and Eve fell, you have to understand this: they walked in love and in unity with God, and in love and in unity with one another. That's how it all started - it started with love and connection - God was joined to them. The spirit of God was joined to them, they were clothed in the glory of God. Whatever they did, they enjoyed absolute peace and security, unbroken fellowship with God. What they chose to do was this: they rejected their Father's love. They rejected the love God has; because if we love Him, we'll do what He says.

They rejected God's love; they rejected Him. They sinned against love, and against relationship.

Here's something people don't think. We think of sin: you do something bad. Actually when we sin, we sin against love, we sin against relationship. Someone is always affected by our sin - and so they rejected the Father's love. Now what happened as a consequence of this, they lost a number of things - the Bible says they “fell”. What does that mean, they fell? Here's what they lost: they lost something they walked in.

The first thing is, they lost their relationship with their Father. In other words, they had no relationship with the Father. That left them disconnected from a Father, without identity; without a Father to father them, they had to father themselves - they became spiritual orphans in the world. That's the first thing that happened - they were cut off from

the love of God. Now if you're cut off from the love of God, guess what? You've got to find it somewhere else, because you're designed for love. People will always find love, and value, and identity somewhere.

Second thing is, they lost their identity. They're no longer a child of God - He is not owning-up to them, He's no longer their Father. They're separated from their Father. Now they have no identity, and when a person's got no identity, you know what happens? They feel insecure; they feel threatened; they feel defensive; they feel afraid; they feel ashamed.

You know what the question is: who am I? The question people ask everywhere - Who am I? People don't know who they are, because they define their identity out of what's around them, and who they're connected to, rather than what God says we are.

So he lost his identity; and the next thing they lost was the supernatural life of God that kept them alive. So eventually they were going to get sick, they're going to grow old and die. What a tremendous loss - embracing the knowledge of good and evil, but letting go their Father, their relationship with God as Father. Their lives were dramatically transformed; so what happened inside them? A number of things happened...

The first thing you notice is: emotional turmoil - fear, grief, guilt, shame, pain. You notice they were so emotionally-numbed that God actually had to push them out of the garden.

What happened then? What came into the heart of man is: I need to be someone; and if I need to be someone, I'm going to have to do something, to be someone. I want to be someone - you know what - I'll get a lot of money, then I'll be someone. No matter how much money you get, you're still not someone, because you're separated from your source, where you came from.

I know what I'll do, I'll get a lot of possessions, and I'll get cars and boats and houses - and I'll get all these things - so there's an ambition to get more and more things, but people still aren't happy. Why? They still don't know who they are, because you're not defined by your money, and you're not defined by your possessions.

Ok, I need to get a position. I'll work hard, and I'll get to the top of this or the top of that or top of the school, top of the community, top of the government or I'll get to the top of the church. But all the same, right inside, there's still a desire that can't be quenched, because even if you get all those things, it still doesn't give you the answer.

Well then, I'll try hard to be accepted in love. I'll really work on my relationships. I'll do all I can - well it's still not going to solve the problem, the problem's far deeper than that.

Well I know what - I'll work out what's good for me - and so hence man began to live this way. This is how we define life: if it's good for me, it's good. If it's not good for me, it's not good. That's how far we've fallen. That's how self-centred we are; and so we come to church: if it's good for me, I like it. If it's not good for me, and I don't like it, then I won't accept it. We're living from a totally wrong centre.

Man became his own centre, not God; so this issue of Turning from Dead Works is an issue of shifting your centre.

So what happens if you become a Christian? Well, you give your life to Jesus Christ; and the spirit of God comes into you. Now the dilemma is this: you have to leave the old centre. You have to leave the old self-centred life. Why do you have to leave that? Because it doesn't work! The spirit of God, and the life of God, does not flow through a life that is self-centred; it flows through a life that's yielded and open and in love with God as a father.

A classic example of this is the Prodigal Son. Remember the Prodigal Son left the home, and he abandoned the Father's love, and went out and he got broken, he got attached to all kinds of things; but here's the thing: he repented of his lifestyle, came back, and received a gift! He didn't have to do anything - just he turned, he repented; and the Father just shouts, he embraced him and hugged him, restored him, gave him what he never deserved. That's grace operating! This is the life of God.

How did he get it? He just repented; and he could hardly even believe all the things that God had for him, when he let go the substitutes, and attached back to his father.

The older son is representative of religious people - people who become religious. What do we mean by religion? Religion is your efforts to get yourself right with God, your efforts to become righteous, and better than others. So what was going on in the elder son's life was something like this: he was a hard worker. He tried to live a perfect life, but you know what? You can't be perfect trying to live a perfect life, because you always blow it somewhere! So he tried so hard, trying so hard to please his father, trying so hard to get approval, so hard to get acceptance - but it's all about him working.

The father said to him: this was always available as a gift to you - you didn't have to do all the work; but he just got working so hard, trying to be good; and the result was this happened inside him: he then looked down on the brother and judged him. He despised someone who was less than him. He worked to be superior, he tried to be better than the other, he tried to present himself as being good; but actually it was all his own works, his own rights, his own struggling and driving. He was a driven man. He was striving to get acceptance and love - and it never came to him. Then, when he saw what grace looks like, instead of saying: I want some of that; he refused to repent. Now you've got to remember this: this is a reference to the Pharisees of Jesus day, who: tithed, went to church, did well, kept laws, looked scrupulous on the outside - but it didn't change the heart.

They were watching Jesus. You know what they did? They were the ones who complained when they saw grace. Why did they complain when they saw grace? They did not have the foundations of Christ in them. They were religious. It is very easy to become an elder brother, very easy to become religious; and so what they did, they needed to be seen. Why? Because it's no good doing something like praying, unless you're seen. They used to give - they'd be seen. Why? There's no use giving, unless someone sees you; because I mean, that's what it's all about. They fast - well we've got to let people know we're fasting - and so the whole lifestyle was: what will people think of me? It was governed by the fear of man, and pride, which is at its root.

This is what religion looks like. Religion can't help people. It doesn't matter how strict the religious life is, it's a life of bondage. Why? Because this is not how the supernatural life comes. That is what you've got to repent of. That is what needs to be removed out of life.

What did he end up like? He ended up resentful, judgemental, rejected, critical of his father, critical of his brother, refusing to enter in, and actually quite angry at his father's graciousness.

The life of a religious person is in conflict and contention with the life of Christ. Wherever people flow in the life of Christ, there will be contention, and arguments, and opposition from people who do not have the life of Christ, who are in a place of religion, and separated from the revelation of God's love.

So we see here in that story of the Prodigal Son, the elder brother was totally opposed to the spirit of grace. I tell you what shows up in your heart. What's shown in our heart is when God shows goodness to someone else - someone else gets the promotion, someone else gets blessed, someone else gets something happen good to them - what's in our heart flushes up to the surface. Churches are so struggling with people like the elder brother, thinking: if I'm just good enough, or I just get this next key, I'll get my breakthrough. If I just fast enough, God will be impressed, and He'll move on my behalf; and so we get into a do, do, do, work, strive, struggle - no rest, no peace, and no flow of life.

Now this is not what Jesus came to give us. You see, this is the consequence of being out of connection, out of relationship - so what has Jesus done for us? Let me just give it quickly, and then you'll see what you've got to break free of. This is what Jesus did. It tells us very clearly in Colossians, Chapter 2, it says: He took away every failure, every fault, the list of everything tipped against us, everything that we failed, and everything we could fail, and He removed it, took it to the cross, declared it cancelled, and broke the power of the devil. Every curse you could be under, He took it to the cross. Galatians 3:13, He broke the power of cursings. Why? So you could be blessed. How do you get blessed? Definitely not by working hard; definitely not by trying to do something else.

In Ephesians, Chapter 2, it says: "Now we are seated with Him, already in a spirit dimension, already in the place of blessing." I hear people pray: "God bless me." No, He has already blessed you - it says in Ephesians 1. God has blessed us already, with all the blessings. How did you get blessed, and where are the blessings, and how can I get them? "You are blessed with every blessing in heavenly places that's in the realm of the spirit, in union with Christ."

The key is this: that when you came and repented of struggling, striving, pain, all kinds of issues, when you turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him, His spirit comes into you.

Now this is what happens: you become a new person. You are not someone who has to try to be better - you are already better. You don't have to try to find God as your Father, He already now is your Father. You don't have to try to be blessed, you are blessed, because of your position and your union. So what Jesus came for, was to offer us His spirit in us, united with Him. We are already in the place of blessing - it's just a matter of flowing in that life, so it is released.

So now why do I pray? Why? Because I'm already blessed, and I want fellowship with my Father, to birth His things into the earth.

Why do I fast? Why? Not to get something from God, but because I want to be sensitive to my Father, so His life can flow unhindered, and I can hear clearly from Him.

Why do I enter into spiritual warfare? Because my Father has obtained freedom for me now, and I will stand in that place of victory, not fighting the devil for the victory, but standing decreeing where I am in Christ, who I am in Christ, what I have in Christ. I will step into that position with faith in my heart!

What an amazing thing. We already have acceptance, we have forgiveness, we have redemption - we have all these things. How do we have them? Here's how we have them: they're all in Christ. They're all in Jesus, the anointed one - I must abandon trying to work hard to get it. This is the problem before I become a Christian. Now when I become a Christian, this is what happens: the spirit of God comes into me, and I am - 2 Corinthians it tells us - one spirit with the Lord. Wherever I go, the spirit of the Lord is there. Now I don't have to bring anything down from heaven - I'm already in heaven. I don't have to try to make God bless me, I am already blessed.

How am I blessed? Well, the blessings come here with Him, with Christ, the anointed one. The anointing of Christ within me, the presence of Christ within me, His spirit within me, is what brings me into a life of blessing. What I need is not to try and now behave, and perform, and do more; try to look good for your sake - not at all.

I need to remain connected here, because if I separate, and I try now to work hard, I come under the law. If I'm under the law, the grace and anointing doesn't work for me anymore. If you're under law, you have fallen from grace. Grace no longer works and empowers your life. Now you are under guilt, self-centredness, and struggle. You've got to cover-up; you've got to pretend you're something you're not; you've got to try hard - and that's where many people end up; but if I stay in Christ, and the key to my life on the earth is being in Him, now everywhere I go, Christ is with me.

I need to meditate, dwell in, and live out of who I am in Him. I am a blessed person. I'm a loved person. I'm an accepted person. I'm a redeemed person. I'm a forgiven person in Him, connected to Him.

Now here's where the Dead Works issue comes up. Dead works are works which flow out of my own efforts, and my own struggles, to be: loved, needed, valued, feel good. Whenever I feel a bit ashamed, or blamed, any kind of thing like that, and I start to try and cover up, and do good works, and try harder, then I remove myself from the life of grace. So how do I abide in Christ? How can I get His life to flow through me? How can I live in the flow of blessing? How can I live in the flow of the anointing? I'm glad you asked!

Here's the first thing you need to do: you need to repent of dead works. That word 'dead' is the word 'necron' - a lifeless corpse, something that's got absolutely no life in it. Dead works means doing things out of guilt, obligation, duty, fear, shame, all kinds of stuff; trying desperately to be loved. You notice when you do that, you have moved yourself from Christ, and you're now self-centred, trying hard. What you need to do is repent, which means turn your - switch it off! Turn away from it; I'm not going to try to make myself any better.

Now if I will abandon trying to do all that stuff, trying to be noticed, trying to be important, trying to get people to love me, trying to get position in the church, trying to get some kind of title, role, rank, some kind of anointing, some kind of special deal - if I would just stop all that nonsense called Dead Works, and just rest, that everything I need in my life right now, where I'm at is in Christ, I can relax and start to enjoy my life, and enter the Rest of Faith, where I can live my life at peace, instead of being anxious, worried, stressed.

Worried about what will they think? It doesn't matter what they think - it's what He thinks. It's what Christ thinks. It's about being connected to Him; so Repentance from Dead Works is the first step in separating from that old self-centred life - where it's all up to you, and you've got to try harder.

When people come into a church, this is what happens: they learn keys and principles. If you'll do 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - you'll be blessed! I know what I need to do, but I'm stuck on #1, so couldn't remember the other four - I wasn't quick enough, didn't get them down. So what happens is: if we don't watch, we move from grace - the undeserved flow of God's life - and end up under the law.

Now how does this really show up? It shows up in how you relate to other people! It shows up in how, particularly, you relate to the body of Christ. If you realise that all your life is in Him, in Christ, then you begin to catch His heart, and you realise He's in others as well. If I'm going to walk with Jesus, the anointed one, and let His life flow in me, I've got to respect and honour and value those in His body who also carry the same anointing - I've got to learn how to love people. I've got to learn how to value people. I've got to learn how to let His life flow through me; and the first step is just repenting, turning from your dead works, so then you can get into a place of faith. Now I'll talk about faith in the next session.

For most, faith means: also trying hard, trying hard to believe. What they're really saying is: I'm still stuck here in my dead works, trying hard to be a better person, hoping God will do something. Unfortunately, He doesn't do it for me - He does it for Ian, or someone else like that. Do you understand?

It's actually about a divine life flow, a divine life flow. Repentance from dead works has to be established as a way of life. It is the first foundational keys to making it possible for you to engage the life of Christ.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you're living out of duty, obligation, legalism; where you do things out of a wrong motive, a wrong attitude, resentful, guilty, shame-based, fear-based, all that kind of stuff. Ask God to show you where that is; and why don't you say: God, at the centre of that activity, it's all about me, and what I get out of it. Lord, I open my heart to the cross, to change - it's the cross, and what Jesus did.

[Closing Prayer]

Father, we just thank you for the wonderful grace that is extended to us in Jesus Christ. How amazing is that grace - that accepts us, that loves us, that redeems us. Oh Father, what a great heart of love. It is hard for us, who work so hard, to comprehend how much you love us; but we see in the Prodigal Son who deserved nothing, but when he came with a repentant heart to be reconnected with his father, he didn't have to do any great thing. You just reached your arms around him, and loved him and welcomed him, celebrated him, wept over him, dressed him in fine clothes, restored him to sonship and authority - and he didn't deserve it.

Oh my, we don't deserve grace, but Your empowerment to live is what enables us to change. Father, right now in these next few moments, speak into our hearts. Is there any area where we're walking in dead works - self-centred, worried about what people think, looking after ourselves, covering up who we really are, concealing the reality of an inner life that isn't going so well; desperately trying to look good, struggling with guilt and shame - all these things. Lord, today show us, so we can repent and turn from them. Father, Father, thank you for your love.

Is there any person here who's never made the first step of a changed life, which is to receive Jesus Christ? You can feel the love of God just touching you, you can feel the spirit of God moving around your heart. God is reaching out to you, to bring you back to Himself. You're a child without Father, and He wants to bring you back into His family. The answer to that is found very simply, and Jesus said: "whoever received Him, whoever believed on Him, whoever opened their life to make Him welcome, He gave the right and privilege to become a child of God."

It's something happens in a moment - when you receive Christ, the Spirit of God enters your heart. I'd love you to pray with me right now this simple prayer, a prayer to change your heart and change your life. I'd like you to follow me this prayer...

Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. Today I turn away from sin and dead works, struggling to be good enough. I turn to you the living God. Jesus, I receive you into my heart and life. I ask you to forgive me. I ask you to be my saviour. By faith today I receive you as my saviour. I give my life to you, and I thank you for your spirit coming into my heart right now, making me clean, making me different. Today Lord Jesus Christ I belong to You. Amen.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb. 5:12 – 6:3 “Let us go on to perfection” to maturity, to the fullness of God’s purpose.

Context of this passage = going on to perfection, following the example of Jesus Christ.

First principles = foundation of “Christ” – The Anointed One.

Many things that are basic to Christian life not mentioned here e.g. prayer, fasting and giving.

List of 6x principles – these are a foundation for building not just set of teachings.

- not just a set of steps to take – six living foundations.

Called 1st Principles of Christ because they establish and form Life of Christ within us.

They are foundational to the new way of being and living.

Foundation = NT 2310 = substructure that supports a building.

First = NT 746 = Arche = 1st in a series, principal.

Principles = NT 4747 The first thing from which others in a series arise;

e.g. military rank.

= The fundamentals, the ABC’s, the “Times Tables”.

Without the Foundations – consequence is spiritual immaturity

Vs 12 “... you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of God”

Babe = NT 3516 = Nepios = babe without the power of speech – one needing milk.

Full age = NT 5046 = Teleios = full grown son, lacking nothing for completion.

Maturity = have constantly exercised their spiritual senses and growing.

Discern good and evil = able to see through to the root (love)

= identify what flows from Spirit of God and what flows from law.

= Identify what is Holy Spirit directed and what is self centred.

2. Overview of First Principles

Heb 6:1 – 3 “... Not laying again the foundation”

(i) Repentance from Dead Works - Turning from self centred life, efforts to be righteous.

(ii) Faith towards God – Turning to God, receive His love and righteousness, and identity.

(iii) Doctrine of Baptisms – separation from sin and immersion to Life in the Spirit.

(iv) Laying on of hands – impartation of grace, gifts, callings to fulfil destiny.

(v) Resurrection of the dead – flowing in the life of the Spirit.

(vi) Eternal Judgement – judging all that is not of the Life of the Spirit.

This is about receiving and flowing in the love and life of the Holy Spirit.

It is about the exchange of our life for His supernatural life.

It is about walking in our new identity and position as a child of God.

It is foundational – it under girds and supports the Kingdom Life of the Holy Spirit.

It is a way of life not a series of steps.

3. The Fall of Man

Gen 3:1-10 “You shall be as God” – knowing good and evil.

Adam and Even walked in love and unity with God and with one another.

They rejected the Father’s Love – sinned against love and relationship.

What was Lost in the Fall

They fell from a relationship and life where God was the Centre.

(i) They lost their love relationship with God as their Father and with one another. Eph. 4:18.

- Cut off from the life and love of God – man was now orphaned, self centred.

(ii) They lost their identity as a child of God who clothed and gave identity.

- Adam was naked, ashamed, self conscious, self centred, insecure.

- Lost! Who am I?

(iii) They lost the supernatural life of God that sustained them, Life of the Spirit.

What they experienced as a result of the Fall

Emotional turmoil – guilt, shame, fear.

Ambition to be someone by doing, to clothe nakedness.

Constant identity crisis – concealing true identity (fig leaves).

Trying to be accepted, loved, and approved of by doing.

Struggling to control their personal life and circumstances.

Defining good and evil from self centre – what is good for me, not good for me.

Under law - trying hard to be good enough, be righteous.

Religious – doing good works to try and establish own righteousness.

4. Example of Older Brother

Lk.15:25 – 3 “He was angry and would not go in”

Seeing the younger brother experience grace exposed his fallen condition.

Elder brother: Loyal, faithful, hardworking, good – profess to love his father.

Hidden Motivation

Serve to find identity in works.

Need to be seen and recognised.

Bitterly disappointed and striving.

Looking for love, identity in works.

Hidden Sins of his heart
Striving Resentment/Anger
Pride Striving for superiority
Jealousy Cold and unloving
Self rights Rather be right than have relationships
Judgemental Opposed to Christ to spirit of grace
He needed to repent of Dead Works.

5. What Christ Has Done for Us

(i) Removed the list of failures and disempowered evil spirits. (Col. 2:14-15)
(ii) Broke the power of cursing to release blessing of Holy Spirit. (Gal 3:13-14)
(iii) Raised us up to be united with Him in Heaven. (Eph.2:5-6)
(iv) Blessed us, made us without blame, accepted, redeemed, forever. (Eph.1:3-5)
All of this is a free gift – cannot be earned – by grace through faith.
Gal 5:4 If we do not rely on grace – its power is made to vanish.
Repent of Dead Works before faith can become effective.
Repent = total change of mind and heart.
Dead = 3498 = Nekros = a corpse, lacking in vitality, life, power.
Activities which are not moved with love and power of the Holy Spirit.
Activities filled with self centred agenda.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are the “first” or “elementary” principles of Christ in Hebrews 6: 1-3?

Why is an understanding of these essential? Hebrews 5: 12-13

(They are foundational to a new way of being and living and they establish and form the Life of Christ within us)

Maturity = full grown son; lacking nothing for completion.
= have constantly exercised their spiritual senses and growing.
= discerns good and evil. i.e
1. able to see through to the root.
2. able to identify what flows from the Spirit of God and what flows from law.
3. able to identify what is Holy Spirit directed and what is self directed.

How can we discern what flows from the Spirit of God and what flows from law?
e.g. in our thought life, attitudes, beliefs, impressions, feelings, inner reactions or responses, behaviours.

How can we identify what is Holy Spirit directed and what is self directed?
What would be the fruit or effect that each would produce in our lives and the lives of those we influence?

Can you share from your own experience a time where you were able to discern that you were Holy Spirit directed and a time where you were directed by law or self?

What did you experience internally? (Law/self = condemnation, shame, insecurity, fear, striving, dryness, depression, jealousy, judgemental/critical attitude, anger, resentment, cold and unloving, control, focused on your rights, feeling that you've got to meet certain standards to be right with God and to attain His blessings and provision.)

(Holy Spirit = flow of love, peace, joy, energy and life, enthusiasm, inner security and strength, rest, assurance, confidence (it's going to be ok) trust, sense of intimacy with the Lord, vitality and power.)

What was the outcome?
What was the impact on those around you?

Do your motivations and actions flow more often out of a fear - base or a faith / love - base?

Review in the notes “What Christ Has Done For Us.”

THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST AT CALVARY IS THE BASIS UPON WHICH YOU RECEIVE FROM GOD NOT YOUR PERFORMANCE OR HOW GOOD YOU ARE!

What has the Holy Spirit been speaking to about in this session?
Has He helped you identify dead works within your life?
Where do you need to repent (change your way of thinking) in order to believe God?

Faith towards God (2 of 7)

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What is Faith? How would I know if I had it? How do I get it? Can it be grown and developed? How can I grow and develop it? Turn towards God to receive his love, receive identity in Him, receive positioning in Him, so you can bring forth good works, living works.

[Review: Dead Works]

We're going to just open up our Bible at Hebrews 6. We looked at this whole area of the foundational principles, and we saw that for any building, you have to have a foundation. If the foundation is weak, the building will not be strong.

Hebrews 6:1 "Now leaving the discussion of the foundational principles of Christ, let us go onto maturity (or to the fullness of God's plan), not laying again the foundation of: repentance from dead works; faith towards God; the doctrine of baptisms; of laying on of hands; of resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgement - this we will do if God permits"

So Paul (or the author) is talking about us going on in the purpose of God: "let us go on"; but he also says: it's impossible to do it, if you haven't got a strong foundation built in your life. So he said: the result of not going on is - people remain immature. They remain babies, when God wants us actually to grow. So as we start this, I want to first of all just give the big picture of what this about.

The Bible tells us Jesus came with a particular mission: He came to reveal what God is like; He came to reveal the Father, and the heart of God as a Father. Throughout history, people have never known God as a Father. They had various ideas about God, revelations of God, but this was the first time anyone had brought a message that God is a Father, and we can be born again into His family. We can be joined into Him, and have His life come into us. We can have a relationship with God as a loving Father. So the Bible says: Jesus was the express image of the invisible God.

He said to His disciples: "If you've seen Me, you have seen the Father". So if we want to see what God is like, as a Father, it's all wrapped up in Jesus Christ, and how He connected with people, how He loved people, and in His day He totally upturned the religious works of the day. So Jesus came to invite you and me into a similar relationship.

In one part He said that where I am, the relationship that I have with my Father, I want you to be there also. Now just think about that for a moment. Right through Jesus' ministry He said: I do the things that the Father has shown me to do; I do the things I see the Father doing. He said: the words I speak are what the Father has given me. When everyone was about to leave Him, He said: I'm not alone - the Father is with me.

Jesus lived His life out of an intimate love relationship with God, His Father; and He said in John 14:1 "Now I go to prepare a place for you". So just before Jesus left the earth, He said: I'm going to prepare for you a place of relationship, identical to mine; that where I am, the relationship I have, you can have that also. Now people know the words of that, but seldom experience the reality of what it is to walk day by day feeling, sensing the love of God as your Father, embracing you, encouraging you, valuing you, guiding you, revealing His love to you. It's out of this source that we can have a secure life.

We saw last session that if we don't find our centre in God, we'll find something else as a substitute. We'll find money, but money will never satisfy. We'll look for properties and possessions, but they never satisfy. We look for position and power, but they never satisfy; and people who seek those things are really seeking something that cannot be found there. Sometimes people seek to find fulfilment of these needs in their life through religion. Religion is just trying hard to gain acceptance with God, and acceptance by people. It cannot change a person, in fact it's just a heavy burden.

So Jesus made it very clear: He's called us to come into relationship - not into doing lots of things, but into experiencing a love relationship with God, out of which our life is transformed. That's what He offers, so these foundations are the foundations of that relationship.

Notice it doesn't talk about prayer, doesn't talk about fasting, doesn't talk about Bible reading. It's talking about foundations in your belief system. The Bible says that what you believe in your heart, that's the way your life will go. So out of the abundance of your heart, that's where your life flows. Your life flows out of what you really believe; so if you come to church, but in your heart you still believe there's something desperately wrong with you, you will never enjoy intimacy with God; because as soon as you try to become intimate with God, the message of your heart, there

is something wrong with me, something not acceptable about me, will come up. The shame of your past activities will come up, and there will be a wall between you, and being intimate with God.

So the tendency for church people is to try to work harder, to be good enough to experience the love of God. We cover over, that we have no real relationship with God, by just trying to do the right things - this is what Jesus did not call us to. Notice this: we're called not only to experience that; we're also called to grow.

Now, in the Bible it talks about this. It says in 1 John, it talks about children, while God has forgiven your sins. Then it talks about spiritual young men, you're strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the devil. That means they're in a place now they've grown, matured. They're not having struggles with temptations. They've grown - and then He says: Fathers, you know Him, who's from the beginning.

So the Bible lays out stages or phases of growth. We could be a spiritual child, and it doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. You could be a spiritual child, childish, continually wrestling with failures, wrestling with shame, wrestling with guilt, wrestling with unforgiveness, wrestling with tormenting thoughts. That is child stuff.

If you're a young man, then you've learned how to confront those with the word of God. You become established in who you are in God, you become strong in the word of God, strong in spirit. Now the devil's not a problem for you. You're not worried about attacks from the devil. You've actually learned how to recognise them and subdue them.

Then you're called to grow from there to become a father. A father is one who knows what God is like, as a Father, and is able to reveal that love to people in such a way their lives are attracted, and they are blessed, and benefit from it. Jesus was a spiritual father to the disciples. Why was He like that? Because He could reveal the love of God, and the nature of God to them.

If we're going to grow to maturity, it's not going to be automatic. We have to lay foundations, and the first foundation we saw was Repenting, or turning from lifeless activities driven by guilt, fear, shame, desire to please, desire to impress, desire to be something. All of those kinds of things - and church is full of it. Society's full of people struggling with lifeless activities. When you get into some situations, you'll notice how dead the atmosphere is - there's no life in it. People are being polite and correct, but you don't feel authentic love flowing - you feel there's something missing there.

You go to some families, and they might be polite and everything's nice together, but you feel there's no bonding of love. There's something missing in the middle of it. It is the love of God flowing, it's the life of the spirit of God, so we're called to repent from dead works. In Hebrews 9, Verse 14, it says: "Now the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you". You need to be clean from dead works. Cleanse your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

Notice this: the first thing is, God wants us to be cleaned up from all the dead, lifeless, barren activities, the frustrating things, that never caused us to feel love, or to have an identity; and to instead connect with God, and the overflow is such that now we're serving God, our life is an abundance of activity and vitality.

It's not we just stop doing stuff. There's a change on the inside, in the core motivation of why we're doing it. If we're not secure in who we are, that: I am my Father's child, I'm a child of God, I've come from God and I'm going to God, I have an eternity with Him, I have a destiny on the earth - if we are not secure that we're loved by God, we will then do things to try and meet the insecurity.

We will try to act or do things that cause us to feel good; so some people are very generous people, and they give and they give and they give and they do all kinds of things, all sorts of things. But the Bible says: if you do lots of things, but don't have love, what profit is it all? It's actually driven out of a motivation to feel good about yourself. What God is wanting is to change us on the inside, so we experience love, and love flows naturally.

When people are living in dead works, they tend to relate to people on the basis of: if you can help me get what I want to get, then you can be my friend. I see you're quite a wealthy person - you can help me get what I want - I'll be your friend. But you - well no not you. No, no. You come from Flaxmere - but this is the kind of thinking that goes on - you know that! That's called partiality, where we divide the world up - people that can help us get somewhere; and people that can't help us get anywhere - now that is full of dead works.

What God is looking for is to so change us, so that His love and His nature flows out, and it's natural to love people. That's why one of the first things He does - and you'll see this in the progression of these - is after we become connected to God and experience His love, He wants us to put us in a family, where we can be immersed in a family, and learn how to grow up in love, and learn how to represent Him properly - which is the remainder of the teachings in this.

So God wants us to then serve Him, but it's a serving that's a joy! That's not something that's a burden. It's something joyful - it flows out because you're in love with Him, and you get up and you talk with Him, and you begin to experience His love, and out of that there's an overflow in your life.

So we're called to turn from Dead Works, and turn instead and replace them with something called Faith towards God. We turn away from activities which are dependent on our own effort and energy, which tire you out, get you drained, frustrated; and we become like the older brother, resentful because we're not getting what we think we should get. A lot of people burn out. Burn outs are often because of a lot of dead works, wrong motivations; but if we repent of those, and now we come into Faith in the living God, our life will begin to flourish, and something flows out of it. It's called the life of the Holy Ghost.

[Message on Faith]

Now let's have a look in Hebrews 11. Let's see what faith is, a little bit about faith. Some of this for some of you will be elementary, but for others it might be quite an eye-opener. So faith, Chapter 11 verse 1:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen, for by it the elders obtained good testimony. By faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen, were not made of things which are visible."

So let me just outline a few simple things, so we can understand faith. I need to know: what is faith; how would I know if I had it? How do I get it; and can it be grown and developed? How could I grow and develop it? These are quite important things; so the first thing is: Faith is different to Hope.

Notice: Faith is the substance of something you hope for. Hope has to do with the future, so many people confuse faith and hope. Hope is about the future. Hope is something in my mind. It is thinking about, and optimistic and expectant of, something really good in the future; but faith is now. Faith is something I have now. It's a conviction and assurance I have - so I know now it's present. So hope has to do with the future; faith with now. Many people confuse faith and hope. They say: "I'm believing God for this", but actually what they're doing is: they're hoping God will do something. Faith - you know it, it's a conviction.

So the second thing is: Faith established in the Heart; not the Head. With the heart man believes; so you can know lots of the Bible, and have no faith at all. You can know many scripture verses, and still have no faith, because it's all in the head. Faith is an issue of your heart - with the heart you believe.

Now let me tell you this - all of us believe some things. Every person here believes something. You believe something about yourself, many things. You believe things about God, you believe things about people, you believe things about life. You possibly haven't stopped to evaluate what you really do believe, but your core beliefs are what move you to live the life you live. Coming to church isn't what does it. It's actually what you believe in your heart - so if you believe in your heart, because you had painful experiences when you were younger, that I'm not of any value... Perhaps you grew up in a very strong, controlling family. Your opinion or feelings or desires were never consulted, and you have established in your heart an angry, hurt, firm belief: nothing I do is ever good enough; I'll never get anywhere; or no one really cares about me.

Now those are three distinct beliefs. If those beliefs don't shift, what will happen is, your life will run through those beliefs. It will filter how you run your life. It'll bring into your life: exactly what you believe is what you'll have. So faith has to be established in the heart. I must then reform my belief system to believe what God says is true. Most of the struggles you have as a younger believer is to shift your belief system, and become established in what God says is true about you. God says: you're accepted; but I don't feel accepted - then you've got a struggle in your heart with your belief system. God says: you're forgiven; but I don't feel forgiven - you've got a struggle in your heart with your belief system. God says: you're a child of His, and He's near you all the time; but I don't feel He's near me all the time - well then, you've got a struggle in your belief system.

So we live our life out of the beliefs we have in our heart, so faith is important to get established in our heart. Faith deals with the things which are not seen, so I don't see it, but nevertheless (says faith), the things which are not seen are very real. So for example, the love of God is very real - it's incredibly real; and when you experience the love of God, it just touches your heart. You often begin to weep. You feel God loving you, and you feel His presence; so it is real, but not seen. It comes from the realm of the spirit, into the natural realm, by faith; so everything you and I will receive from God must have faith in it. I must believe what God says about this, for it to manifest in my life. You may have grown up rejected, and believe that you're not acceptable to anyone. Well faith will shift that, and acceptance will be established in your heart; and then no matter what anyone does, you are secure. You're not dependent on what people and circumstance is doing any more. You are secure inside because faith - you have it now!

People say: how do you know you're accepted? I know! I know! I know! I know! How do you know your sins are forgiven? Oh, I know! I know! How could you possibly know? What's the evidence? The evidence is in here - I know it, because it's come into my life as I believe what God said; and it brings liberty. It brings tremendous liberty - so faith needs to be established in our heart.

So faith is also expressed through the words we speak. In Romans 4:17, God calls the things to be, not as though they are. So faith comes into our heart. Faith comes, we hold the word of God, because whatever you believe in your heart, you'll speak with your mouth; so when there's faith in our heart, we will confess what God says. We will speak what God says. God said to Abraham - changed his name from 'Abram' to 'Abraham, Father of Nations'. So for years, Abraham was saying, when they asked him "who are you?" - "I am Father of Nations". Excuse me, you don't have any kids? I am Father of Nations. I don't like to put this out, but you're wife is nearly 100 years old. I am Father of Nations - and you're not looking too good yourself. I am Father of Nations.

He chose to believe God, and he professed his faith. He did not stagger, though his body and her body were old, and the result of holding in faith was: a miracle took place; and guess who the Father of Nations is? Abraham - but there was a walk of faith to establish it. The Bible says: we walk not by sight, but we walk by faith. We don't walk by the things we see. We walk because we, by faith, can see what God has said is true - and we hold onto it. We've got to see the healing in prayer before you'll experience the healing. You have to see what God has planned for you, before you'll hear it, and see it in life.

So faith always reaches to what God says in the invisible realm, and causes it to manifest now. Sometimes there's a delay between my knowing I have it, and seeing it happen in life - so that's faith. So let's just talk about faith in relationship with God. Have a look in Verse 6. Now without faith, it's impossible to please Him - impossible! If something is that important, I should make it my life's study to know about Faith. Why should I? Because without it - I can't please Him.

Now just coming to church doesn't mean you're in a place of faith. It means you came to church. It could mean you're in a place of faith. It could mean, like me, you just come to church. When I was a Catholic, I used to come to church - it's what you did Sundays. It wasn't a matter of faith, it was a matter of fear - I'd go to hell if I didn't. I had to come to church. Even when Joy took me to her church, I'd still go to my church. I had this belief: I'll go to hell if I don't go to church! I'd go to church; but you understand there's no life in that. It's kind of: God, a whole hour, you know? You understand? I'm not going to meet God. It's just doing a religious activity - there's no faith in that. Faith comes when I'm here because I want to be - I want to be in the presence of God. I want the atmosphere of God! I want God to speak to me! I'm here because I want to be - the presence of God.

So notice, it says: without faith, it's impossible, impossible, to please Him - impossible. So notice it says: "he that comes to God must believe He exists, and also that He rewards those who diligently seek Him". So 1) He exists; 2) He's a rewarder; and the key ingredient is my faith - that shows up by diligently persisting in seeking Him.

So He's a rewarder - God blesses us. Sometimes we look around and we say: how come they're blessed, and I'm not so blessed? Well maybe there's a reason. Maybe they diligently sought God, and changed their beliefs. So you notice then, faith is foundational to the relationship with God. Let me just put it to you this way: without faith or a trust in God, you can't walk with Him. You can't build any relationship without trust. You can't build a marriage without trust. You can't build a business relationship without trust - so without faith, without trust in God's character and words, I can't walk with Him at all.

If I'm going to argue with Him; and doubt what He says; and reason what He says; and continually take what He says, and put it through my mind, and filter; and I've got my own opinions about what works - if I'm going to walk like that, I

can't walk with God. It's as simple as that. Walking with God means I develop a relationship of trusting Him, because I continually am experiencing being loved.

Now this is the stumbling point for so many people, they have unresolved issues of the heart, and they stop trusting, or won't trust God. When you won't trust God, this is what you've got to do: you have to take control of your own world and life, and be God yourself. So we're made to bond to God who is a Father, a loving Father and spirit being. We're created to bond to Him, to trust Him, to have a relationship with Him, and faith is what makes the connection, so by faith we enter relationship with God. By faith we maintain it.

Now let's just talk about entering relationship with God. How do you enter into a relationship with God? What is the key thing?

In Ephesians 2:8, the entrance into relationship with God has got nothing to do with where you've come from, what education you have; it's got nothing to do with your family background, got nothing to do with anything natural at all. It's actually like this - verse 4 - God, who is rich in his mercy, rich, rich in mercy... Most people, when they think of God, think He's angry and judging them - ooh oh, got a big stick, gonna catch you out! But the Bible says: He's rich, wealthy, abundant in mercy and - look at this! - and His great love - great, abundant, extravagant love! He absolutely loves you! So it says: "When we were dead in sin, He made us alive together in Christ; by grace you're saved, and raised us up together, made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness, kindness towards us."

Notice these words: grace, mercy, kindness, love - that's what God is. So how do I enter relationship with God? Very simply: by grace. By grace are you saved through faith, and even that's not of your own - not of works, lest you boast. Now you know the verse, but the tendency is to forget what it really means. Grace is an empowerment by God that changes our lives. It's something we don't work for, or we don't earn. If you work for it, it isn't grace, it's your reward. If you didn't work for it, and it's a gift, then it's grace; and grace is the power of God to shift you on the inside.

You can't work for it, you can just receive it; so either you get given grace to change, or you're working hard to change - there can't be any in-between. I either get God's power to help me change, and so I do change, and it's real change, and its change on the inside; or I got none of that, I'm just working hard trying to be a good person, to overcome that temper. You'll notice when you do that, you're under law; so by grace you're saved through faith, not of works. So it's a gift.

Anything you do to try and earn your standing with God - so let me show you how it shows up subtly in many people. Well I had a bad day yesterday, didn't pray - I feel distant from God; or I prayed today, I'm real near to God! Now all of this about your nearness to God is dependent on your works. He doesn't change at all. It does not depend on your works - prayed two hours today and 15 minutes tomorrow, doesn't make any difference to your standing with God. Your standing with God, your identity, is given to you as a gift. When you receive Jesus Christ as your saviour here's what happens; you become a new person. He puts His spirit into you. You are now joined to Jesus Christ. You're joined to the spirit of God. You are joined to the spirit of God. He doesn't break that joining. You are joined now to the spirit of God, and so God's life, His own very life is grafted into you. You're what's called "born again". Now you are not what you used to be - you are a child, a son or daughter of God. Who am I? I'm a son of God! God is my Father!

You see, this is who you are now; but the trouble is, if it's not established strongly in your life, you'll live out of who you used to be - a reject, or fearful, or afraid, or ashamed, or embarrassed, or broke, or whatever. See, this is the new identity, so I don't have to work to get that, I am now, by the grace of God, a child of God. Now I've just got to learn how to live and walk with Him. So faith got me started, and faith is how I continue. It's all going to be grace, not trying hard. The harder you try, the more condemned you'll feel about your condition - that's the terrible thing about it. Have you noticed that? The harder you try, the more difficult it gets, and how you get bogged down and just want to quit and give up. Why? Because when you do that, you move away from grace and come under law.

If I am right with God, in any area of my life, by trying to work at it, then I've shifted and I've come under law. Paul said: don't frustrate the grace of God. Don't cause God's grace - which is freely and generously given, to help you grow and live your life - don't frustrate it and stop it, by then trying to perform to be good to get it.

Don't frustrate the grace of God, by struggling hard and working to be a better person. Learn to believe what God says is true about you.

This is what he said: "This is the work of God: that you believe". The problem is learning to believe. Why? Because immediately, when you try and believe what God says, the strongholds in your mind and heart rise up and argue; they argue against, and they reason against, the life of God. The Christian life is much easier than you think - it's about grace. I can see when I said that, that some of you don't agree; and the reason you're not agreeing is because you're looking at your experience and saying: my experience is hard, and therefore, the Christian life can't be easy.

Jesus said: "My yoke is easy, my burden is light". It's easy; it's light. If it's getting heavy, you've moved out of grace, you moved out of faith, you're trusting in yourself again. The moment it gets heavy, you're out of faith. You're struggling in your own efforts.

Jesus said: there's a Rest of Faith; so when faith is in your heart, you know what happens? There will be two ways you'll tell... One is you'll come to rest. You just actually become at rest inside. You're not struggling, striving, and uptight; you're at rest. You're quite confident and calm. There is a rest of faith. The second thing that happens is: the way you talk. You talk out of that place of rest, out of the position of rest. Our struggle is not to try and do things, or make God do anything. Our struggle is one of struggling to overcome unbelief, doubts, negative thinking; and just believe what God says is true, and come to rest in that, so there's no more struggling. When you're resting in what God says, you're in a place of faith. Faith - it's not your feelings. Your feelings will come into a bit.

So we walk with God by faith. Notice in this last scripture, we'll look at, Galatians 5. Now he's talking to the Galatians Church, which started off believing, and then got into trying doing.

"Stand fast in the liberty with Christ has made free, don't be entangled again in the yoke of bondage".

In other words, don't go back under laws, regulations: you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you must do this, you've got to dress like that, you've got to have this hair cut, and I can't have that hair cut, you've got to behave like this, behave like that, you've got to go here, not there. All of that kind of stuff is a yoke of bondage. God wants us to grow like Him, and get to know Him, and to get to know His nature, where we can love people without having them to be monkeys and perform for us.

So notice what he says. He says here, for in Christ Jesus - Verse 4 - "you become estranged from Christ, if you attempt to make yourselves right with God by the law... (By doing things; if you try that way) ...you have fallen from grace."

How many have had a situation like this, where you had someone that really hurt you, and you found it really difficult to forgive. So now you struggle trying to be nice to that person? Why are you struggling trying to be nice to that person, when actually you want to slap their face? Or worse even! Why are you struggling to be nice? Because behind it all, you're thinking something like this: I'm a Christian, I've got to be nice; and you know deep in your heart, is war and vengeance and murder! And when you're not trying to be nice, you're thinking of how you could pay them back, and what you'd really like to say. What is all of that about? That's not the Rest of Faith! You've come under the law: I need to be nice.

Why not stop coming under the law? When you come under the law, the thing that happens is, there's no power of God to help you; and it's real hard to love some of these people - it's really hard! Christian life is so hard, I've got to love people, but I don't like them; some I even hate them. Some have ripped me off. I know what I'll do: I'll just subtly avoid them; I'll just cut them out. It's all a manifestation of hate. The problem is in the heart. If you're not in the Rest of Faith; you just come under the law. You're struggling now, trying to be a good person.

Actually the reality is this: you already are a loving person. Why not just admit the war in your heart, and come and repent from that Dead Work of trying to love them; trying to manufacture the life of God? Instead just: repent of the dead works; surrender to the Lord, ask Him: Lord, help me to see this person like you see them; help me to love them. Let your love flow through me. As you begin to meditate on the love of God for yourself, and for people, and very soon you start to find it coming naturally rather than forced, add-on. When it's an add-on, it doesn't last. Somehow you'll definitely blow it. You've tried so hard to be nice - nine times you were nice! Oh, I'm nearly there, but the tenth you blew it; and all the nine just didn't count for anything, because the tenth you really blew it! So you're back now to do what you need to do: humble yourself, just repent and change.

Notice it says: "don't get in the yoke of bondage". Learn to live a life out of the new identity: I am a loving person; I love people because that's who I am. It's not because: well they don't deserve it! Oh come on, you got back under the law again. Grace has got nothing to do with whether you deserve. Grace comes, not because you deserve it, but

because it's free; because God is good. God loves you, so He wants you to love others. He can love people through you; so you notice there: faith works by love; so the life of faith is cultivated by spending time with God, beginning to experience His love, listening to hear His voice; because by hearing His voice, faith suddenly comes into your heart.

It's cultivated by meditating in the word of God, and allowing our mind and heart to be renewed. When faith is there, there's works flow out that are very real. You don't have to try to love people - I've got to go out and love the sinners! It's what we have to do - love the sinners.

Now you can see a person in the grip of bitterness in the law. If you have to do it, then it's not flowing naturally; you've got a love deficit in your heart. When you're full of love, it just flows out. Have you ever seen a drunk man, when they're full of booze, and they start to love - and they've got love for everyone, you know? I love the world - you know, something changed, they were overflowing.

When we get filled with the spirit of God, which is a spirit of love - it flows to touch the world. So foundation 1) to walk and repent of all of that legalistic striving, struggling, dead empty work. Repent of the motivations. Instead start to turn to the Lord, and allow His word to shift your heart, so you begin to discover who you really are; you're a loving person. Why? Because you're in the image of Christ. You're a forgiving person. Why? Because you're in the image of Christ. You're a generous person. Why? Because you're made in the image of Christ. You already have those things in you. They just need to flow - not try to make them happen. They're already there. That's who you are; and when we start to live a life like that, we become at rest inside. That's actually who I really am. I love being generous. I just love it. It's who I am.

Live out of the identity. I love being gracious. Why? Because it's who I am - it's what my Father is like - I'm like Him.

I love forgiving. Why? Because my Father's forgiven me, and I'm so grateful, I just love to forgive. I don't want people under the law.

The life of faith, it's a life where grace flows out and touches people. What a great life.

[Closing Prayer]

Father in heaven, what a loving Father You are. I feel overwhelmed by the wonderful love that You have. I thank you for that love.. The presence of God is here; and the presence of God is also where you are right now. God is a loving Father. He really does love you, and He wants you just to turn away from trying hard in life, and trying hard to be a good person, and to believe.

Believe that God loves you so much, that He sent His only son Jesus Christ who gave His life on the cross, so all the sin could be broken and it's power broken, every curse taken away; so you could be ushered in to the family of God, and become a child of God, just by believing in Jesus Christ.

Maybe some here today, and perhaps you are struggling in your life, struggling with all kinds of issues. What a great day to say I'm going to repent of those things, and begin to open my heart to my Father that loves me. I'd like you just to follow me in this prayer...

Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. I thank you for loving me, thank you for accepting me, thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins. Lord, I've struggled so hard to make my life work. I turn away from those struggles. I turn away from sin. I turn away from a life without you. Jesus, I receive you as my saviour today. Please forgive my sin, forgive all my struggles to try and look good. Lord, forgive me. I give you my life today. I receive forgiveness. I receive your spirit into my heart. I belong to you. Before heaven and earth today, I declare Jesus Christ is my saviour and Lord. Amen.

Father, I just thank you for each person that prayed that prayer for the first time. Let the spirit and love of God just flow into their heart. God loves you so much - more than you realise. You have so much to discover about this God, who wants to make Himself known to you.

Perhaps today there's ones who are struggling. You've lived under legalism, under the law and you've wrestled with that. Today would be a great day for that yoke - Paul calls it a yoke - a yoke of duty; a yoke of having to; a yoke of lots of little things you have to do to be good enough, to be acceptable. God wants you free of all of that. I'd love you

today, if you've been struggling under that kind of yoke; those that are present - I'd love you just to come forward. We want to lay hands on you, and want you just to let go of the struggling, repent of the trying and the efforts, and open your heart for God to reveal His love to you. As people lay hands on you, I know you're going to experience something of the love of God.

It's a terrible thing trying hard, trying hard to be good enough. I did that for many years growing up, lacking a revelation of love, I struggled feeling I was never good enough, struggled so hard to be good enough; did so many things in order to get acceptance. What I needed was a revelation of God's love. It comes by faith - after you stop and repent of your dead works.

If there's people struggling, and you're caught in the bondage of legalism, of works, heaviness, oppression. People here who are struggling with oppression over your lives, some are struggling with failure and the fear of failure; other ones struggling here with the fear you'll be rejected. Some of you have come - there's about three people come today, and you've had real troubles in your life with God, real troubles in your walk with God, and your biggest fear is whether you'll be accepted, because of the things you've done. God loves you. He wants to help you today.

You know, the problem with the law is you have to keep the whole lot of it. Jesus came to set us free of the law of obligations and duties; have to do this, have to do that. He wanted us to come into a relationship of love and grace; wonderful grace of God, that frees us up to be ourselves. How great to be yourself in Christ.

I came up with a religious background, a Catholic background. It took me quite a bit of time to realise I'd brought with it a lot of the baggage into my Christian life. I just needed to let it all go, needed to let go striving, struggling to be good enough, struggling to meet God's needs, struggling to get my sins forgiven, all of that kind of stuff; and just: God, I thank you I already have it. I am blessed with every blessing in heavenly places in Jesus Christ. I have forgiveness. I have redemption. I have acceptance. I have it now - that's what I have being a child of God, so now I'm going to meditate in it and dwell in it.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb. 6:1-3 "Let us go on to perfection (maturity), not laying again the foundations ..."

(a) Jesus came to reveal His Father – reveal what God is really like, a loving Father
Heb. 1:3 "... bring the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person"
Jn. 14:9 "... He who has seen me has seen the Father..."
Jn. 10:30 "I and my Father are one".

(b) Jesus came to call us into relationship with the Father – sons and daughters
Jn 14:3 "I go to prepare a place for you – that where I am you may be also".
Jn 1:18 "...the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father has declared Him".

(c) God calls each of us to be born again into His Family and then to grow up"
Rom 8:29 "... He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son ..."
1 Jn. 2:12-13 Children (precious infants) - Young men – Fathers.
Spiritual fathers – one who represent God the Father and reproduce His Life.

(d) Growth to maturity is not automatic – requires foundation to be laid
The First Principles of Christ are foundational for growth. (Heb. 6:1-3)
Heb. 9:14 Blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
Dead Works = activities that have no life or love of God.
Works activated out of guilt, fear, duty, personal gain.
Called to Repent = totally turn from dead activities and selfish motivation.
Blood of Jesus Christ has power to cleanse the conscience so free.
"Serve Living God" = activities that flow from love and trusting obedience.
Jn. 6:29 – "This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom He has sent".

2. Faith – What is It?

Heb 11:3 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for ..."

(a) Faith is not the same as Hope
Hope is directed to the future – an attitude of expectancy concerning things to be.
Faith is established in the present – now!
It is a confidence, something real and definite within us here and now.

Substance = 5287 NT = to set in place under, confidence, assurance.
Evidence = 1650 NT = connection, proof, assurance.

(b) Faith is established in Heart not Head
Hope is anchored in the head. (1 Thes.5:8 .. helmet, hope of salvation)
Faith is established in the heart.
Rom 10:10 with the heart man believes unto righteousness.
Faith is not a mental acceptance of bible facts – produce no change.
Heart faith produces genuine change in the life of person who has it.
Believe is always associated with a change or motion –“ into”.

(c) Faith deals with things “Not Seen”
Heb 11:1 “ ...evidence of things not seen”
Not seen = not exist = they are invisible to physical senses.
Faith deals with the real spiritual realities of God’s Word (2 Cor. 5:7).

(d) Faith produces a rest from struggle, uncertainty, doubt
Heb 11:3 “We who have believed do enter that rest ...”
When faith is present in the heart – there is also a rest from struggle.
Often there is a conflict between what we see and what God’s Word says.
Faith produces a deep confidence that what God says is true in spiritual sense.
Rom 4:17 “ ... call the things that do not exist as though they did”.

(e) Faith expresses itself in confession – speaking in agreement with God.
Rom. 10:10 “with the heart man believes, with the mouth confession is made to salvation”.
Whatever the heart is full of overflows in our life.
Confession = Gk homologia = to say the same thing as.
When there is faith in our heart we speak out what God says (2 Cor. 4:13)
Heb 3:1 Christ is the high priest of our confession.
He represents us in heaven using the words we have spoken.

3. Faith and Relationship with God
Heb. 11:6 “without faith it is impossible to please God...”

(a) Faith is foundational to our relationship with God
Faith is basis for entering relationship and for continuing relationship.

(b) By Faith we enter into relationship with God
Eph. 2:8 “By grace have you been saved through faith, and that, not of yourselves it is a gift of God, not of works ...”
Grace = the supernatural enabling power of God given to us.
Grace = Gift, nothing that we have done except believed.

(c) “By Faith” we continue in relationship with God
Faith in Jesus Christ positions us as Children of God – Our New Identity.
Eph 1:3-1 He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ”.
- We have a new nature, identity, acceptance, forgiveness, redemption.
- We already have these things we don’t have to work for them.
Gal. 5:1-6 Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
- We must not fall back into trying to please God by doing.
- Learn to receive the Love of Father – it energises our faith.

(d) Faith can be cultivated and grown
Faith is cultivated through intimacy and hearing God’s voice (Rom. 10:17)
Faith can be “little” or “great” or “dead”.
Faith is cultivated by meditating in Word of God.
Faith that is real has works that can be seen (Ja 2;17).

Baptised into Christ, Baptism in Water (3 of 7)

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A foundation of believing that causes you to step up to the reality of who Jesus says you are. I am immersed into something that I was not in before. I am a totally new person, connected to God vitally, and connected to the body of Christ. Water Baptism is my testimony to the world that to the spiritual powers, that old person died, I'm joined to the living God, the power of sin is broken. I'm a free man, there's a new person risen up, born again.

Welcome to our next session in this series, a series of Foundational Principles. It's found in Hebrews 6, and this session today we're going to be looking at the Doctrine of Baptisms.

I encourage you to have a Bible, to read your Bible, to follow along the scriptures that we share, and open your heart to let the spirit of God touch you and change you right where you are. We will pray for you right at the end of this session, and we'll believe for the spirit of God to come into the room where you're watching, and to touch your life very, very powerfully.

Let's just open our Bible in Hebrews 6. The author is saying:

"Leaving the discussions of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection or maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from: dead works; of faith towards God; of the doctrine of baptisms; of the laying on of hands; of resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgement -and this we will do if God permits."

So the author is speaking first of all about the challenges - that if these Christian believers were very mature, they actually should be teaching the word of God. They should have enough in them now to be able to instruct others, to help others; and yet they remained immature. They remained spiritually like infants, and so he says: we want all of us - let us all go on to maturity.

In other words, God's goal for every one of us, as a believer, is to grow into maturity; but for that to happen he says there are two things need to happen:

1) You must have a foundation in your life. If the foundation is not laid, you cannot become all that God intended you to become. It is impossible.

2) You can't go on to maturity unless God permits; so God has a vital part in your growth and development, to fulfil your course and your destiny. If you wish to remain a child, well that's fine; but it's not what God has planned for you, and you're selling yourself short of all that God intends.

So you notice he says here: "laying a foundation". The foundation of any building is unseen - it's under the building, supports the building; and we saw in Christchurch during the earthquake, if the foundations aren't secure, and the ground it stands on is not secure, then the whole building can collapse very, very easily. So there is a foundation to be built into your life. It is a spiritual foundation.

It is something real and substantial. When it's there, you can build your life. When it isn't there, your life just goes in what seems to be a cycle of the same kinds of things, and you never grow up, and never mature. That's not God's plan. God's plan is for us to grow and to represent Him, and to advance His kingdom everywhere that He positions us.

So we saw the first two of these foundations: #1 was Repentance from Dead Works - the turning away and abandoning of activities and things that we do, trying to somehow gain favour with God - dead works that have no life in them, that are full of duty and guilt-obligation, motivated by fear, and the wrong kinds of motivations. Any work and activity you're not motivated by love, and a response from God, becomes a dead work.

The second one was Faith - Trust in the Living God; and we shared some aspects: that without faith, it's impossible to please God. We must learn how to lean on Him, and to trust in Him, and it's not just something you start your journey with. It's something you continue walking in; and the biggest challenge in all of that, is the challenge to let go control, and to learn how to trust.

So then we come to the next one. You notice it says that the foundation here is: the Doctrine of Baptisms; so in other words, the teaching concerning baptisms is the thing that becomes the foundation in your life.

The word 'doctrine' just means literally 'to teach' or 'to instruct'; but when we think of that, we think from a Western viewpoint. We think like this: I've got something to learn, and so I've read the book, I've got some information, that's it. But from a Hebrew point of view: doctrine was something you believed, and put into daily practice. There was no such thing, in the Hebrew culture, that doctrine and lifestyle were separated; that is a Greek concept. So when it says about the doctrine, it's talking about beliefs which you live out in your life. So the beliefs, the teaching, the insight

concerning baptism, is something for you to live out daily in your life; and as you live it out, a foundation for building, a life with God, is established.

When most people read that, they overlook the word doctrine straight away; and they just think: baptism - oh I've been baptised. But when you look at their life, it's evident that they're not living with the foundation properly established. They've had an experience; but the foundation has not been properly put in their life - that's why they can't stand. So the foundation here is the teaching that surrounds baptisms - plural, more than one baptism.

So God wants us, if we're going to grow and mature and have insight, to understand: what is the teaching associated with baptism; and then embrace that insight, and begin to live that out.

Let's have a look at the word baptism first of all. Mark 4:20, and the word baptism of course is a word, when you read it, you think: baptism, oh, I don't know. I'm from the Anglicans or from the Catholics, well you take the child and you sprinkle on them - that's what baptism meant for me, when I was growing up. If you've been to Pentecostal Church, maybe you're like me, and you went down the river, and got baptised in a river, so that's what it means to you.

The word baptism is - this is what happened: King James, when he got it translated, didn't want to offend the local church of his day, so he said: don't do anything that'll upset them. So what they did was, they just translated the word *Baptido* and made it *Baptism* - so they never really translated it. If you really want to understand what the word is, you've got to see how they used it; so in Mark 14:20 it tells us that Jesus said: "one of the 12 who dips his finger in the water with me". That word 'to dip into the water' is the word *bapto*, the word baptism, so "to dip into the water". So *bapto* is the root from which baptism comes, it means you dip into something. It's never a sprinkling on - it's always an immersion into something.

In another scripture, Luke 16:24, the man in hell cries out: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and give it to me to drink, because I'm tormented". So notice "dip the finger into water" - so it's an immersion. If a boat sank, it was *bapto*, it was baptised - it sank into the water. If you dye a garment, you *bapto* it - you put it into the dye, and it comes out changed.

So always the thinking and understanding, to a Hebrew reading, this is very, very simple: to baptise someone, is to immerse them completely into something. You are always baptised into something. So as we look at the word, and what these different baptisms are, I want you to think that you are placed into something - *bapto*. If you put your hand in the water, you're immersed and surrounded by water; the water has an effect on you - you get wet.

So when we're looking at the word 'Baptisms', and the teaching of Baptisms - the teaching of baptisms is about you being immersed into something you were not in before. It's about being placed into something; and it always concerns change. So when we look at these different baptisms, every one of them represents a change in your lifestyle, in some kind of way.

So what are the different baptisms? 1 Corinthians 12:13 says: "By one spirit, we are baptised into one body". The Bible talks about us being baptised into Christ. That word Christ means 'the anointed one'. It can represent: Jesus Christ, who was Jesus of Nazareth - the anointed one. It can represent the body of Christ, which is also called God's Christ, the body of Jesus Christ on this earth - His representation. So one of the baptisms is a baptism into Christ: into Him, Jesus Christ; and into His body.

The second baptism is referred to in Romans 6:3 - "as many of us were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into His death". So a second baptism is a baptism of water; so we are baptised by a person, and we're dipped into water. I was put into a river - it wasn't a river in flood, but it was a great river. I've tried to baptise people in rivers in flood - it's quite fun really, you've got to hold them real tight! So there's a baptism in water; and we sometimes have quite a separation in time between a person receiving Christ, and being baptised in water. We'll see in the Bible that was not so - they just baptised them as soon as they believe.

In some cultures, you can believe in Jesus Christ - to them, He's just another God; but the day you get baptised - you have sent a clear message to everyone: I'm a Christian. So in some cultures, the day you are baptised, is the day that it's clear to everyone: who you are, and where you stand. So water baptism, for some, in some cultures, means the difference between life and death. The day they get baptised, they're shut off from their family, shut off from their relatives, shut off from the culture - and now they are really living a different life. They've entered a new way of life.

So the third baptism in Luke 3:16 – “Jesus will baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” - so there's a baptism in the Holy Ghost.

So each of these baptisms is an entrance; it's an entrance into something that has changed. So the baptism in the Holy Ghost is an entrance for you, into the supernatural realm. Some people never go past that. They never go past the entrance, or the doorway; but the baptism in the Holy Spirit enables you to enter the realm of supernatural living - because of what the other two baptisms mean.

Finally, a Baptism in Fire – “He'll baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”. So the baptism in fire, basically that represents a change taking place in your soul. As you go through difficult experiences of life, which the Lord allows you to go through, and it's like a fire begins to hit your life.

How many have been through a fiery experience recently, or the last year? The purpose of it was very simple - it was to bring change in your soul. It's to help you to see the need to let go control, and to learn how to surrender and yield to the Lord, and let His life flow through you.

So even though we put our hand up, and said: Jesus Christ is my Lord; we find as we walk with God, many areas are unsundered, and fiery experiences can bring dramatic change internally in our life. From that, we begin to grow further and further into the purpose of God.

So there we have it, so we've got four baptisms mentioned there: the first one, the baptism into Christ, is a change in Identity - it's a change in who you are. The second one is a change in your Positioning, in relationship to the spiritual powers - you are now out of the kingdom of darkness and in the kingdom of light. The third one is a change from being powerless to having Power; and the fourth one is a change in your Soul - so you can walk with the Holy Ghost, and live a life that's incredibly productive. Each one is a change.

Now I'm just going to go briefly through two of these baptisms: Baptism into Christ; and Baptism in Water. I want you just to allow the spirit of God, to just help open your understanding, to what the instruction concerning this baptism is; because as you get a hold of it, and embrace it, and live in it - it shifts you, you change.

One of the most common struggles that believers have is this: they keep thinking and remembering how they used to be, and live condemned, because old problems seem to be there. The devil seems to continue to condemn them. Let's just have a look at two or three scriptures related to this.

First John 20:21. We're going to look about what it means to be baptised into Christ - there are some distinct meanings, and distinct parts to it. Now this is talking about the operation or work of the Holy Spirit: where you are born again, and become changed in who you are. Jesus had received, and had the disciples there in front of Him, after He had died, and then He said: “As the Father sent Me, I send you”. So He's sending them into the world, He's sending them on a mission of advancing a kingdom; but they cannot advance the kingdom of God, unless they themselves have a foundational experience of being placed into the kingdom of God, of being placed into Christ, of being placed into His kingdom.

When He had said this to them, He breathed on them, and said: “Receive the Holy Ghost”. So at that moment in time, as Jesus breathed upon them, the spirit of God flowed from Him, came into them - and a change took place inside them. A change took place. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6: 7 – “when we receive Jesus Christ, we become joined to Christ”. That's a marriage term - you are in covenant, connection. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

So first thing that happens is: God puts His spirit into your spirit, and you are now one with God. You are one with Jesus Christ. You are one with the spirit of God. You are joined, the spirit of God is fused with your spirit - you are one. You have now had something dramatic take place inside you.

The old nature, which used to live in sin, now is declared to be dead. Now you're born, and you're a new person in God's eyes. You're a totally new creation, it says. So the first thing is, the spirit of God comes in. Second is, now the spirit of God is inside me, and I'm born again, now I am joined to the Lord. I cannot be ‘not joined to the Lord’; I am joined, and one spirit with Him.

The third thing that happens is: now I'm a new creation. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, it tells us: “now you become a new creation. The old has passed away”. You say: I don't feel like the old has passed away. Nevertheless, it's a spirit

reality. Your experience may be that you still wrestle with old things; but the teaching of baptism in relationship to this is: you have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness; you're in the kingdom of light - you are a new person.

It teaches very, very clearly, that the power of sin has been broken. You are placed into Christ; so when God looks at you now, He sees His Son in you. Before, He saw Adam in you, He saw the fallen man. Now He sees His Son in you. He sees you as a place, or as a part of body of people, called the body of Christ. Notice what it tells us in 1 Corinthians 12: 13. It says "By one spirit, we were all immersed into one body".

Now there may be lots of different churches around with different names - it makes no difference. There's only one body of Christ. Those different names are historic names, representing different waves of reviving in God, but they often become divided. The body of Christ consists of: those people who are joined to Jesus Christ, and have embraced their identity in Him.

You are now a new creation! You are no longer a sinner! Do you sin? Yes, you do from time to time, but from God's eyes, from God's point of view - you are now in His Son. When He looks at you, He sees His anointed Son Jesus Christ. When He looks at you, He has placed and hidden in you, His Son. He sees the life of His Son in you. You are a totally new person.

Not only that, that same spirit that placed you and joined you to Jesus Christ, has now placed you into a body, where you have a new identity and a destiny. Before, your eternal destiny was one separated from God. Now, being baptised into Christ means: I'm a totally new person! Completely new! Old things have passed away.

Now I have to believe that, hold onto that, and then outwork that in my life. I don't have to make myself more spiritual. I do not have to make myself a better person. I already have changed. That old me has died. That old me has been crucified when I identified with Jesus Christ, so now there's a new creation; and not only that, you're not only born into the family of God - now you're part of a body of people.

This is an aspect of the truth that people struggle with: Christianity is not to be lived alone. You are part of a body, a body with many members. Notice what it says down in Verse 27. It says: "now you are the body of Christ". You are the physical representation of Jesus Christ on the earth now. You are joined to Him, one spirit; and so therefore, when you and I walk the earth, Jesus Christ is walking the earth again; through individuals who are connected as part of one body, with Him as the head.

It's very important to understand that. If you don't listen to the commands of your head, your body is going all over the place, you've got major problems in your life. If your head does a lot of thinking, but there's no connection to the limbs and your body, then you're confined to a wheelchair. It's important that every one of us is joined at the head, getting instructions from the head; but God also connects us to a body - that's why the local church is important. The local church is just one part of the body of Christ. It's a place, usually has the unique DNA, unique flow of life, of God, according to the men of God that have been raised up in there; and so it has the capacity to prepare people in a certain way - so different local churches are quite different in many ways, yet we are all one body of Christ.

That's why we bless the other churches, and do not speak against them. It is wrong to speak against them. Why? Because in doing so, you're speaking against the body of Christ. We're one body. It is right and godly to bless the churches of our city, pray for the Pastors, pray for the success of churches. Why? Because from God's point of view, there's only one body of Christ.

So the first thing that happens then is: the spirit of God comes into us; and the first foundation of baptism is this: your old person's gone, you're a new person now. You're a totally new person, and you're part of a body which is found in every nation of the earth. You're part of a group of people called the Church of the Living God; the body of Jesus Christ, called to represent Him, and make a difference advancing His kingdom! You're called to do something! Know Him and do something, advance His kingdom! Fantastic!

So we're part of a body - embracing that truth enables you to understand this. If I embrace the truth: I'm baptised into Christ; He's in me, and I'm in Him; and I'm part of a body. Now I begin to think differently - I need other people. They have something that they can give to me, to help me grow as a believer; and I have something to give to them. I have a destiny that's worked out in a local church, but also in the community. You and I now are different people.

If you don't embrace that truth, you'll live like just nothing much has happened - you just come to church. Christianity's never been about coming to church; it's about being church. It's about being someone, connected vitally to God, who has an overflow of kingdom life to give to others. You need to see: I am a gift to this community! We are a gift to this community! We are a gateway into heaven, because we're joined to Christ! His life is able to flow through me!

You can understand why this is called: the Principles of Christ, the anointed body. Jesus Christ is in heaven; He also has a body anointed by Him, and representing Him in the earth; not just Pastors and leaders and ministers represent Him - you represent Him, because you're part of the body of Christ.

Now you start to take that truth into you, and think about: every day I go out, I'm joined to Almighty God, God is in me, I'm in Jesus Christ, He's in me, and I represent Him in the earth. Now that'll affect the way you live - it'll affect how you do stuff. You go into your business, and it doesn't matter what you're doing seven days of the week, you're still who you are. If you're one thing on Sunday, and something different on Monday - that's called a hypocrite; but you are what? You are a believer. You're born again! The spirit of God is in you! You now represent and carry the life the King inside you! Now that is a foundational part of baptism. I'm no longer who I used to be - I'm a new person now. I think differently, live differently, I have a destiny to outwork! It's found within a body.

So let's go to the second one then, Baptism of water. In Matthew 3:13-15 we see - even Jesus got baptised. John was baptising, and Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptised by him. John tried to stop Him. He recognised who Jesus was - Son of God. I need to be baptised by You, and You're coming to me? Jesus said - now notice this: "Permit it to be so, for it is fitting for us, to fulfil all righteousness."

Now John's baptism was a baptism in repentance. He required that men repent of their sin, believe in God, and then He would baptise them. Always repenting of sin and believing in God comes before baptising them. When the Pharisees came to him, he couldn't baptise them. He said: your life doesn't show up that you have repented and believed. You're just turning up because you want to be a part of the crowd, and don't want to miss out on anything. Your motives aren't right.

So John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. It was only a partial thing, to prepare the way for Jesus Christ coming. Now Jesus committed no sin; He had no need to be water baptised. Nevertheless, He said: "It's right that I do this". It is right that I do this. So notice this, that Jesus had committed no sin - He was baptised to establish a pattern, an example for us. He went down and submitted to the ministry of His day; submitted to the anointed man of God, who had the word of God in that hour - the prophetic anointed prophet of God.

In other words, He submitted to what God was saying in that hour. He went down into the water baptism, came up. Notice what it says, the experience He had: "Immediately the heavens were opened. He saw the spirit of God come on Him like a dove alighting on Him, then suddenly a voice from heaven came saying: this is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased."

So He encountered God at His water baptism. He was also baptised in the Holy Ghost. Now you and I are called to be water baptised. There are two conditions to be water baptised. The first condition is very simply, repentance. Repentance, in Acts 2:37-38, Peter had preached. After he preached they said: what must we do to be saved? He said: repent and be baptised; in other words: turn away from a life that's not Christ-centred, a life that's not God-centred, a life that is self-centred; and turn to the living God. So the first thing is Repentance.

Then in the Book of Mark, in Mark 16:15-16, Jesus said: "Go preach the gospel, and he that believes and is baptised will be saved". Now you notice: Repenting, Believing, and Baptism are all connected. It is important you are water baptised. If you were sprinkled as an infant, you were not water baptised, according to what the Bible says. You need to be baptised - after repentance and faith. There's no evidence anywhere in the Bible, that there wasn't repentance and faith - these were the conditions before baptism. It doesn't say how old a person is, but they must be old enough to be aware of sin, to have turned from sin, and have trusted Jesus Christ. Then they get water baptised.

So notice this, that water baptism itself is built on the foundation of: Repentance; Faith in Christ - the spirit of God's come in, you've been brought into Christ, into the body of Christ. Now the obvious thing to do is to bury, in a symbolic way, in a representative way, to make a statement outwardly, of the change that's taken place inwardly.

So when you get water baptised, it's not that you go down and we sing a few songs, you go down the water and come up and you get wet and maybe raise your hands. It's much, much more than that. There's a teaching connected with it; and it's the teaching of it, associated with the doing of it, that brings about the change.

It is possible for you to experience massive deliverance when you get water baptised. I've seen people get massively delivered. I've seen people go down in that water, come up and many, many aspects of their old life just disappeared in a moment. Why? Because they held onto the truth associated with water baptism.

Let's have a quick look at it in Romans 6, and then we'll just finish up. We'll read from Verse 1, and Paul is talking about sin reigning over people; and now the possibility of the power of God living in our life, and reigning in our life.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, so grace can abound? Certainly not! How shall we - notice what he said - who have died to sin". Not will die, but have died to sin - that's what the Bible says. This is part of the teaching of baptism - water baptism. When you came to Christ, you identified with Him. What did you identify? He was our representative; He went to the cross representing us; He died as our representative; He was buried as our representative; He rose by faith in the power of God, and is alive, and full of resurrection life.

Here's what baptism is: Baptism - we identify with what He has done.

Notice what it says here: "Shall we, who have died to sin" - you've already died to sin. You're dead to sin. Before you were Christians, sin had power over you. You had no power over sin. You could discipline your life, you could try real hard, but sin always was there, waiting to conquer you. When a person comes to Christ, this is what it says: "we have died to sin". "Don't you realise, as many of us were baptised into Christ, were baptised into His death". We were immersed into His death - I'll explain this in a moment, and it says: "therefore we are buried with Him, through baptism into death; that just as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, we would now walk or live with a different lifestyle.

So it's not just the water baptism - it's the lifestyle. It's the difference between: living a life where you live in sin and self-centredness, doing your own thing; and a life where the spirit of God is in you, and you're starting to live by the power of the Holy Ghost, and the life of God; the resurrection life shining through you, changing you, giving you victory, giving you power in your life.

In verse 5 it says: "knowing this, if we've been united with Him in the likeness of His death, so shall we be in His resurrection. Knowing this, our old man was crucified with Him..." - now that's not your father there. Your old man is your old nature - "...was crucified with Him - that the body of sin might be done away with; no longer slaves to sin, for he who has died is now free from sin. So if we died with Christ, we believe we shall live with Him". Verse 11 - now reckon yourselves (now here's the key of baptism) - "reckon yourself: I'm dead to sin, it has no power".

Now let me just give it to you in just a few simple things. The first thing is: our old nature that caused us continually to sin, had no help of reforming and changing. When Jesus Christ died, when you put your trust in Him, His death was your death. When you trust in Him, the spiritual reality is this: that the power of sin in your life has been broken. Not only when He died, you also legally died with Him. Now if you're legally dead, the devil's got nothing to accuse you with. You can't accuse a dead man of anything.

If a person's got a problem with alcohol and cigarettes and all that kind of stuff, and they continually can't get over it; but if they're dead, you can put a bottle in front of them, they're not going to touch it. Why won't they touch it? They're dead. There's nothing in there alive anymore that goes for those things, so what he's saying is this: that when Christ died on the cross, if you put your trust in Christ, then God considers a legal reality that you died then. You literally died. Your old nature, it's power's completely broken, and was taken to the cross and died with you.

The only thing you could do with a person who's dead is bury them, so you bury them underground. So not only were you crucified with Christ; when He was buried, we were buried with Him; and what happened then, the power of God raised Him up to live with resurrection life.

So these are the realities now, that you are free from the power of sin; so how do you get free from the power of sin? Well here's the thing most people try and do: they just try harder; and when you try hard, you're always condemned.

When I got water baptised, I was declaring to spirit powers: the old Mike Connell died. It's right and fitting today we bury him, and he's out of your sight legally. A new person has risen up, who is joined to Jesus Christ; the spirit of God is in him, he's part of a body of people, and the resurrection life of Christ is in him. He will live to advance the kingdom of God, and destroy the works of the devil! Sin - I'm dead to sin.

If you will take the position you're dead to sin, then the reality is: sin doesn't have its power anymore over you. So the teaching of baptism is: sin's power is broken, you are free - you're a free man. After the Second World War, the war was over, and it was declared that the Japanese had been defeated, but there were still many people in a prison camp. They were in a prison camp, because they didn't know the truth; and when they did find the truth, they were still too scared to actually do what they needed to do: just to stand up and take over the camp and walk out. Many people today live like a prisoner in a prisoner of war camp. Already the battle has been won at Calvary. Already God has established a spirit reality: that you are free from the powers of darkness, you are free from the power of sin; but if you don't wrap yourself in your heart, and embrace that foundational truth, you'll live like you're in a prisoner of war camp - still bound by old sins and old ways.

But if I get the truth - I'm free! I can arise in my spirit, and decree into the spirit powers: power of sin is broken, the life of God is in me; and the law of life, of the spirit in me, overcomes the law of sin and death! Are there struggles? Yes, but you don't win them by struggling trying to overcome sin. You get them by taking your position in the spirit: the work is done, I'm already free, its power is broken. I'll acknowledge that and hold to that!

Water baptism is your declaration to spirit powers, and to the world around you: my old life, living in sin, is over! I am a dead man! Dead men get buried. Now, when I rise up, there's a new person, a new creation full of the Holy Ghost, full of the life of God, ready to advance the kingdom of God; part of a body of people, called the body of Christ, called to advance the kingdom of God in every nation of the earth! What a great truth. What an exciting truth. What an exciting truth!

First two foundational things in the teaching of baptisms: 1) I'm a new person. I'm joined to the living God. 2) The power of sin is broken. I'm a free man, and if I'm free, do I need to be condemned? No! No condemnation to those who are in Christ! Walk after the spirit of life. Why? The old man died. Now he's condemned, not me. I've risen again. I'm part of the body of Christ. I'm joined to Jesus Christ. No condemnation to me, now I'm in Christ! Oh, there might be immaturity; there might be the occasional lapses, and falls, and difficulties, but there's no condemnation! Why? Because I've escaped that in Christ, I now have a new life in Him. What an amazing thing! Well, you do need to embrace those truths - you're a new person. Live like a new person. Think like a new person.

When you get up tomorrow: I'm a new creation in Christ! I'm born again! Spirit of God lives within me, that same spirit that raised Christ from the dead, is quickening my body today - giving me energy and life; quickening my mind, quickening my thoughts, quickening my spirit. I'm joined to the living God, and I'm part of a great body of people, spread throughout the world! It's going to take over the world! The Bible says in the Book of Revelation: "now the kingdoms of this world, have become the kingdoms of our Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ - and His Christ, His anointed body, walking under His kingdom". What a great day we live in! No wonder I need to get water baptised! I need to make it right, smart, clear: I'm out of that old scheme, I'm a new person, I'm getting up new!

See, so water baptism's so powerful - being baptised, placed into Christ, into a body and a family; and buried, the old thing buried so I can step up into the new. I can't wait until next week - to get filled with the Holy Ghost! So next week you want to come along, get filled with the Holy Ghost? We'll pray and lead people through to get filled with the Holy Ghost. Why? It's only the entrance; it's a baptism into a new realm! It's a baptism into a new dimension! It's a baptism into a supernatural life of the kingdom; a life of miracles, where the kingdom of God is advanced through people who believe!

No wonder it says: "all in the body of Christ can prophesy, all of you can move in the gifts". Why aren't you doing it? Well, probably you've forgotten the truth of baptism - about who you really are. Oh, well I'm just me, and I'm condemned. Listen - that's not who you are. You're an anointed person! You're a person called to carry the life of God! You need to know who you are in Jesus Christ! He says: "child of God". He says: "born again". He says: "an ambassador". He says: "you are blessed with every blessing" - you've got to just start to agree with what He says. That's what this baptism thing's all about. It's about being immersed into the realities of the new creation, and staying there because you believe the truth.

So many people just get baptised, and their life doesn't change, because they didn't get a hold of the foundation in their life: I'm a different person, a new person; and that new person is a loving person, a generous person. If I read the Bible, I can find what the new person is like. The old one - well I used to be mean and selfish and fearful; but the new creation man is a quite different person - so that's who I am. That's me, I identify with that. Oh well that's the old things just trying to come back - but that's not who I am. This is who I am: loving, and I'm generous, full of God. You see who are you? You'll live out of who you believe you are; and if you still believe you're that poor wretch, lost in sin, and condemned and struggling and in bondage, you will live that way.

So the doctrine of baptisms is a foundation of believing, that causes you to step up to the reality of who Jesus says you are. Water Baptism demonstrates your Belief in that. Holy Ghost Baptism launches you into a reality of it, in terms of Power. Baptism is suffering the experiences, which we welcome and rejoice over, because they enable Christ to be seen more clearly. What a great foundation! If you don't have that foundation in your life, you'll just live out of the old.

[Closing Prayer]

Perhaps there's someone here who's never taken the first step to receive Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus said: "To as many as believed in Him, He gave power to become a child of God". This is a day for you to become a child of God. This is a day for you to open your life, to receive the spirit of God, and the moment you receive the spirit of God - as you turn away from sin and put your trust in Jesus Christ - trust that He died as your representative. He took all the punishment of sin, and has made a way for you to be changed. As you believe and embrace that in your heart, I'll tell you something - you are changed. You are changed. You're going to be a new person, different person. The old will have passed away, and straight away after that, you'll just want to get water baptised - find a bath and full it up, or go to a river if it's a clean one - whatever, but get baptised real quick.

Let me just lead you in a simple prayer. I wonder if we could just pray the prayer together:

Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. I thank you for loving me, for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins. Lord Jesus, I turn away from sin today. I receive you as my saviour. I give you my life today. I ask you to forgive me, to make me clean inside. By faith I receive forgiveness now. I receive your spirit into my heart and I give you my life today. Before heaven and earth I declare: Jesus Christ is my saviour, and Lord, and my friend forever. Amen.

If you've prayed that prayer for the first time: welcome to the family of God! God's spirit has just come upon you, and touched you. Next thing you'll want to do is get water baptised. Someone who's there as a believer can take you to get water baptised. Otherwise fill the bath up, and do it there - but get water baptised; make a declaration to the spirit powers of your identification with Jesus Christ, and that you are truly rising up to be a new person.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb. 6:1-3 "Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundations ..."

The foundation of any building is unseen, but it determines the size and capacity of the building. Our life and relationship with God must also have solid foundations for us to grow and mature. In order to grow and 'go on' there are two conditions (i) Hope foundations (ii) Permission of God. Heb. 6:1-3 Lists foundations essential to build our relationship and life with God.
(i) Repentance from dead works - turn away from activities that have not the life or love of God.
(ii) Faith towards God - trust in the word and character of God, expressed in words and obedience.

2. Doctrine of Baptisms

The Doctrine of baptisms forms the next part of the foundation.
Doctrine = NT 1322 = teaching or instruction (about the meaning of baptisms)
Western thinking "doctrine" is about knowledge or information.
Hebrew thinking "doctrine" is about teaching that is lived out experientially (Act 1:1)
Baptisms = NT 909 = Baptismos Greek It is a Greek word written in English and not translated.
Mk 14:20 "...it is one of the 12 who dips with me in the dish" Dip = bapto = to immerse.
Lk 16:24 "...send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water ..." Dip = bapto = to immerse.
Baptize = to dip or totally immerse one object into something.
Bapt = NT 9:11 = to overwhelm, cover wholly with a fluid, to stain with a dye.
Baptism is the immersion of one thing into another so that it becomes changed.
Baptism is meant to impart to you a foundation of change.

3. Different Baptisms (4x)

Baptisms - is plural, there is more than one baptism - each one is to bring change.
(i) Baptism by Holy Spirit into Christ
1 Cor 12:13 "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one Body..."
The Holy Spirit brings about a change in identity and destiny when we receive Jesus Christ.
We become joined to Jesus Christ and become part of a Body of people representing Him.

(ii) Baptism in Water

Rom. 6:3 "...as many of us were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death."

Water Baptism is a declaration of our change in identity to spiritual powers. The old life of Adam no longer rules, we are no longer a sinner but have died to that old life and been replaced by a new person joined to Jesus Christ.

(iii) Baptism in Holy Ghost

Lk. 3:16 "...He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Baptism in the Holy Ghost is a change from being powerless to being powerful. It is an entrance experience into a realm of supernatural living and power.

(iv) Baptism in Fire

Lk. 3:16 "...He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Baptism in fire is an experience that changes our soul so we let go control and learn how to flow with the leading and directing of the Holy Spirit.

4. Baptized into Christ

To be baptized into Christ means to have a change in identity and destiny.

It means the following becomes a spiritual reality.

(i) The Spirit of Christ Himself is imparted into you (Jn 20:21)

(ii) You become 'joined', one spirit with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:17)

(iii) You become a new creation, no longer a sinner but a child of God (2Cor.5:17)

(iv) You are placed by the Spirit of God into a Body of People (1Cor 12:13-18,27)

· Instead of living your life independent, alone, your own way, you are connected to Jesus Christ and placed in a Body of People with a destiny to fulfil.

· God has made you in a unique way so He can live His life through you and extend His Kingdom through you in a unique way.

· Embracing and living out these truths lays a foundation for growth.

· Embracing this truth you become connected to a local church or expression of Body of Christ.

5. Baptism in Water

(1) The example of Jesus

Mt. 3:13-15 "Jesus came from Galilee to John and the Jordan to be baptised by him"

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance into remission of sins (Mk.1:4)

John made 2x requirements (i) Repentance (ii) Confession of sins (Mk1:3-5)

Jesus had committed no sins. He was baptized to "fulfil all righteousness" i.e. He established an example and pattern for all believers to follow.

(2) The Conditions for Water Baptism

There are two conditions to be met before people are baptized in water.

(i) Repent Act. 2:37-38 Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

(ii) Believe Mk 16:15-16 He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Water Baptism is built upon the foundation of repenting and believing.

Water Baptism is the public response to an inner change (Act. 8:12/35-39)

(3) The Spiritual Significance of Water Baptism

Baptism is the immersion of one thing into another so that it is changed.

Baptism is meant to result in change – not just something you do – go into water.

Baptism is meant to impart to you a foundation of change:

(i) The old corrupt sinful nature has been crucified and is dead (Rom. 6:6)

(ii) You have died with Christ when He died on the Cross (Rom. 6:6)

(iii) You are freed from the power of sin (Rom. 6:7)

(iv) Sin has no more dominion over your life (old you is dead) (Rom. 6:11,14)

(v) The resurrection power of the Holy Spirit is within you giving you spiritual life (Rom. 8:10)

(vi) You are stating and declaring by water baptism that reality to spiritual powers.

· Old Life under power of sin is dead and buried (Col.2:12)

· New resurrection life of power and victory has begun.

· Embracing and living these truths lays a foundation for growth.

· Embracing these truths – you refuse condemnation and embrace grace and life of God.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit (4 of 7)

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Immersion into the person, and power and presence of the Holy Spirit, so it lives around you, and is on you, and flows freely from within you. The entrance into a supernatural living.

[Introduction]

Foundational Principles, Hebrews 6:1. These are the principles that you can build a great life walking with God. This is the fourth in the series, we're doing the teaching on baptisms.

"Now leaving the discussion of the elementary principles or doctrines of Christ, let us go on to perfection or maturity, not laying again the foundation of: Repentance from Dead Works; and Faith Towards God; of the Doctrine of Baptisms; of Laying on of Hands; of Resurrection of the Dead; and of Eternal Judgement. And this we will do if God permits".

God wants us to go forward, to grow; not to remain static, but to grow. To grow forward requires two things: 1) that you have spiritual foundations strongly established in your life. The foundations of a building are unseen, but the whole building depends on the strength of the foundations. It would be unwise to build something on weak or incomplete foundations. 2) it requires that God permits us to go on.

So God requires: 1) that we embrace, and open our life, to the foundations being set in place; 2) that we walk with him.

So we've been sharing with you some of these teachings. The one we're on now is: Doctrine of Baptisms. The word doctrine means: 'the teaching' or 'instruction'. There are some experiences we can have, and there's a teaching related to them. The teaching and the experience form the foundation.

[Main Message]

In the Western culture people tend to think of teaching just as information; we don't relate it to life. From a biblical point of view, teaching and life went together. In other words: what you knew was what you were living out. So you notice it talks about the doctrine, or teaching, of baptisms (plural); there are more than one baptism referred to in the Bible, last week we saw a reference to four of them.

You are Baptised into Christ; so when we receive Jesus Christ as our saviour, the Holy Spirit comes into our life. We are born again. We become joined, and become one, or we become 'in' Jesus Christ. Not only that, we are put by that same spirit into a body of people. We become part of a church, a body of people called the body of Christ, God's family universal. We outwork our conviction of that belief, by committing to a local church, and being involved in it.

The next baptism we saw was a Baptism in Water. The teaching or the instruction behind that is that, when we came to Christ, we identified with Him, and received Him as our representative; then our old life, literally its power of sin, was broken.

The Bible says very clearly, the power of sin was broken when we came to Christ. You don't need to live in sin any more - and so our old nature died, and we have become in Jesus Christ a totally new person. So if someone dies, the natural thing to do is to bury them; so baptism in water is literally a public acknowledgement of an inward reality: my old life, living for myself, living independently has finished - it's out of sight. That old nature, that old life, lived under the power of sin, living as everyone else lived, has now ended; a new life has begun.

Water baptism is your testimony to the world, and to the spiritual powers, that old person died. There's a new person risen up, born again! He's a child of the living God! It's a great change - but that's not all! Now God wants to immerse us into a different life, and so we come to the Baptism in the Holy Ghost...

Baptism in the Holy Ghost - the word 'baptise' is to 'dip into' or 'immerse you into something'; so baptism in the Holy Ghost is immersion into the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The presence and power of the spirit of God lives around you, and is on you, and flows freely from within you. It is literally the entrance into a supernatural living.

You can understand then, that the whole process: Baptised into Christ, and Water Baptism, deals with our old life. Now Baptism in the Holy Ghost, and the Baptism in Fire, refers to the whole new realm of the way you're going to live. So being baptised in the Holy Ghost is just, literally going through the door, into the first of a whole realm of supernatural life.

The original man that God created, Adam and Eve, were connected to God, and lived in the supernatural dimension. They carried the power of God. They carried the creative life of God. When they fell and were disconnected from God, sin ruled over their lives; so when we come to Christ, the power of sin is broken - we're water baptised,

declaring now: I've got a new life. It's in Christ. I'm joined to Him. I'm one with Him, I'm part of a body in the world, and now I'm going to immerse into a whole new dimension - oh! An interesting life, and journey, that's supernatural! That's why the church not living in the supernatural is totally short of what Jesus created us for. So let's just have a look at a few scriptures...

The first thing, we're going to have a look at the Baptism in the Holy Ghost. Luke 3:16 – “John the Baptist answered, saying to everyone there: I'm baptising you in water, but One who is mightier than I is coming (that's Jesus Christ) his sandal strap I'm not worthy to loose. He will baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.”

Isn't that fantastic! He will baptise you with the Holy Ghost and Fire. In other words, He will put you into a dimension where the spirit of God clothes you, and you are immersed in the life and flow and power of God. That's what he's talking about here. You say: oh, that's not like my experience. Well, we need to bring our experience up to what the word of God says; not bring the word of God down to what we experience.

So it's an immersion into the person, and power, and presence, of the Holy Spirit. Suppose you went into a river, and the river's sort of flowing over, and you stand under a waterfall. As you stand under that waterfall, you are immersed in the water. That's kind of what it's talking about - immersed in something that's coming down from you, and touching every part of you. You are immersed in the waterfall.

So the baptism in the Holy Ghost then, is where your soul, your personality, your life, becomes immersed in a dimension of God – supernaturally; and of course we can live in that, or you can go back to living like you used to live. We have to choose what we're going to live like, so it's an entrance.

Luke 3:21 – “When all the people were baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptised.” So Jesus got water baptised, and following water baptism, as He rose up out of the baptism waters, He immediately was baptised in the spirit. So from a biblical point of view (Jesus being the model), Holy Spirit baptism would normally follow directly after Water Baptism; as you rise, you bury the old life, bury the old nature, declare your old life is over. Now as you come up out of the waters, it's reasonable to expect you'd be filled with the Holy Spirit, so look what happened...

It says: “while He prayed, heaven was opened; the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said: You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.”

Jesus is the pattern for us. Note that after His water baptism, He reached out and prayed - He prayed - that's how He entered into this experience, being baptised in the spirit. Notice the things that happened:

- 1) Heaven was opened. The supernatural realm of the spirit became open. He had free access to intimacy with God, the Father.
- 2) The spirit of God came on Him, and remained on Him.
- 3) He started to hear the voice of God. Notice what the voice of God said - He hasn't even begun His ministry, done no great action - and the voice of God says: “This is My beloved Son. I'm pleased in Him.”

So He had the Father confirming His identity. He has moved from being a child, unrecognised, and now He is standing clothed in the spirit of God, ready to engage the world in His ministry. Straight after that - Luke 4:1 - we find Him being led by the Holy Spirit. So that's the example of Jesus.

Now Jesus made a promise. As we look in the life of ministry of Jesus, you have to notice that everywhere He went, there was supernatural manifestation and demonstrations. If you follow Jesus' ministry, you will notice these characteristics:

Firstly, He continually seemed to have access to the Father. He continually seemed to hear from the Father, so much so, that He said: “what I see Him showing me, that's what I do”. What I see Him doing, I do it too. What I hear Him saying, that's how I judge things. So He continually flowed in a flow of the presence of God, speaking to Him.

Second thing you notice is: the supernatural around His life. The two went hand in hand. When you look at the ministry of Jesus relationship with God: access into the realm of heaven; and the flow of the spirit, characterised His life and ministry.

Now what did Jesus promise? I want us to look at a couple of scriptures. First of all look in John 20:21. Jesus has finished His course on the earth. He died for our sins, after three days rose from the dead. Now He's appeared to His disciples, and He's about to commission them, and so this is what He says, in Verse 21 – “As the Father sent Me, I'm sending you. And when He said this, He breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit.”

At that point it was like He was replicating what God did with Adam. God breathed into Adam, and Adam became a living soul. Jesus breathed into them, the spirit of God entered into them. They were now born again. They were now children of the living God. Of course some point after that they must have got baptised in water.

So what happened then? They were joined to God. They were now born again, but their experience wasn't complete. Jesus had a mission for them to accomplish. He had a purpose for them to accomplish on this earth, and in order to accomplish His mission, they needed access to the supernatural. Why? Why did they need access to the supernatural?

It's very simple. We live in a Western culture here, but the majority of the world doesn't have a Western world-view. It has a spirit world-view, and in cultures where you go to in the world, some of the things that are evident in every culture I've gone to, is the evidence of witchcraft, of cultism, and strong manifestations of spiritual power originating from evil spirits. Jesus was sending them into such cultures, to change the culture. To change the culture, they needed to have power to overcome evil spirits, and power to heal the sick. They needed power to go with their message. The kingdom of heaven is not just hot air and talk; it's also in power. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 – “I didn't come preaching in fancy words, but in demonstration of the spirit and power of God”; so it was essential before they went to witness, that they had power in their life.

Now this is not a different power that they got, that we get. It's the same power; the same promise. So if we have a look in a couple of scriptures, say look in Luke 24:49. He says: “behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”. So now He says that there's something more for you to get. There is a promise for you: it is to be endued; or literally that word 'endued' means: 'to sink into some clothing'; so I am endued with this red shirt and black trousers. In other words, I'm clothed with them - so what He's saying is: you will be clothed with power. That word is supernatural power. God wants you to be clothed with power, wants you to have power available in your life. No power => something's missing.

Many Christians seem to live without any power - and are not disturbed by that - but Jesus said: “wait until you receive the power.” That's what you need to be able to do the work - so He said: “wait until you are clothed with power.” Power will come upon you.

The same thing is repeated in Acts 1:4. He's assembled with them, and He says: “Wait for the promise of the Father, which I've told you about; for John baptised you in water, but you will be baptised in the Holy Spirit, not many days from now.” Verse 8 – “You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you.

So notice He's talking, not about an experience, where the spirit of God enters us. Now He's talking about being baptised, or dipped and immersed, into a dimension where the Holy Spirit operates. He uses different words for it. One word He uses is to be 'clothed with power'; another one, He says, is for the Holy Ghost to come upon you. Another word He uses is 'Baptised in the Holy Spirit'. So the Bible uses several words to try and get us to understand what it means. I'll pray for a few people shortly, and try to demonstrate what He is meaning by this...

He used 'baptised'. So what is the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Notice He says: “You'll be baptised in the spirit; the spirit of God will come upon you”. In some other places it says: “the spirit will be poured out on you”. Another place it says: “the Holy Ghost fell on them”, so clearly it's talking about an experience, where the spirit of God comes upon us, and something changes in us.

Now I believe there are two parts, or two aspects of it. The first is the invisible presence and power of the Holy Spirit comes on you, and begins to clothe you. It begins to saturate your life. You become different when the Holy Ghost comes on you - absolutely certain, you're quite different when the Holy Ghost comes on you. Notice it's a sensation where He comes on you; but not only that, what happens is He fills you; and the life that's in your spirit is able to flow through your soul, because your soul now begins to be free, because it's soaked, saturated in the Holy Ghost.

What is it free to do? It's free to express the life of the spirit that's within us. It's free to move in gifts of the spirit. You're free to receive spontaneous impressions, promptings, pictures, images, things from the Holy Spirit. So we experience the spirit of God baptising us: firstly as something coming on us; and then something arising from being saturated in Him, and beginning to flow through us, and express in the world.

So being baptised in the Holy Spirit - you are immersed into a dimension of the spirit of God moving and operating.

Now Brydon and Sharon, won't you just come up and stand over here for a moment. Just come up on the stage, it'll be a lot easier for the camera to see. So the Holy Spirit comes on us, and then His presence arises within, and flows through us.

I want you just to lift your hands up to the Lord. So Sharon, what now we're going to do is, we're just going to pray that the Holy Spirit will clothe you, that the power of God will just come flowing, and just [WHOOO!] touch you life, just like that. It's like something comes out of heaven. It's like heaven opens [whooo] and there's just like a flow of God just begins to come. A person starts to get touched by God.

Right now, he is clothed with the spirit. When you clothe with the spirit, sometimes you feel Him, sometimes you can't stand; so you notice it's like something invisible came over him. It's like something that was heavy, so heavy he couldn't stand. It was like something you couldn't see just came on him.

What's happened now is: the spirit of God is resting on them. We tend to think in terms of concrete things, but the Holy Spirit is able to move and flow; so what's happened now - the spirit of God has come on them. "Spirit of God has come on them" - so Holy Ghost is on them. Now when we get baptised in the Holy Spirit, not only does the power of God come on us, and clothe us; actually it activates, and we become filled inside as well.

When I talk about being clothed, you tend to think of a physical body and physical clothing. When God talks about clothing, He's talking about your whole inner man being saturated, soul and spirit. When your inner man is saturated, soul and spirit, something is going to rise up from within you; and the first expression, as we'll see in a moment is, normally people speak in tongues. Sometimes they just fall over; sometimes they look like they're just drunk, and can't stand up - but always there's a flow from within.

So notice the Bible talks about "the Holy Spirit was poured out on them"? So it's like a pouring out, something from heaven just comes down like that over the person - God's spirit coming on them.

Not only does the spirit of God come on them, the spirit of God fills every part; so our soul now can flow with the Holy Spirit, if we will let it; and now we can actually activate gifts of the spirit; and we can flow, so the spirit of God flows through us.

Now one of the first expressions of the Holy Spirit flowing within us, that happened in the New Testament is - they began to speak in tongues. When the spirit of God came on them (in Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, Acts 19); when the Holy Ghost came on them, they began to do something. Because they were filled, they began to speak in a language they'd never learned - and it's the Holy Spirit that gave them the words. [Speaks in tongues]

Now you see they began to speak in a language of the spirit. There's an entrance into a new dimension. They're so filled, they're starting to talk.

Acts 10:44 - "Spirit came on them, as on us at the beginning, they began to speak in tongues."

Acts 2 - "spirit came on them, they began to speak in tongues."

Acts 19:6 - "Paul laid hands on them, they were filled with the spirit, began to speak in tongues."

Something from within them began to flow out - something from within. So we get charged with the Holy Spirit. So if I just begin to now allow myself to become filled with the Holy Ghost - "Thank you Lord" - I begin to thank God and just - because the Bible tells us: continue to be filled. Don't keep drinking wine, be filled with the Holy Ghost. How do you get filled with the Holy Ghost? Thanking God, praising God, speaking in tongues, wandering, just beginning to just enter His presence, [Speaks in tongues]

Now I'm starting to come alive with the Holy Ghost! So I'm sure, if I'm alive with the Holy Ghost, if I was just to touch her, power of God would just go [bop] like that, straight down into her. So something happens. You get full of the Holy Ghost. [Speaks in tongues] I'm filling up with the Holy Ghost! [Speaks in tongues] and the spirit of God; and when you're praying in tongues, the spirit of God is giving you the language, your spirit is praying, and now you're starting to energise!

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 14 – “when you speak in tongues, your spirit is now talking!” Most people didn't even know they got a spirit, let alone how to talk. They're too busy blabbing away, they don't stop. Let your spirit talk, see?

So when you pray in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:14 – “my spirit is praying”. In 1 Corinthians 14 it says: “when you're praying in tongues, you're speaking to God!” You're speaking in a language He understands. Why? The Holy Ghost is giving you the language.

1 Corinthians 14:2 – “When you're speaking in tongues, you are speaking mysteries.” You're beginning to speak out God's will, God's purposes, a powerful gift. [Speaks in tongues]

1 Corinthians 14:4 – “When you speak in tongues, you are building up yourself. Some people think they don't need to build themselves up. That's why they remain weak. The Bible says: “it's given to build you up” - so why wouldn't you want the gift? It'll build you up - and that word build up means ‘to build a house’, or to ‘structure’ or ‘construct’ something.

What is being constructed, when you pray in tongues? Your spirit becomes mightily energised with the life of God! You begin to build your inward man. That's why many people are weak - they don't build their inner man - spend too much time eating. Build the inner man, you see, and when you begin to pray in tongues, now the power of God starts to fill your body, energise your body. It energises your soul.

You know what's going to happen next? If you pray in tongues, it's like you become so filled with the spirit of God that you begin to start to sense in your soul the thoughts of God. You begin to flow in the Gifts of the Spirit, and your whole body becomes alive and energised.

Something is alive in me, causing that to happen. All I've done is to make visible what the Bible says the Holy Ghost does inside a person. He energises you, fills you with supernatural life! If you want to live a life that's trying hard, that's good, good for you; I'd rather have a life that's got a power boost. It's much easier.

Notice that as you activate that life, very commonly in the New Testament, Joy is associated with the life of the spirit flowing in you. So it's quite common, when you begin to pray for people, that they begin to start to get the joy of the Lord. “Holy Ghost, just come, fill her now Lord, just let that joy just come around her life.” See - joy begins to come on people. Isn't that right? Joy in the Holy Ghost will be flowing over her life! Joy in the Holy Ghost. If you're watching or reading this right now - this life of the Holy Ghost is going right to you!

The Bible says: “Be filled, not with wine, but be filled with the Holy Ghost.” You can feel, as we begin to express His life, how the life begins to flow. The life of the spirit is a flow from your inner man. Look at that - the presence of God - she can't stand up. It looks like she's been drinking. She hasn't been drinking, it's just she's under the influence of the presence of God. How did that happen? I began to stir my spirit and speak in tongues! What a great gift we've got.

Now to Mihi and all those who are watching, if you would just lift your hands right now, God is about to touch you, just where you are. Just watch this: “Holy Ghost, come into Mihi. Come into the room behind her. Touch people right now with joy in Jesus' name!” There it is - she can barely stand - the power of God.

How do you get filled with the Holy Ghost? Of course you want to be filled with the Spirit of God. Why would you live life with only half the experience? Water baptised; but never dipped into the realm of the spirit. Now some people think: well, I got baptised in the spirit - I've done it, tick that one off. No, no, no, no! It's a doorway into a flow of life and power, you've got to stay there.

How do you stay there? By constantly being filled by the spirit; being led by the Holy Ghost.

Why does God fill you up like that? Why - He wants to energise your power, bring power into your life. He'll want to bring your prayer life to a whole new level, to fire you up in the Holy Ghost! How wonderful.

So when you're Baptised in the Spirit, it's your entry into a whole new realm where you can experience spiritual realities. You can learn to flow with the Holy Spirit. You can minister the life of the spirit. You also engage spiritual conflict. You become aware of the demonic realm.

Why do you become aware of it? Because very simply - you're called to conquer it. That's why the power is given. Funny, in the West, they won't even talk about it – strangest thing. Now you and I know it's very real, isn't it? Some of you, right now if you're watching, you'll be a little agitated, because the presence of God here will stir up the presence of any foreign spirits; but right now we can just share with you very simply how you can get filled with the Holy Ghost. It's great to get people filled with the Holy Spirit, and praying in tongues, and activated.

How do you feel? Good; Wobbly. It's a good feeling though isn't it? What happened to you? It felt like sprinkles of something were coming on you, and you feel fresh inside I guess. Can you stand again? Well not too sure - no. No, we're beyond standing now. Okay, we're going to have an altar call in a moment, get people to come up and get filled with the Holy Ghost.

So the realm of the spirit, what a wonderful realm it is - this is where you and I are called to live. You say: it's hard. No, it isn't hard. Living without the Fire of the Holy Ghost is hard - it is really hard. Living without His vitality, and having to face the burdens of life is very hard; but oh, to be able to get up and praise God, and speak in tongues, enter His presence, and experience Him, and hear Him speaking to you - oh, your life becomes so energised!

How does a person get filled with the Holy Ghost? Well, you need to have given your life to Jesus, first of all. You've got to become a Christian first of all; but then the Bible says in Mark 11:24 – “When you stand praying, whatever things you desire when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” Notice here's what is needed:

1) Desire. I must want to be filled with the spirit. I must desire God to clothe me and fill me.

2) Ask. I need to ask Him. I need to just come and ask Him in faith, believing that He wants to do this. Jesus said: “this promise is for you”. Peter said: “It's for you, and your children, and everyone who's afar off.”

3) Believe

4) Receive.

5) Then you do have to step out, and yield to the Holy Ghost, and let His voice express through you. You speak, and the Holy Ghost gives you the language, and a whole new dimension starts.

[Closing Prayer]

Why don't we just do that right now? If you're reading this, you could follow me in this prayer; and God, the same God that's here, is there where you are too. He will respond to your prayer.

So I'm going to lead everyone in a prayer. I'd like you all to follow me in the prayer. We're going to reach out, believing, and asking for the Holy Ghost to fill us. You say: well, I've already been filled with the spirit. Good - ask again!

Then we receive: take a deep breath in; and then we stretch out and begin to yield, and let the spirit of God flow through us - begin to speak in tongues. Let's really speak in tongues. I believe there's going to be great joy start to come into the house, come into you wherever you are.

Lord, I'm asking you right now, that as people pray this prayer, that joy will come into that meeting. Let's lift our hands right now, lift your hands up to God, who is there for you. Thank you Lord. I want you to follow me in this prayer...

“Jesus, I confess You as my saviour and Lord. I believe You died on the cross for my sins, and You rose again from the dead. I declare You are my saviour, and I belong to You. Now Lord Jesus, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to be baptised in the Holy Ghost. I want to be clothed with power. I'm asking You now, according to Your word,

to fill me with Your spirit, to give me the gift of tongues so by faith now I receive the Holy Ghost. I receive the gift of tongues, and I praise You with my new language.”

Come on, let's praise Him now. [Speaks in tongues] Holy Spirit come, begin to touch people, begin to fall on people, touch people's lives right now. Let the joy of the Lord, Holy Ghost come. Fire, let the fire of God come on people right now. We release joy. We release liberty. We release freedom right now in Jesus' name.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb. 6:1-3 “Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation ...”

In order to ‘grow’ or ‘go on’ there are two conditions:

(i) Foundations Laid (ii) Permission of God

Heb 6:1-3 lists foundations that are essential to build our relationship and life with God.

Doctrine = NT 1322 = teaching or instruction about the meaning of baptisms.

Note: Western thinking (Greek) - Doctrine is about knowledge or information.

Hebrew thinking - Doctrine is teaching that is lived out experientially.

Baptisms

(i) Baptism into Christ You are joined to Jesus Christ and to the body of His people (1 Cor. 12-13).

(ii) Baptism in Water Your old life is dead, a new life has begun.

(iii) Baptism in Holy Ghost You enter the supernatural realm of the Holy Spirit.

(iv) Baptism in Fire Your soul life is purified by fiery experiences that test your faith.

2. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

(a) The Promise of Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Lk 5:16 “He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire”.

Baptise = NT907 = to immerse in, to dip into, with = en = in, into.

Baptise in the Holy Spirit = the whole soul or personality is immersed, surrounded and enveloped in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
= the entrance into the supernatural realm of the spirit.

(b) The Example of Jesus

Lk 3:21-22 “...Jesus also was (water) baptised and while He prayed the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form like a dove ...”

Following Jesus water baptism He was immediately baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Note what happened:

(i) Heaven opened – access into the supernatural realm of the Father God

(ii) Holy Spirit descended – He was dipped, immersed into the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

(iii) A voice came from heaven – He was affirmed in His relationship and Sonship.

(iv) He was led by the Spirit (Lk4:1)

(c) The Promise of Jesus

Jn 20:21-22 “...and when He had said this He breathed on them and said “Receive the Holy Spirit”.

- Jesus imparted the person and life of the Holy Spirit into His disciples.

- They became born again, joined to the Spirit of God indwelling them.

(1 Cor. 6:17)

- This was not the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Promise of Jesus

(i) Lk 24:49 “Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high”.

“Clothed” = NT 1746 = Enduo = to sink into a garment, to cover with a clothing, to put on a garment.

“Power” = NT 1411 = Dunamis = supernatural ability.

(ii) Acts 1:4-8 “... wait for the promise of the Father ... for John truly baptised with water but you shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days from now”.

“Baptised” = NT 907 = to immerse in, to dip into.

Vs8 “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon and you shall be witness to me...”

The Holy Spirit will come upon and envelop or cloth you with His Presence and Power.

3. What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

(a) The Bible describes this experience several ways:

Acts 1:5 "You shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit..."
Acts 1:8 "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon..."
Acts 2:33 "...He poured out this which you now see and hear..."
Acts 10:44 "...The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience where:

(i) The invisible presence, and power of the Holy Spirit comes upon a person and surrounds, envelops and clothes them.
(ii) The invisible presence and power of the Holy Spirit arises from within your spirit surrounding and sensitising the soul to spontaneous impressions of the Holy Spirit.

(b) The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the entrance to a supernatural realm of life
New realm of awareness (Acts 2:17-18)
New realm of functioning (1 Cor. 12)
New realm of power (Acts 1:8)
New realm of revelation (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
New realm of guidance (Lk 4:1, Rom. 8:14)
New realm of prayer (Rom 8:26)
New realm of conflict (Lk 4:1,14)
Holy Spirit rests upon and immerses the person!

(c) We need constant daily filling with the Holy Spirit
Eph. 5:18-19 "Be not drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit".
Be filled = continuous, ongoing, something that happens as a result of yielding.
Acts 4:31 "When they had prayed ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..."

4. Speaking in Tongues

(a) They speak in Tongues!
Acts 2:1-4 "... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues..."
Acts 10:44-46 "...for they heard them speak with other tongues and magnify God.
Acts 19:6 "...The Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

(b) What is Speaking in Tongues?
It is an overflow from your heart of the Holy Spirit speaking through a yielded soul and voice.
Some Key Features:
- Your spirit is praying (1 Cor. 14:14)
- The Holy Spirit is giving the language (Acts 2:4)
- It is a real language with meaning (1 Cor. 14)
- You are speaking to God (1 Cor. 14:2)
- It builds, energises, enlarges your spirit (1 Cor. 14:4)
Edify = NT3618 = Oikodameo = to build a house, to construct.
Where is the house built? Within You! Your spirit is enlarged and becomes charged with life.
- It gives voice to God's will and purpose (1 Cor. 14:2)
- It enable your soul to become energised with spontaneous communication of the Holy Spirit.

5. How to be Baptised in the Holy Spirit

Mk 11:24
(i) Desire
(ii) Ask
(iii) Believe – exercise faith
(iv) Receive gratefully
(v) Yield your soul and voice to allow Holy Spirit to speak through you.
N.B.: You speak! He gives the Words!

Laying on of Hands (5 of 7)

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In the laying on of hands, in the spirit, there is a flow from one person to another. God has called you not just to experience Him, but to connect to people tangibly, and release what He has given you.

[Review, Introduction]

We're carrying on our series on Hebrews 6, the First Principles; and we've talked about: Repentance from Dead Works; Faith towards God; and the Doctrine of Baptisms - baptised into Christ, and into His body; baptised into water; baptised in the Holy Ghost.

Today we want to speak on the Laying on of Hands. I encourage you, if you have a Bible, to follow it through; then at the end of this service, we want you to be touched by the presence of God, so let's read from Hebrews 6:1.

"Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection or maturity, not laying again the foundations of: repentance from dead works; faith towards God; the doctrine or teaching of baptisms; of the laying on of hands; of the resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgement. And this we will do if God will permit."

And so we see it's talking here about foundations - spiritual foundations. The Bible likens your life to a house - a house needs foundations. The first spiritual foundation to be laid is your relationship with Jesus Christ. So the first of these foundations are: repentance from dead works, empty activities, and trying to gain favour with God; instead coming to a place of faith and trust in the living God. The first part of the foundation takes us out of a life of sin, and puts us into being joined to God, and brings us into a body called the body of Christ.

Then, as a consequence of that, we begin to understand what 'baptisms' is. The doctrine of baptisms is the teaching. Baptism is to be 'immersed' or 'dipped'; so because we are now immersed in Christ, our old life has gone away, from God's point of view; and so we are water baptised.

Water baptism - we're buried. The old life is buried out of sight. We arise to walk in a new life with God. Water baptism is about saying goodbye to an old self-centred life, a life which is all about me and what can I get out of life; to a life lived to bring honour to God.

So following the water baptism is: Baptism in the Holy Spirit - the immersion into a new realm of the supernatural. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is usually accompanied by the gift of Speaking in Tongues - a language we've never learned, a language of the spirit; and we are ushered into a dimension of the spirit.

It's your choice whether you stay there, live there, walk there and grow in the supernatural dimensions on your life; but never, never stop short, or at the beginning. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is just the beginning of that life in the spirit.

[Main Message]

Now we're going to look at the doctrine of Laying on of Hands, and it's very simple. It's just what it says - it's actually you lay hands on someone. One person lays hands on another person; and as a consequence of that there is a spiritual connection between them. It's not just some empty ceremony - in the Laying on of Hands: as we lay hands on a person, there is a connection of one person to another.

One of the most important things that we need in our life is human touch. God is a personal God. He's not sort of someone remote and far off, and so touch is very vital to human life.

One of the ways that God has ordained that things are transmitted into our life, is through connecting and touching; and particular ways we can touch, lay hands on people is one of them. Notice when Jesus healed people, sometimes He touched them first - many times He laid hands on them; so we'll look at what the laying on of hands is for, but let me get you to understand what is really at the core of it..

The core of Laying on of hands is very simply this: when one person lays hands on another, it is because they have something to give to the other person. There is a connection takes place, between one person and the other; and if he believes and exercises faith... Sometimes we like to think that God will just do it out of the air, or out of the spirit world, that we can just get everything we need just directly from Him - and it's true - God does supply directly to us; but God also works through a body of people, and God uses people, who are filled with His spirit, to carry His life to others.

So the laying on of hands acknowledges that: not only does God want to touch me; He wants to touch me through another person - that God gives something to a person that I can receive.

If you'll just lift your hands to the Lord just right now, and if you will just close your eyes and open your heart expecting to receive. I'll lay hands on you, and then something of what God has given to me, will flow into your life. There's nothing dramatic or mystical about this. It's just that in the Laying on of Hands, in the spirit, there is a flow from one person to another - there is a real tangible impartation. Something flows, from one person, to the other person.

Now I can only give away what I've received. You and I are called to carry the spirit of God. That's why God put His spirit in you - so you could be joined to Him, and walk with Him. That's why you got baptised in the Holy Ghost - so you could enter a dimension where the power of God is in your life. Part of carrying the power of God, is that you share what God has given you. So in the laying on of hands, which can be just as simple as just a touch; or it can be as intentional as me going "Holy Ghost come on him"; or it can be just simply that I just touch. The power of God flows - there's a tangible flow of power; so through the laying on of hands, I make a physical connection with him; and what is in my spirit, connected to God, flows from heaven, and he receives.

Now this is not for 'special' people. This is for all who have been connected to Christ, and ushered into the realm of the spirit supernaturally, by being baptised in the spirit. This is something every believer is called to do, because the Bible says "signs shall follow all who believe". "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover". You have to understand that God has called you, not just to experience Him, but to connect to people tangibly, and release what He has given you. You and I need to be filled with the spirit every day, carrying the life of God to give to someone else.

Demonstration: Now I want you to consciously lay hands on him. Now I want you to become very conscious the spirit of God is inside you. Just meditate for a few moments: "God is in me. Almighty God is in me. Great joy is in me".

I want you to intentionally step forward, and just put both your hands on his head - as you do that, expect there will be an impartation from you to him. Are you ready? There you are. You have something to give from God.

That's true of every believer - you have something to give. You have something to give - if you hunger for spiritual experiences, hunger that you might build up people; and then take what God gives you, and give it to someone else. God wants you to have something to give to others; so at the end of the service, pray for someone next to you, and lay hands on them. We all have something to give. Tell someone next to you: you have something to give. Now there is an atmosphere of expectation, and I want you at the end of this service to pray for someone, believing for God to release His power through you. Why not do that?

So people receive an impartation. What are the purposes of the Laying on of Hands? We need to have a look in the Bible; and we'll find that there are five distinct purposes for the Laying on of Hands.

1. Blessing - the first purpose of laying on of hands is for blessing. Blessings in the Bible were prophetic; prophetic impartations to people's life. Genesis 48:13 - "Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand towards Israel's left hand, Manasseh with his left hand towards Israel's right hand, brought near him. And Israel stretched his right hand, laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger. Then he blessed Joseph." Verse 20 - "He blessed them that day, saying: "By you Israel will bless. May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!" He set Ephraim before Manasseh.

So you notice here that there is a blessing imparted. It is a prophetic word spoken, and it becomes reality in the person's life through the laying on of hands - it becomes real by the laying on of hands. So in the Old Testament, blessings are not just: "well, God bless you" - it was far more than that. It was God bless you with this; bless you with long health, good health, long life, favour. It was always prophetic of that person's destiny; and so words of blessing imparted life, and when the father laid hands on his son, there was a blessing imparted to them.

In the New Testament, women brought their children to Jesus, and they wanted Jesus to lay hands on their children, because they knew if He lay hands on them, there would be something of the life of God imparted into them. How wonderful to grow in a family where fathers speak words of blessing into their children, who lay hands on them, even while they're in the womb, prophesy over them, and speak into them blessing and health and life. Your words carry power. The laying on of hands is one way that power is released into the life of another; so the first purpose is one of blessing.

There are a number of examples of people being blessed, in Numbers 27:18-20 - "then Moses laid hands on Joshua". There was a need for leadership transition. There was a need for a leadership shift. God had spoken, and

identified; and in this what happens is: God speaks; Moses lays hands on Joshua; and God takes something of what is on Moses' life, and puts it on Joshua. Joshua arises to a new level of authority, so with the laying on of hands, there can be an Impartation of Authority into your life.

Something happens inside you. You need to believe, for it to happen. You need to have faith, for it to happen; and when God has commanded it to happen through the laying of hands, your whole inner life can come up to a new level of authority in what you can do, in how you can operate, in the way God will work through you. This is why the laying on of hands is such a wonderful thing to have happen - particularly when we have anointed men and women of God do that.

The second area of Laying on of Hands is: Impartation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Let's look in Acts 9. It's also in Acts 8 - so go into the Book of Acts; and the Holy Spirit, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, was often imparted through the Laying on of Hands.

Acts 8:17 – “The apostles laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit”. They knew they'd received the Holy Spirit - they began to speak in tongues.

Acts 9:17 – “Ananias who's just an ordinary believer, a disciple of Jesus Christ, went his way. He entered into the house where Paul was staying, and he laid hands on him; and said: Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you came has sent me, that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost”. Notice in verse 17 – “he laid hands on him”.

So two things happen - the first thing is that God has spoken to him, to go to find Saul. Now you've got to understand, that's a scary thing to do. Saul has just been murdering all the Christians; and God speaks to an ordinary believer, and said: this man, in spite of what you've heard, in spite of what you've seen, in spite of the stories, in spite of their bad reputation, I see something in him that others can't see.

He said: I want you to go to his house, find where he is; and then lay hands on him, and speak over him. Often we can only see people through the eyes of their history. We know them in a community for what they are, and what they've been like, but we need to see as God sees.

He sees your destiny. He sees within this murderer, a man who could change a generation. He sees within people who others say are failures, He sees someone who could make a generational difference - and how did it happen?

He listened to the voice of God; he came and laid hands on him. As he laid hands and spoke, the Holy Ghost came on him. Paul was filled with the spirit, and also he was healed. So the Laying on of Hands is used for imparting the Holy Ghost. There is transference; an activation of something can happen, when there is faith for this to happen.

Here's a third use of Laying on of Hands – Romans 1:11. Paul has spoken, and he said: “I really long to come to you, that I might impart to you some spiritual gift”. So impartation of spiritual gifts can happen through the laying on of hands.

Look at these verses very clearly - 1 Timothy 4:14. Paul is writing to Timothy; notice what he says: “Do not neglect the gift that is in you”. So Timothy has a gift, and it's in him. It's a charisma. It's a supernatural operation of God (doesn't tell us what it is).

He says: “don't neglect it”. It was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the elder-ship. So notice how he received the gift....

1) He's got a gift. 2) The gift is in him. 3) It was given to him; and it was given to him by a prophetic word spoken, accompanied with the laying on of hands, and something entered his life. He was gifted; and could do things he'd not done before.

Notice what it says in 2 Timothy 1:6. It says: “Here I remind you stir up the gift of God which is in you, through the laying on of hands. Now notice how it came - by impartation.

So Timothy was clearly known to Paul. He was known to the elders. That meant he was connected into a local church. This is not something that sort of happened by a wayside. He was a part of a community of believers; and there came a time when they laid hands on him, to impart to him, and activate him in the call of God in his life.

This was a young man, and he became a Bishop over thousands and thousands and thousands of people. How did it happen? He had a wonderful gift operating in his life. How did he receive the gift? Someone spoke prophetically the mind of God; and when they laid hands on him, it was imparted into him. Notice Paul says: "It was imparted by the laying on of my hands, accompanied with the words of prophecy".

Later on Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1:18, he says: "now war a good warfare, according to the prophecies that came over you" - so with the impartation of the spiritual gift came an area of conflict. You see, when hands were laid on him, it's because God had a mission for him. To get the mission done, he needed to have spiritual activation, he needed spiritual empowerment.

So when Paul laid hands on him and the gift was imparted to him, he was responsible to keep the gift alive, to keep the gift operating - that was his job; and Paul has to write and say: Timothy, come on, don't be scared. Don't be fearful, don't be intimidated by all those people. Come on, stir up that gift inside you, that gift got dormant. You left that gift that once operated in you, you've let it fall down inside you. Come on, activate it again!

So the laying on of hands will impart the gift, but it's your responsibility to keep whatever God's given you alive, burning and on fire!

How did he lose it? It became dormant. It was never gone. It just became dormant. I wonder how many are sitting here today - and once you moved, and someone laid hands on you, there was an impartation. Someone imparted, and you were activated in a gift; but it is dormant - it's not operating.

What happened? The devil has come to steal away something God put in you, to make you a blessing, to fulfil your destiny. It's your responsibility to keep it alive! What happened? Did you get hurt? Did you get a setback? Did you go through a fiery trial? Did you go through a disappointment? What did you go through - or was it just people intimidated you?

Paul says to Timothy: come on, stir up, activate - get that gift fired up in you again! He said: remember the prophecies that I spoke over you. Begin to use them like a weapon of war! Speak what God says about you, not what people are speaking about you. It doesn't matter what people are speaking about you; it's what God is speaking about you that really counts! You need to be agreeing with what God speaks about you; and if He's prophesied over you through someone, then get that word, use it as a weapon of war - and speak! Declare it into the atmosphere with faith; and I tell you something: heaven will respond to your faith, and there'll be a flow of life through you! Activating the Gifts of the Spirit - fantastic!

So here's another one that it's used for (or two): Deliverance and Healing. So have a look in Luke 13:10 - there's a woman who has a spirit of infirmity. She's sick. She has a serious back problem. Jesus in a synagogue, there's a woman with an evil spirit. For 18 years she was bent over, could not lift herself up. When Jesus saw her, He called her to Himself and said - now notice this. He spoke, and then He laid hands on her. Woman - you are loosed from your infirmity.

He spoke to the woman, and then He laid hands on her; and when He laid hands on her, the words He had spoken immediately was activated. Many times the words of God, once they're spoken, require us to do something. Jesus laid hands on her. He wasn't afraid of the demon, not afraid of any evil spirit in people. He just laid hands on her; and the moment He laid hands on her, there was transference of power - the demon came out, she stood up, and she was healed.

So Deliverance can be done. The Laying on of Hands is a part of the ministry of Deliverance; it's not all of it. Deliverance ministry requires the verbal command - the speaking to demons directly; or speaking and commanding the situation to change. But with it, we also lay hands on people.

So the next area is Mark 16:15 - the Great Commission. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes, and is baptised, will be saved. He that does not believe, shall be condemned." Now notice

this: "These signs will follow those who believe". Follow those who believe. Do you believe that you, as a follower of Jesus Christ, can be used by God supernaturally?

It says: these signs will follow those who believe. In other words, as you begin to share the gospel, as you make Christ known to people, as you engage with those who are lost and unsaved and in desperate need - you can expect God to do something. "These signs follow those who believe: In My name, they'll cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they'll take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they will recover". They will recover!

So "Healing the sick" is associated with the gospel. The gospel is not just words, it's about God moving to endorse His words; and so the Bible calls you to lay hands on the sick people. How many know some sick people? We're called to lay hands on them in faith, believing that they will recover. That word 'recover' means 'become well again'.

Sometimes people recover; it takes time, a gradual process. Sometimes it's immediate; but you know we're called to do our part, which is: pray and lay hands on people. Lay hands on them, and believe for God to flow through and touch them. When you lay hands on people, sometimes they feel the power. Sometimes you feel the power. It can be like warmth, it can be like electricity. Sometimes you feel nothing. Don't look for what you feel - just do what God says to do - lay hands, expecting God to do something.

Faith is always necessary for people to be healed. Without faith, people are not healed. I've noticed an interesting thing. I was in a church in Taiwan, and there was a man there in a wheelchair, and we prayed for him and helped him out of the wheelchair, and he began to walk. He began to walk so quickly, he didn't want me to hold his hand. He just began to walk up and down, and he was incredibly excited about walking; but what I noticed was, people who were with him were almost in a panic.

Notice what they're seeing: they're seeing him walk, for the first time unaided in years; and you know what's the uppermost thing in their minds? Get him back in the wheelchair - he'll hurt himself! In other words, their natural mind had not caught up with what God had done. Their natural mind was saying: oh, oh! It just actually wasn't registering he was healed. The natural mind was saying: he can't be out of a wheelchair - he needs a wheelchair! In other words, they were frozen in time in their thinking, and in their mentality; and God had moved, and they hadn't caught up with the miracle.

I said: no, fold up the wheelchair - because this is what I've learnt, that if you put him back in it, they probably won't get out of it again. I've learnt that when you pray for someone - this is some of the things I've discovered, in praying for people to be healed.

The first thing is, many people wait until they feel something; and if they don't feel anything, they don't think anything's happened. The second thing that many people do is this: they have felt something, and found a little freedom; but they focus on what God hasn't done yet - they focus on their sickness. I ask them this question: did you feel God touch you? Yes, I did. Has the pain gone a little? Are you freer in that limb? Can you move a little more? Yes, I can. Well, then don't focus on what hasn't happened - start praising God, and thanking God for what's happened - and the miracle will continue to go right through your body, until it is complete!

Sometimes miracles are progressive. When you see when blind eyes are opened - it's usually instantaneous. Well, I've had that come in stages too - I prayed for one person, they could see a little. Prayed again, see a little better. By the time I prayed the fourth time, they could see clearly - I just kept praying and believing. So an important thing in this area of faith healing, or healing by faith, is that people keep their faith active.

You keep your faith active - thank you God you've touched me, thank you you're healing is worked through my body right now. By your stripes I am healed - in other words maintaining a position of faith, in spite of some of the symptoms that may still be there. Does that mean that we don't go to doctors? Not at all, doctors have their place. The Bible tells us to: "go first to the Lord".

James 5:14 it tells us this: "If any be sick..." - this is what it says. It's quite interesting, the revised version of the Bible says: "if any be sick, reach into the medical cabinet and get something to fix you up". The revised, revised version says: "if any be sick, call the doctor immediately". It doesn't say that!

The Bible says this: "If anyone be sick, let him call for the elders of the church, and they'll come and anoint him with oil and pray over him, and the prayer of faith will heal him". Presumably that means Laying on of Hands as well.

So many people make the prayer of leaders in the church the last place... I'm going to you now, to pray, because I've been everywhere else, and nothing else works - now I have to come. Not a lot of faith in that. God says: no, believe Him for health. Believe Him to keep you in health. Believe for healing, when healing is needed. Do we need the doctors? Yes, the doctors are helpful; but just make your first place prayer. Turn to the Lord first, and say: God, touch this sickness, touch this thing.

We had one situation with one of our daughters. She had an eczema condition for years and years and years, and we tried all kinds of things. We prayed for her, and prayed for her; took her to doctors, gave her things; and more recently it's got worse and worse and worse. Nothing we did - even praying - seemed to make any difference. When she was here last, Janice prayed for her actually, and she felt the touch of God.

We just gave her a book, and she went away, and she began to look at the issues of her heart; and look: perhaps there are some blocks to healing taking place. She began to look at some generational things that may have been in her life. She began to look at some areas of attitude in her life; and then she just prayed some prayers to put her heart right before God. She woke up the next morning, and almost all of the eczema had gone. God did something no one else could do, no medicine, nothing else could do it. God could do it! So don't be discouraged if, the first time you pray, nothing happens.

Finally, the last is the area of Commissioning Believers. In Acts 13:1-4, they commissioned people into acts of service by the laying on of hands. So the Holy Ghost spoke to Saul, and spoke to Barnabas - spoke to them, put it in their heart that they had a call of God; and then God spoke to church leaders and said: now's the time of that call - so they laid hands on them after prayer and fasting, and sent them out. God worked through them mightily and powerfully.

Throughout the Bible, the Laying on of Hands was used to set people into roles. In Acts 6, they set deacons into roles. They prayed, and the spirit of wisdom and power came on them, and many of them worked in the supernatural, and did miracles.

The laying on of hands enables you to give what you have to someone else. Don't minimise what God has given you, and don't hold back from reaching out to someone to pray for them; because just making that connection, and believing God can release something into their life - that changes them forever.

[Closing Prayer]

If you're reading this, or listening to the Audio - you know something could happen to you, in just a moment of time. I'm going to pray a very simple prayer. This is a prayer to open your life to the power of God, to the person of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for your sins. As I pray this prayer, I'd like you to follow this prayer with me. I'd like you to speak this prayer aloud, and as you do this, in this few moments, in the room that you're sitting in, I'll tell you what will happen.

God will hear your prayer, no matter what country in the world you're in. His presence will come into your life. Your sins will be forgiven. You will be joined to the Lord. Let's just pray the prayer together shall we?

Congregation: "Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. I thank you for loving me. I thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins. Lord Jesus, I believe you died for my sins, and you rose again from the dead. Today I ask you to forgive me. I receive you as my saviour. I give you my life today. I receive your spirit into my heart and before heaven and earth I declare Jesus Christ is my saviour and Lord. Amen. "

Now those of you who're online, God's presence has come into that very room right now. If you have a sickness in your body, or if you have a need in your life right now, I want you to believe for the power of God to flow straight to you, and to touch you right where you are. I'm going to pray for you right now. I want you to believe in a few moments the power of God will come into that room where you're sitting right now.

Pastor: "Father, I thank you for each and every person that is watching right now. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I rebuke every spirit of infirmity. I command you to go from their life now in Jesus' name. I command sicknesses to go in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I release the power of God into that room right now, into each

person that is listening or reading. Father, touch them with your mighty power. Now there it is - God's presence in that room with you right now. Check out and move your limb, check out your sickness, and give thanks to God for what He's done for you."

Church, while we're sitting here right now, before we finish, I want you to do this - we're going to do two things. We're going to stand up on our feet; and we're all going to pray in tongues. Then I'd like you to turn to someone, and I want you to ask: can I pray for you? Then lay hands on them, and release the blessing of God.

Let's do it right now, let's just pray - 15 seconds praying in tongues, speaking in the heavenly language. [Speaks in tongues] Thank you Lord, you are filling us afresh with your power. Thank you you're filling us afresh with your anointing and your life. We have something to give to those around us, in Jesus Mighty, Mighty, Mighty name. Thank you Lord.

Won't you turn to someone near to you, and offer: you can pray for them, pray and release blessing over their life, healing into their body, if they need it. Let's just minister to one another. Thank you Lord. Thank you Lord, for your wonderful presence; thank you Lord for touching people today; thank you Lord, Holy Ghost, come and fall upon people right now. Touch people right now; minister to people right now, wherever they are - let your presence fall. Let the power of God flow through them. Find someone you can pray for, believe for God to touch them with power.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction:

Heb. 6:1-3 "Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation"

The foundation of any building is important, is unseen, but it determines the capacity and stability.

Growth to maturity is not automatic – it requires that the foundations be laid in our lives.

- Repentance and faith – establish our new identity as a believer in Christ – Children of God.

- We are baptised by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into His Body or family.

- We acknowledge we identify with Christ's death, burial and resurrection by act of Water Baptism.

- We enter a new realm of supernatural living by being baptised in the Spirit.

Laying on of Hands:

Definition: one person places their hands upon another person (usually the head) with a definite spiritual purpose – usually accompanied by prayer/prophetic words.

In the laying on of hands there is a spiritual connection and transference of spirit life and power from one person to another – you cannot give what you do not have.

The person receiving the spiritual impartation exercises faith that God will impart to them through the activity of another person e.g. Mk. 5:27-30 woman; Lk 6:19 Multitude.

2. Purpose of Laying on of Hands

i) Impartation of Blessing

Gen. 48:13-15 "Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head ... and he blessed Joseph ..."

Blessings were Prophetic words spoken over a person that became imparted through the laying on of hands.

The blessing was not able to be revoked once it had been imparted. Gen.27:34.

Blessings with laying on of hands acknowledged someone was chosen by God for a purpose.

Other Examples:

Num. 27:18-20 Moses lays hands on Joshua and imparts authority and wisdom.

Mk. 10:13-16 Jesus lays hands on children and blesses them – spoke into them.

ii) Impartation of Baptism of Holy Spirit

Acts 8:17 "Then they laid hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit".

Acts 9:17-18 "Ananias lays hands upon Paul and speaks over him prophetically. Paul receives baptism in Holy Spirit and is healed".

N.B. Ananias held no office – he was a disciple of Christ who listened to the Holy Spirit.

Mk. 16:17 "These signs will follow those who believe...they shall lay hands on sick ..."

- Laying on of hands is not just a ceremony – it produces a real spiritual effect.

- There is a real spiritual contact between two people and transference takes place.

- This is a ministry for all believers – we carry the life and power of God.

- God works through people making vital faith connection with other people.

iii) Impartation of Spiritual Gifts

· 1 Tim. 4:14 "Do not neglect the gift of God which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the eldership.

· 2 Tim. 1:6 "Stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- Timothy had some spiritual gift – supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit.

- That gift was given to Timothy by impartation.
- Timothy was known by Paul and the eldership and in relationship with them.
- Through prophecy the will of God was revealed – by laying on of hands it became effective.
- There was a real impartation and a subsequent spiritual conflict over this gift.
- Paul also urged Timothy to stir up the gift and warfare using the prophetic word 1Tim.1:11-18.

iv) Deliverance and Healing

(a) Deliverance

- Lk. 13:11-13 “Woman you are loosed from your infirmity, and He laid His hands on her...”
- Jesus spoke a word of command and it became effective as He laid hands upon her. The tormenting spirit of infirmity departed from the woman and she was healed.

(b) Healing the Sick

- Mk. 16:15-18
- 5 supernatural signs are associated with preaching the gospel.
- “These signs shall follow those who believe” – this is a faith ministry for all believers.”
- “They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover!”

i) Healing the sick is connected to preaching the Gospel and demonstrating its power.

- ii) Recover = to become well again.
- It is up to God how the person is made well and how long it takes to recover.
- The healing may be instantaneous (a miracle) or they recover gradually.

iii) Impartation of power

- The person may feel a flow of power through them – warmth, electric.
- The person may feel nothing at all.

iv) Faith is necessary (Mt.9:29 “according to your faith be it done unto you”)

- The persons faith must remain active.
- People tend to wait until they feel better.
- People tend to focus on what has not changed i.e. focus on the sickness.
- People need to focus on what God’s Word says and stay active in faith

(a) Thank God for what He has done.

- (b) Continue to confess the Word of God in the face of negative symptoms.
- If the person lets go of active faith the healing may not be fully complete or may be lost.

v) Jam. 5:14-15 “If any among you be sick ...”

- God expects believers to be connected with a local church and leaders that minister.
- God expects believers who are sick to seek healing from Him first – call elders.
- OK to receive help from doctors but seek the Lord first – I believe God!
- Oil is symbolic only of the person and power of the Holy Spirit – Faith contact point.

v) Commissioning Believers

(a) Apostolic Commissioning

- Act 13:1-4 “Having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them they sent them”
- Holy Spirit had already spoken personally into hearts of Saul and Barnabus.
- Holy Spirit spoke prophetically and publicly confirmed their call and directed their going.
- Laying of hands was done to confirm, commission, and confer authority.
- God had already gone ahead and prepared the way for them. (Act 14:16-17).

(b) Setting in of Leaders

- Acts 6:2-7 “...and when they had prayed they laid hands upon them”
- They publicly acknowledged the choice of these men and committed them to the task.
- They imparted authority and grace for the task.

Resurrection of the Dead (6 of 7)

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There is a difference between a person being raised from the dead, to extend his life and then die, and the teaching of resurrection. Jesus was the first-fruits, the first-born to be resurrected from the dead, and appear to many in a resurrection body - immortal, incorruptible, able to vanish in and out, no longer constrained by the physical world. He was a pattern for all that is to follow. This teaching covers the first resurrection, 1000 year reign of Christ on earth, and the second resurrection. Which one will you be in?

[Introduction]

Welcome to this series: the First Principles in Christ. We're now on the next principle called 'The Resurrection of the Dead'. We trust you really listen, and let God speak to your heart, and that you are established and changed because of this.

Hebrews 6:1 - "Now leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation: Repentance from dead works; Faith toward God; the Doctrine (or teaching) of Baptisms (Baptism into Christ, into Water, in the Holy Ghost, Baptism of Fire); of the Laying on of Hands (last session); of Resurrection of the Dead; and of Eternal Judgment. And this we will do if God permits."

[Review]

Last week, we looked at the Laying on of Hands. When you touch someone, you make connection with them; and the Laying on of Hands always implies there's relationship. We saw that the Laying on of Hands enabled us to receive from anointed men and women of God, to receive for our needs, to receive impartations; but also that we could lay hands on others, and we can give.

So we're in a position where, if we are connected to the body of Christ, and we are known - we're in a place where we can receive someone laying hands and imparting to us - activating, imparting gifts; but also God wants you to reach out and be part of His mission, and to lay hands on the sick, to lay hands on people, and see them recover.

[Main Message]

Today we want to look at: Resurrection from the Dead. Now the first four principles dealt mostly with this present world; and what happens in this present world - this realm called Time - the physical realm.

The next two go together: Resurrection from the Dead; and Eternal Judgment. Resurrection from the Dead deals with the next realm, the realm of eternity, the realm where God is. We live in a realm called Time - it's only a small thing compared to the realm of eternity where God lives.

In the Bible, there are quite a number of people who were raised from the dead. Let's have a look at one of them in Mark 5. Jesus ministers to a small girl. Her father had called Him to come and visit, because the girl was very sick; and we read in verse 39 Jesus came in and said to them, "Why are you making all this noise and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping," - but they ridiculed Him.

When He put everyone outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said: "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, arise." And this girl here, who had been dead - immediately she rose and walked; she was 12 years old, and they were overcome with great amazement. He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given to her to eat.

Let's have a look at another resurrection from the dead, in John 11. There's a whole number of examples; but this is not what the teaching of Resurrection from the Dead is about. John 11:38 (Lazarus, Jesus' friend, is dead) Then Jesus, again groaning within His spirit, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Roll away stone," and Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said "Lord, by this time there'll be a stench. He's been dead four days."

His body has actually started the process of decay. He said: "Did not I say to you, that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?" They took away the stone from the place where the dead man was. Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said: "Father, I thank You that You've heard me. I know You always hear me; but because of the people standing by, I said this, that they may believe You sent me." When He said these things, He cried: "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said them, "Loose him, and let him go."

So there are stories of people being raised from the dead. In the Old Testament there were Elijah's bones, which were so full of resurrection power, that when a body was dropped on him, immediately the man came back to life again.

In the New Testament, Jesus healed and raised from the dead, a young boy that was dead; this young girl raised-up Lazarus from the dead. We also see in the New Testament, that Peter raised a young girl from the dead; and also Paul raised a young man from the dead. In fact in Matthew 10:7-8, Jesus specifically says - now get this: "raising people from the dead goes with preaching the gospel". See?

It goes with preaching the gospel; so He told: wherever you go, preach the gospel of the kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, and so on. So the ministry of raising people from the dead was entrusted to the church. How far we've slipped from that! How far we've slipped; yet I've heard stories, in the last two or three years, of people that were prayed for here in New Zealand, that rose again from the dead - so God, in these latter days, is restoring great power to the church.

Now here's something you need to understand. All of those people, who were raised from the dead, that we just read about - all died; so when we're teaching the doctrine of Resurrection from the Dead, we're teaching about something that goes much beyond that, and I want us to go there now.

Let's have a look in Matthew 27. We'll just look at when Jesus rose from the dead. I want you just to stick with me, as we're going to go through a few scriptures, and I want you to understand what this is about, because you'll understand this is the great hope of a Christian believer. In fact it's a foundation to become Christian.

Matthew 27:62 – On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered to Pilate saying, "Sir, while He was alive, the deceiver said 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' So command the tomb be secured until the third day, lest the disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He's risen from the dead.' And the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went, and made the tomb where Jesus was buried secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard - which is probably four Roman soldiers.

After the Sabbath on the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. Behold, there was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven; and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, his clothing was white as snow; and the guards shook for fear, and became like dead men. But the angel answered, and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where he lay." They walked in - in another version it tells: they walked in, and they saw the grave clothes. Now they were wrapped around Him, and they had not been unravelled - they were just empty. He had risen - literally risen, completely out of the grave.

So Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. The Bible calls Him the first born. He is the first man truly resurrected. Acts 26:23. It says "that Christ would suffer, and that He would be the first to rise from the dead". So when we're talking about Resurrection from the Dead, we're talking about a total change of a person's body - going along with their spirit being rejoined to them, so they come alive. We'll show you a little more about this in a moment.

1 Corinthians 15:20 – "Now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of those who have risen from the dead". There was something about Jesus' resurrection that distinguished it from all other people who were returned to life. They were returned to life, but ultimately they died again. Jesus' resurrection was completely different; and so from the Bible point of view: He is the first fruits; the first born; the first one to be resurrected from the dead - and a pattern for all that is to follow. So Jesus was the first one.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 tells us that Jesus was seen by Peter. He was seen by the 12 apostles. He was seen by upward of 500 people. He was seen by James; then He was seen by the apostles again. In fact the Bible makes it very clear, that Jesus, after He rose from the dead, was seen by hundreds of people. Hundreds of people were eye witnesses. They saw Him die on the cross; they saw the Roman soldier put the spear into His side - they knew He was a dead man. They took Him down from the cross, and now here He was - He appeared to them.

Now it's very easy not to understand what that meant - to have someone, that you saw die; and you know that is a dead man; and where they buried Him in the ground; and then suddenly He's there, standing full of life in front of you. That is very, very scary!

So what was His body like? What was He like? In all the other cases of people who rose from the dead, they had been like dead on a slab, and then their spirit came back into them. They woke up, and they were restored to health, and away they went with their life again; but there was something about Jesus' resurrection that was completely

different. The Resurrection of the Dead, the Resurrection of Jesus - His whole body, His original body that He had lived in, that He had died on the cross in - was totally changed. The power of God changed that body; so no longer was it a physical body, limited to the physical realm. The body He had was reconstructed, and had unusual capacity. Let's just read a few verses...

Mark 16:12 - After that, Jesus appeared in another form, to two of the disciples - and they didn't recognise Him. So Jesus, in His resurrection body, had the capacity to change into a different shape. He wasn't recognised - think about that. His body was immortal, incorruptible. That meant there was part of it 'not old' anymore - no teeth fell out; no hair fell out; there was nothing old anymore. Everything was renewed, and could never corrupt. He would never die, He's absolutely immortal - so He could not be killed or shot.

Luke 24 offers another example, or a situation, of Jesus after He rose from the dead. Luke 24:16 – “and Jesus has been walking with them, and their eyes were restrained, they didn't recognise Him”. Have a think about that - here's someone they have lived with for three years - now He's walking with them, and they can't recognise who He is. He has the capacity to change Himself.

When Mary, who knew Jesus very well, met Him in the garden, she thought He was a gardener - she did not recognise Him. So in the resurrection, the body of a person is able to change shape, able to change form - the word there is 'morph'.

Notice in Luke 24:30-31, “It came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him - now notice this - and He vanished from their sight”.

So when a person has been resurrected, their body can never be corrupted again. They can never die. There's no way they can be killed. They are beyond that happening to them. Their body can change shape; their body can vanish in and out of the physical realm, and into the realm of heaven; and their body is able to suddenly appear, come through walls and turn up.

Can you image that? Can you imagine how scary that is, to have someone do something like that? How it just defies all thinking? You're talking to someone, and you've touched their hand, they've shared food with you; and then suddenly, in front of your very eyes, they're gone - just like that!

The mind can't comprehend it. You read it, and you've seen it in the scriptures before, but often we don't take time to think about what that must have been like - to be talking with a man; walking with a man; sitting and eating with a man - and suddenly you recognise it's the Lord; and then right there - His dish still there in place, cup of coffee still there in place - He just vanishes in front of your eyes.

In other words, He was no longer constrained by the physical world. He was able to enter into the realm of eternity, and back into the physical world, at ease. That's what it means to have a resurrection body - incorruptible, totally.

Further down, in Luke 24:36 – “Now the disciples were in the upper room and they shut the door. As they said these things, and were talking, Jesus Himself stood in the midst and said 'Peace'; but they were terrified, frightened, and thought they were seeing a ghost”.

Imagine if you've got the doors locked, and there are just 12 of you in the room, and suddenly - boof! Someone turns up there! They were freaked out. They were scared. They were terrified. This is beyond human reasoning.

In Luke 24:39, they said to Him – “Look, behold My hands and Feet, it's Me”. It's Myself, it's Me. Hey, come and touch Me, handle Me. A spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, like you see I have, and He showed them His hands and His feet.

So you notice it looked just like a human body, but it had unusual power and qualities - no wonder they were terrified. Do you think you'd be any different? Because it's supernatural, the supernatural tends to frighten people. It's indescribable.

So He rose from the dead, and I want you to understand that He wasn't the only one who rose. Have a look back in Matthew 27:51 - This is straight after Jesus died on the cross. "The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom; the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the graves were opened".

Notice this: when Jesus died on the cross, the graves broke open. Now for a Jew to have the grave break open, it's very serious. They had to go and guard the grave. They couldn't do anything about it - it was the Sabbath. They had to sit there, and wait, and guard these places; so they would have been waiting outside those graves.

Now this is what happened - it says: "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection. They went into the holy city and appeared to many". So Jesus was the first to rise from the dead; and notice it says: many - not all. Many were raised from the dead after Jesus' resurrection; and not only that, they went into the holy city, and they appeared to many.

So who were some of those people? Well, probably Joseph; was because Joseph knew this was going to happen, and that's why he commanded His bones to be taken from Egypt and buried there near Jerusalem. Probably Abraham knew, because that's why he bought a cave; and his descendants were all buried in the cave with him.

They wanted to be near what they knew would happen one day - Jesus Christ the Messiah would come, He'd come into the earth, die on the cross and rise gloriously from the dead! And at that time, they also would rise with Him - they had a great hope that stretched for centuries.

They looked and saw Jesus day. Jesus said: "Abraham saw my day and rejoiced". Abraham saw the day of the messiah, saw His resurrection from the dead. He got it by revelation, and it become a great hope. The only thing he purchased in his life, that I'm aware of, was a cave - to be buried near where this was going to happen. His hope was of the resurrection.

So the Bible tells us many - not all - at that time, rose from the dead. They had a resurrection body. They could walk in and out of rooms; walk in and out of heavenly realm; just walk in and out - they were immortal. Just imagine that.

What would you do, be part of that? Imagine if that was to happen today - what wouldn't you give to be part of that? If some were resurrected, and others weren't - what wouldn't you give, to be part of that? Think about that. You'll see that that's the great hope that we have. It's a great hope. That's what motivates us to move forward with God and to grow - it's very, very important.

So belief in the Resurrection is totally foundational to the Christian faith. Because of this, it tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:13-16 - If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then: 1) your sins can't have been forgiven; 2) it's a waste of time believing in Him, because He's dead like everyone else.

So Jesus Christ, being raised from the dead - God proved this was the Son of God. You see, the political leaders, the religious leaders came together saying that He's not the Son of God. They put Him to death; and God raised Him up, and proved He's the Son of God by resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:19 tells us: "and so if there's no resurrection, the Christian faith has no hope for anyone" - but there is a resurrection. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He will come again, and there is a great hope.

In Romans 10:9-10 tells us "If you believe in your heart, and confess with your mouth, if you believe God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved." Foundational to becoming a Christian is belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many other religions have founders. All of them are dead; none rose again from the dead. There's only Jesus Christ, only in Christianity has our founder died on our behalf, and then rose from the dead, seen by hundreds, and will one day come again. You and I need to recognise this is unique to the Christian faith.

The Bible tells us: all will experience resurrection. In Hebrews 9:27, we ask the question: what happens when people die? It's very, very simple, I can't develop it - I'd like to, but just in brief. In Hebrews 9:27 - "It's appointed under man once to die, and after that judgement". The judgement - final judgement comes, after the resurrection.

"But its appointed a man once to die". You don't get a second round; so if you think you're coming back again well, you're not coming back again - once to die. Every person has an appointment with death. None of us can shake it -

unless the Lord comes, and we are changed, then we will die, and we will have an appointment with God. That appointment with God is going to determine then our destiny; so death is just a separation of your body, and your soul, and spirit.

The Bible says we're a three-part being: spirit, soul, body. We live in a body, but we are a spirit being; so when a person dies, their body just returns, and disintegrates, and just becomes dust in the earth again. God, by His power, is able to reconstitute the entire DNA - every part of who you were, when you were alive on the earth - put it back together again, and resurrect that body that you lived in. So the body you're in now - God is going to resurrect it. Thank God for that! You get more teeth! God will resurrect that body.

So what happens after you die? Well, immediately after you die, if you're a believer, the angels "gather you". Luke 16 - "the angels gather you into the presence of the Lord". You're welcomed into heaven, and you're there until the day of resurrection. If you're a person who's rejected Christ, walked anti-God, then the spirit of death takes hold of you, and you can never be in the presence of God. You will always be separated from Him for eternity.

In Luke 16, it describes it, that place of suffering; where people that we know, are now there. They have their memory. They remember who they were when they were on the earth. They remember their loved ones. They have memory of people that they had relationship with on the earth. They remember experiences when they were on the earth.

They also suffer terribly. A rich man, who was in hell, suffered immensely. While he was there, he had memory of his brothers, his family, his experiences in life - he had all of that memory with him. It doesn't tell us if he was aware of what was happening on the earth, so I don't think people in that place are aware what is going on, but they remember their family members.

He saw into the realm where Lazarus was. He saw into the other realm; the realm where people are in rest with God; that realm called Paradise; that realm of heaven now where people go. He saw into that realm, and he was distressed, because he could see there was a great divide, and no one could cross it. After you die, there's no coming back. After you die, there is no chance to have a second chance. After you die, there's a decision made of where you'll spend eternity; and you make that decision on the earth. If you receive Jesus Christ, then it sets the course of our life; now we must walk with Him, and stay in Him, and not abandon Him.

So what happens then, at the moment after you die? Within a split second, immediately your spirit and soul leaves your body, goes into eternity; and your decision of how you responded to Christ will determine what happens to you in that place.

Now the Bible says: "all will rise from the dead". In John 5:28-29, this is what Jesus said - He taught this: "The time will come when all, all who are in the graves will hear His voice, the voice of Jesus Christ and will come forth; some to a great resurrection, some not to a great resurrection".

Revelations 20:11 - I want to stick with this, and then we'll come to the end. "Now I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things that were written in the books. The seat gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hell delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. Anyone not written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire."

So the Bible teaches then, that all will be resurrected from the dead. Jesus said: "all will come forth to be resurrected from the dead" - so every person that's ever lived in history, there will come a day when they will rise from the dead; their body will be changed, their spirit will be reunited with their body. They'll be there again, that person there again. At that time, the books are opened, and then eternal judgement takes place - and there's no one exempt, no one exempt.

Mark 12:24 - "God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living". So people do not vanish, they do not cease to exist when they die. They go into eternity, and they're either in the presence of God - Paul said to "be absent from the body, present with the Lord" - they're present with the Lord.

Stephen, when he died said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". So the Bible's very clear - when you die, you're either: in the presence of the Lord; or in your place of torment. There comes a point where there'll be a resurrection of all people; and following that resurrection, a determination is made of your destiny forever – forever- based on what you did.

Revelations 20:4 says: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who'd been beheaded for their witness to Jesus, and for the word of God, and had not worshipped the beast or his image, not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived - notice this - they lived, and they reigned with, Jesus Christ for a thousand years".

In the beginning of Revelations 20, there will come a point in time when the devil will be bound and imprisoned; so the spiritual powers which have deceived the nations for generations will be bound - their influence will no longer be there. They'll no longer be able to cast their influence upon the nations of the earth; so there will be a period of a thousand years, and in that period of a thousand years, all demonic activity will cease. The devil and his cohorts will be bound for one thousand years. That 1000 years will be a period in earth's history, that has never been seen ever before, but which is prophesied from one end of the Bible to the other.

There will be an unprecedented season of prosperity and peace in the earth - it's a great hope to look forward to. There's no political solution to the dilemmas that we face in the world. The only solution, really, ultimately is the coming of Christ; when what He will do will bind spiritual powers.

Revelations 20:1 – "I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having a key to the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; he cast him in the bottomless pit, shut him up, set a seal on him, so he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished." But then he's released for a little while.

So there will be a period where there's no demonic activity. Can you imagine no demonic activity? A lot of people can't understand the extent to which demonic activity creates the problems in the nations. Much of the church in the West won't even acknowledge it, and deal with it; but for us who understand things of the spirit, we understand there is a very real spirit world. Spiritual powers influence people, and they run, and control, and manipulate the courses of nations. They control what goes on in the earth, through deception, through spiritual power. Can you imagine when they are bound for a thousand years, what it will be like on the earth, without all of that there? An unprecedented season of peace and prosperity in earth history - until the devil is released again.

"Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them". So now he sees in the spirit - and he sees thrones. A throne is a position of governance, a position of authority and power - authority that the devil has had to give up. A body of believers has taken possession of those; and now have the power and authority representing the Lord, to bring about amazing and substantial changes in the earth.

It says: "I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness for Jesus" - clearly they come up. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Now notice this - that some people enter the first resurrection; some people do not. The assumption everyone has, is that they would be; that all in the first resurrection would be Christians. It's an assumption, rather than a reality.

Notice what it says: "the rest of the dead". That's all other dead people - apart from those who the Bible refers to, enter into the first resurrection. Now among those who come into the first resurrection, are people who gave up their life for Christ. Imagine that, this is the kind of people it's talking about - people who live their life for Christ, passionately, fervently; and some of them laid their life down for Christ. They are counted worthy to be in that first resurrection. I don't think someone who's a lukewarm believer, and lives in compromise, and doesn't represent Christ - it's hard to imagine how they could be in that.

Not only that, it says: "I saw thrones, and they sat on them". You notice, if you read right through the Book of Revelation (first four chapters), that only those who overcame were ever given that kind of authority. So the first resurrection - it says: "blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

I don't think we should assume that we will reign with Christ, if we don't: walk with Him; fellowship with Him; and endure suffering for His sake, in this life. Think about that. The assumption automatically is: everyone just makes it in; but actually, notice what the Bible talks about. The Bible talks about those who live a life that honours God - a life that overcomes the difficulties that are in the current church age, the current age we live in.

Jesus spoke to the Lukewarm Church of Laodicea. He said: "Blessed is the man who overcomes lukewarmness, apathy, and indifference. He shall sit with me in my throne". So God has reserved rewards for those who walk with Him; so we can all access and come into heaven, but when we're resurrected, and how we're resurrected, and the realm we live in, in resurrection - now that varies; and that depends on what you have done with your life, as a steward of Christ while on the earth. Think about that.

Notice we just already read: "the books were open"; and Jesus said in another part, in Revelation 22 – "I come, and My reward is with Me, to give each man according to his works". So very clearly what it's talking about here is a resurrection of reward, a resurrection of privilege.

It's spoken of in other parts in the Bible. I'll just give you two references to it; one is found in Hebrews 11:35, and it says: "some had great victories with their life. Some did great things to change nations. Others were put to death - now notice what it says - they were put to death; and what they were believing for was a more powerful, or a stronger, resurrection". You see they went to death because they believed there was something - a prize to be won.

Paul spoke of the same prize, we'll just look at that, and then finish for today. Philippians 3 - Paul was aware of this too. He begins to talk about his own journey; now Paul was a great apostle - he did amazing things.

Philippians 3:10 – "oh, that I might know Christ, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death - notice this - if by any means I might attain to the resurrection from the dead".

So he's saying: I'm doing these things - IF I might get to here. When there's always a word 'if', you know there's a possibility that you may not get there. You will catch the bus - 'if' you're on time. If you're not on time - you don't catch the bus.

He's saying: I do these things - I seek to know Him; I seek to discover the power of His resurrection. I seek to walk in the fellowship and friendship, connecting with Him over the rejection that often comes for being a Christian – "being conformed to His death, if by any means I might attain to the resurrection from the dead" - and the word resurrection here is a word used no other place in the Bible.

It's the word 'Anastasis' - resurrection is Anastasis, meaning 'out from resurrection' - the resurrection that causes people to stand up, stand out from everyone else that is dead. He's talking about the first resurrection; and notice what he goes on to say, in Philippians 3:13:

"Brethren. I press on, I do not count myself to apprehend, one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, reaching forward to the things which are ahead, I press to the goal for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let any of us who be mature, having that same mind, and if you're thinking differently, God will reveal it to you."

Notice what he's saying: My whole life is motivated because of what I see is coming in the future. There is a day when there will be a first resurrection. I want to be in that resurrection. I want to be with Christ. I want to be part of that great resurrection.

Can you imagine what it'd be like to be living on the earth for a thousand years? You can never die, never suffer, never be put to death, never be corruptible; and you can now fulfil a mission for God - bringing the earth into the order that He intended it to be brought into.

What this is called is: the Hope of the Believer. This is called: the High Calling of God, in Jesus Christ.

Paul writes in Colossians 1:27 - "It's Christ in you, the hope one day you'll be filled with the glory of God" - your body will be resurrected, and you will walk this earth representing Him, just as He did after He was raised from the dead. What an amazing thing!

Notice what he says in Philippians' 3:20 – "Our citizenship is in heaven, from where we eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus who will transform our lowly body, that it might be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working whereby He can subdue everything".

It is not too difficult for God to do this thing. It is very clear, in that first resurrection, not all will rise, but there will be some who have died, who will rise from the dead; there will be some who are alive, who will be changed; and Christ will be seen in His people. What an amazing motivation for you and me to serve Him passionately, and to come into such a wonderful destiny that He has for us.

The Bible tells us that this resurrection life has already begun in you. Romans 8:11 says this: The same spirit, the Holy Spirit, who resurrected Jesus Christ, changed His body, joined Him back together, raised Him from the dead; when you became a Christian, that same spirit of God was put in you, that same Holy Ghost is in you.

Notice what he says: the same spirit, that was able to raise Jesus from the dead, can: quicken, energise, activate, and restore your mortal body. You can be filled with the life of God, because He's put His Holy Spirit in you. It's a resurrection spirit!

That spirit that you've got in you, that Holy Spirit of God, raised Jesus from the dead. It can energise you with life. That's why we encourage you to build a spirit life; because if you don't, you won't have life resurrection power inside, filling you, making you healthy and full of life, energy, vitality, able to release the power of God to people.

It's not just for a handful. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, the resurrection power of God has already started in you. It's your responsibility to cultivate your relationship with God, so you live energised in the Holy Ghost, full of the power of God, flowing in the gifts of the spirit, releasing the life of God to others.

This is the privilege of every believer. Resurrection took place when I received Christ. I come alive, my spirit is joined to the one who's risen from the dead. Now you and I can walk in a new life. When you got baptised in the Holy Ghost, it's the entrance into that realm of life.

It's not so difficult, not so hard - it's a life serving God. It's a life where you meditate. It's a life where you let the word get into you; you learn how to praise strongly, and the life of God begins to fill you. It's for every believer! It's for every believer!

One day, there is a hope, that if I serve God, walk with Him, fellowship with Him, and endure things for His sake - that I will qualify for that great resurrection, the first resurrection. What an amazing challenge we have!

[Closing Prayer]

Father, God, we thank you for such a great hope that is set before us. If you are reading or listening online, then the best thing you could do, would be to open your life to Jesus Christ. If you're not a Christian today, then you're not walking with God. You have a destiny separated from God, and that destiny will start the moment your heart stops. When your heart stops, time will stop. You'll enter eternity, and you know what I say is true. What a great thing, if we were to just receive Christ right now.

I want us just to pray this prayer together; and then we're going to stand, and just honour Jesus; and clap to Him who rose from the dead.

Father in heaven, I open my heart to you. I thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I thank you that you raised Him from the dead. Jesus, I believe in you. I receive you as my saviour. I turn from all sin. I turn from all false gods. I receive you as my Saviour, and give you my life today. Before heaven and earth I declare Jesus Christ is my Saviour and Lord and friend forever. Amen! Amen!

Let's give the Lord a clap shall we? [Applause] Halleluia! We believe in you Jesus, your power rests within us today.

Why don't we stand together, and let's begin to pray in tongues. Let that life of that spirit, that raised Christ from the dead, begin to express inside us right now.

I want you to do this for 15 seconds, pray in tongues as strongly, as loudly as you can and see the difference. [Prays in tongues]

Father, let the resurrection life of Jesus grow and increase in us, manifest through us, touching the people around us; and Lord - to you we give all the honour and all the glory. Jesus - thank you for dying on the cross. Thank you for going into the deepest parts, thank you for rising from the dead. You're our saviour and you've set us FREE! You've set us FREE! Come on, let's celebrate! Free. I'm free!

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb. 6:1-3 "Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundations ..."

· The first four of the foundational principles deal with this present world – realm of time; physical realm. The last two of the foundational principles take us into the realm of eternity, realm of God.

2. People Raised from the Dead

· Old Testament:

2 Kings 13:21 A dead man arose from the dead when his body touched Elisha's bones.

· New Testament:

Lk. 7:14 Jesus raises a boy from the dead.

Mk. 5:35-42 Jesus raises a girl from the dead.

Jn. 11:39-44 Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead – healed restored and raised.

Acts 9:40 Peter raises Dorcas from the dead.

Acts 20:9-12 Paul raises a young man from the dead.

· Mt. 10:7-8 "As you go, preach, saying the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, freely you have received, freely give."

Raising the dead is part of the commission that Jesus gave his followers. This demonstrates the power of God and the reality of life after death. All these people died – None of this is the resurrection referred to in Heb. 6.

3. The Resurrection of Jesus

(a) What happened?

· Mt. 27:62 – Mt. 28:7 "I know you seek Jesus who was crucified, He is not here; for He is Risen!"

· The Romans sealed his tomb and posted a guard to ensure no-one stole his body.

· When the women entered the tomb they found empty grave clothes – He had vanished.

(b) Jesus was the first to experience resurrection

Act 26:23 "that Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead."

1 Cor. 15:20 "But now Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

1 Cor. 15:3-8 Jesus seen by Peter, the twelve, over 500, James, all apostles, Paul. They were all eye witnesses to seeing Jesus after His resurrection.

(c) Jesus Body had Changed

Mk. 16:12 After that He appeared in another form to two of them.

Lk. 24:31 He vanished out of their sight.

He stood in their midst – touch my hands and feet!

His body incorruptible, immortal, transformed by the power of God.

He was able to change form, trans-locate, enter in and out of heaven.

(d) Others Rose from the Dead with Jesus

Mt. 27:50 -53 "...the graves were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the graves after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many."

This is why Joseph wanted his bones buried near Jerusalem.

This is why Abraham purchased a cave near Jerusalem – Abraham, Sarah, Isaac buried there.

4. Belief in the Resurrection is Foundational to Christian faith

Rom. 1:3-4 God declared Jesus Christ to be the Son of God by resurrection.

1 Cor. 15:13-16 Resurrection proves our sins are forgiven at the Cross. Without resurrection our faith is empty and without hope.

Rom. 10:9-10 Belief in the resurrection is foundational to being saved.

5. All then will experience Resurrection

(a) What happens when you die?

Heb. 9:27 "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgement."

Death = separation of spirit/soul from body – your body returns to the earth and decomposes.

Your spirit and soul go into eternity to face Creator God to be judged.

Angels of God gather godly who trust Christ to heaven.

Angel of Death gathers ungodly to place of torment (Lk 16:19-31).

(b) All will rise from the dead to face Eternal Judgement
Jn. 5:28-29 "...all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth ..."
Rev. 20:12-15 "...and anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."
God is able to re-assemble every part of our body again by His great power.
All will be raised from the dead and enter eternity of judgement/ suffering or of joy.
Mk. 12:24-27 "God is not the God of the Dead but of the Living."

6. The First Resurrection

Rev. 20:1-6 "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the First Resurrection"
There are two resurrections – and there are different realms of existence in the Kingdom.
The first Resurrection - Precedes the 1000 year rule of Christ on the earth
- Precedes the general resurrection of all dead
- Brings people into a realm of authority and rulership (thrones).
- Is for those who overcome in this life. (Rev. 3:21)
Mt. 25:1-13 10x virgins.
Heb. 11:35 - stronger, more powerful resurrection.
Phil 3:15 – Paul saw this as something to attain to – a great hope.
Resurrection = exanastasis = the 'out from' resurrection = to stand out from the dead.
Phil. 3:20-21 – transform our lowly body that is might be conformed to His glorious body according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself.

7. Resurrection Life Now

Rom. 8:11 "If the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you"
- Jesus now dwells in heaven.
- We who have received Jesus are joined spirit to spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).
- The Holy Spirit within you can quicken and energise spirit, soul and body.
- Quicken = to make you alive with the life of another!
This life of the Spirit begins when you receive Christ as Saviour.
This life of the Spirit is empowered when you are baptised in Holy Ghost.
This life of the Spirit can be developed and expressed through you.
- Prayer – Meditation – Word of God – Serving – Obedience.
This life of the Spirit that dwells within will resurrect our mortal body.

Eternal Judgment (7 of 7)

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Sometimes we focus a lot on the grace of God, the goodness of God, the mercy of God we forget or overlook that there is another side, that God is also holy and He's just. His justice requires that He deal with how we've governed our life and what we've done in our life. All of you have an appointment to keep with this. There is no exception. Matt 16:27 I come and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work.

[Introduction]

Welcome the last in our series, in Hebrews 6 - First Principles; we're going to look today at Eternal Judgement. We trust you'll just open your heart, to just hear the word of God; and may the spirit of God move where you are, and touch you, and change your life today.

[Review]

Hebrews 6:1-3, "Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of: Repentance from Dead Works; and of Faith towards God; of the Doctrine of Baptisms; of Laying on of Hands; of Resurrection of the Dead; and of Eternal Judgement. And this we will do if God permits.

So we see a number of truths, which are foundational to being established in Christ. Every one of these truths is a foundation, so it's not all that we learn. It is the part which has to be laid upon, which everything else builds.

We saw at the beginning, the need for us to turn away from activities and works to try and gain the approval of God - religious activities; to repent of those things which are dead and lifeless, motivated by wrong motives; and to turn

towards and have faith in the living God, faith in what Christ has done for us. As we do that, we are immediately born again - the spirit brings us into the realm of the kingdom of God.

Next was the Doctrine of Baptisms; and we discussed being baptised into Christ - being placed by the Holy Spirit into Christ Himself, and into a body of people.

We looked at Water Baptism - the public declaration that our life as we knew it is over; and we're now entering a new life of following Christ.

We talked about Baptism in the Holy Spirit - an experience that opens the door. It's a door experience to the supernatural.

We saw the teaching concerning Laying on of Hands - that God wants to impart into us; so therefore we need to be in a body of people where we're known, where people can lay hands, impart, release, activate gifts into our lives; and we ourselves are authorised by the Lord to lay hands on the sick, and to minister to them.

Then we saw the doctrine and the teaching about Resurrection. We saw that the difference between: a person being raised from the dead; and the teaching of resurrection - the one day when all will be raised from the dead. We shared about the first resurrection and the second resurrection.

[Main Message]

This last one we want to do is a very, very important teaching, on Eternal Judgement. The word 'judge' means 'to look', or 'to distinguish', or 'look right through to the source' of something, the motivation behind it, to see clearly through to what lies behind it; and to evaluate.

So the Bible talks about a foundational principle called Eternal Judgement. There are judgements that God does in history; or in other words, judgements in the present time; and one of the principles is: God's mercy always rejoices over judgement, but God does judge sin. At the cross He judged sin; but also made way for mercy for those who repent.

So there are some ways that God judges and deals with sin now. The most common one is just the principle of sowing and reaping - what you sow, you reap. If you sow sinful actions, sow hate and bitterness; then you will reap a harvest of that, the Bible tells us. Not only that, but demonic spirits use our violations of the law of God as a doorway through, to cause destruction in our lives.

There are some times in history where God has intervened. We can see, as we read the Bible, God directly intervened in histories, in a number of areas, bringing judgements into the earth. We see in the New Testament how Ananias and Sapphira, when they sinned, then they were judged right on the spot - they died on the spot, in church; so there are some judgements that take place in the course of life. However, the primary way that God operates with us, is according to how we respond to His word.

We're going to look now at Eternal judgement - Eternal judgement which is different. Eternal judgement has to do with the judgement that will take place. All of you have an appointment to keep with this; there is no exception.

Hebrews 9:27 says: "It's appointed unto man, once to die. You don't die twice, you don't come back again - once to die; and then after that - judgement; so this is a very important truth.

Because people don't experience judgement, and because justice is often perverted in a nation, people don't have a fear of God; nor understand: we will all have to give account for our life.

Sometimes when we focus a lot on the grace of God, the goodness of God, the mercy of God; and we forget or overlook that there is another side - that God is also holy, and He's just. His justice requires that He deal with how we've governed our life, and what we've done in our life.

Ephesians 2:10 says: You are His workmanship. "We are His workmanship, and we are created in Christ Jesus" - notice what we're created for, for what? "For good works, which God has prepared..." When? "...before the foundation of the earth".

I want you to just note that, because everything we say after this is going to lever off that particular scripture.

God created you - He had you in mind, before you were even thought of, by your family; and He designed you to be born into the earth - whatever situation, circumstance, nation or background - He designed for you to be born into the earth, and He set out a destiny for you. He designed and created you with giftings to accomplish something with your life; to accomplish something not trivial; but purposeful, meaningful, which would impact people.

He has "created you for good works". In other words, you are designed to do things that extend the Kingdom of God; so having come to Christ - not by any work we did, but solely on what Jesus Christ did on Calvary; having been made right with God, just because we trusted - now we are to spend our life on the earth serving God, and accomplishing something with our life.

What we accomplish, is different for every person. These works, that we're to accomplish, were written by God for you to accomplish - something only you can do. There's something that every believer in the body of Christ is called to accomplish. It's not done in a Sunday meeting. It's not done in any church meeting. It's primarily done when you live your life. You and I are called to accomplish things for God.

You and I are agents of God in the earth. We are an ambassador for the kingdom. We are a gateway for the life of God to flow and express in the earth; and you and I are mandated by God to do good works - to actually accomplish something with your life.

Hebrews 9:27 - "It is appointed for men once to die, and then the judgement". Accountability for our actions is foundational to the Kingdom of God; accountability for our actions is foundational.

Romans 14:10-12 says - "Why do you judge your brother? Why do you look at the person next to you and criticise them and find fault with them? Why do you despise your brother?" Why do you look at other Christians, other believers and criticise them, despise them, find fault with them? Why do you do that?

"For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ". All - that means everyone - no exceptions.

"We all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee... (every knee => no person, who has ever lived, shall not fulfil this) ...shall bow to Me, every tongue confess to God, so each of us shall give account of himself to God."

So people may get away with stuff in life. I don't think they really do, because they reap what they sow; but eventually, all must give account - so we see that it's a principle of the kingdom that no person is exempt. Every one of us, are going to give account; not for the person next to us, but for ourselves.

Think about that moment. This is an appointment you will keep. There'll be a day when you will keep this appointment, and you'll stand before the judgement seat of Christ; and what will be on view is how you've run your life - that's a very sobering thought. It's something to cause us to think about our life, not live week to week, day to day; but to think of the course of our life, and begin to consider how we can be productive with our life - because it will come to an end, and we'll give account.

So you notice there, it's the 'Judgement Seat of Christ'. That word 'judgement seat', is a word in the Greek called 'Bema'; it means literally, a rostrum. This referred to a rostrum that Caesar stood on, and he would give a verdict about someone. If they were judged to be guilty, they were given a black stone; if they were judged to be innocent, they were given a white stone; but it was a place of judgement, where a person's life was assessed; and the judgement was final, no appeals. You don't get a lawyer, and appeal, and have a second go. The judgement is final - absolutely final; so it's a place of calling to account.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10. "We therefore make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be pleasing to God." This is our goal - we want our life to be pleasing to God. It doesn't matter what people think in that sense, it's whether our life pleases God.

He says then: for here's why we endeavour to please God, this is why you live your life to please God: because one day you're going to have to stand before Him. "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Same truth: Everyone is going to appear before the judgement seat of Christ. The judgement seat of Christ is a place that believers go; this is where believers are judged. People who have not received Christ are judged differently, at a different place in time; so this is a judgement for believers.

Here is the deal: it's according to how you've behaved, or conducted, your life. What we have done, whether it be good or bad; so every action in your life has some value, good or bad; and every action in your life will come before the Lord, without exception.

The purpose of this judgement is reward. What God has in mind is reward - "that we may receive".

God's purpose is (at this judgement): it's for believers; it's to look at your life - what did you accomplish with the life; the opportunities, giftings, talents, and resources you were entrusted to? How did the world benefit because, and how did the kingdom advance, because of what you did?

On the basis of what you did that's worthwhile, there is reward - it is acknowledged by God. Now this is justice! People, who pour out of their lives in the service of God, will receive from God, a reward that goes on for eternity. People who waste their life doing their own thing will obviously not receive such a reward.

There is a problem in our culture called Egalitarianism - where everyone wants to be just equal. In eternity, we will not be equal at all; in hell, people will not be equal. There are different degrees of punishment in hell; different degrees of reward in heaven - you have to understand that.

When you understand and hold this in your heart - that I've only got a temporary assignment on the earth, which is preparing me for eternity - you begin to look at your life differently, and operate your life differently, because you have an eternal perspective.

The judgement is to receive something. If you are a believer in Christ, you will not be judged, condemned and sent to hell. John 3:18 - "He that believes in Me shall not be condemned".

So if you're a believer, the purpose of this judgement (at this particular judgement seat), is not to judge whether you go to heaven or not; it's about what you receive in eternity.

Again Jesus tells us in, John 5:24 - "He that hears and believes in Me shall not come into judgement, for he has eternal life".

So if you are a believer in Christ, this is not about your salvation. It has nothing to do with your salvation; it has to do with your service - what you did with the life God gave you.

So the next thing we see is that believers will either: experience reward for the life that they lived; or they will suffer loss. 1 Corinthians 3:8. "Now he that plants, and he that waters, are one; and each one will receive his own reward, according to his own labour".

So every person will receive a reward, according to what they did. What are you doing with your life, to follow the Lord, to honour God, and to walk out His destiny for you? That's what is in mind here. It's not the person next to you - it's you, and how you live your life. This is what God has in mind.

So the Bible says Matthew 16:27 "everyone will be rewarded according to what they've done". In other places, for example in Rev 22:12m Jesus said: "I come, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according to his work".

So we are saved without any works; but for eternity, our position, our stewardship in eternity, is governed by what you do with your life now. Our life is just a training ground. It's a preparation for eternity, so we keep that in mind. So salvation is free; but we walk with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:11 – “No other foundation can anyone lay, which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”. So the foundation in our life is Faith in Christ.

Now you begin to build: “so if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver and precious stones; wood, hay and straw, each one's work will become clear”. You notice it's talking about a foundation being laid in your life; and then you're building on that foundation. It describes two kinds of materials you can use: gold, silver and precious stones; and wood, hay, straw.

“Each one's work will be made clear or manifest, for the Day will reveal it (that's the day the Lord returns), for it will be revealed by fire”. The fire will test everyone's work, what sort it is. “If the work he has built on it endures, he will receive reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved.”

So you notice now, the people that He's talking to and writing to, are believers. He's saying that every believer is a builder. You build your life; you build and extend the Kingdom of God; and how we build will be examined.

What you build like will be examined, and it says that if God examines what you've built, and discovers it's wood, hay and straw, then there is nothing of value taken with you into eternity. There's no reward for what you have laboured - but you are saved. The image or picture is like someone who escaped out of a smoking house and it was burning down, but they got free and they've escaped. They didn't bring anything with them - but they're saved. So they have an eternal life, a wonderful, joyful life in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the Bible also describes that there are rewards for those who serve faithfully, and we need to understand the nature of those things, and the seriousness of the issue that's at hand for every one of us. Notice that the works that they have done is: their service for Christ, how we've lived our life.

Eternal judgement is a key foundation in the life of a believer, because of this: we understand that one day, every aspect of our life will be scrutinised, with a view to being rewarded. God is not there to judge us; He's there to reward us. All He's going to do is evaluate whether there's anything worth rewarding.

He's not going to condemn us. If we believe in Jesus Christ, we've passed from condemnation to life. That's not the issue any more. The issue for us will be: have you accomplished anything with your life that God could celebrate, and acknowledge, and reward for all eternity? That's the issue. Important issue, isn't it?

If every one of us is a builder; every one of us has come to Christ, is building and extending the Kingdom of God, we're an agent for the Kingdom of God; and we work with people, we impact people, we influence people, we run our life, and fulfil the course God gives us (it's our responsibility to discover that); then there comes a point when our life will be evaluated, and what we've done will be evaluated.

You won't be evaluated on whether you were a preacher or not, or whether you went to the mission field or anything like that. You'll be evaluated as to whether you fulfilled the course God had ordained for you.

It's a terrible thing to put a ladder against a building, and climb to the top of the ladder, and find it's against the wrong building - not very good. In other words, you were busy, but you actually were busy doing all the wrong things, that you were never called to do. This is an issue of discovering what God designed me, and called me, to do - and then doing it, very simple.

God is not going to approach us with anger. He approaches us with love, that we're His children. What He's looking for is, He's saying: is there something I can find and discover, in how you've run your life, that I could highlight, and reward, and acknowledge for eternity? That's what the spirit of this is like.

Let's have a look then, at what kind of principles would God use, to evaluate our life. Many of us would think: I haven't got many talents, and I haven't had much opportunity, and so on. So Jesus, in the Parables of the Kingdom, explains exactly how evaluation will take place. There's no doubt left, if you read the parables Jesus taught. Most of Jesus' teaching was to His disciples, and the issue is the issue of the kingdom, and our entrance into the kingdom, then being stewards of kingdom truth and life to others; so in many places He has recorded exactly the basis.

Number one is: the Quality of what you've built - what sort it is. Notice it says there in 1 Corinthians 3:13 – “Each one's work will be clear, for the Day will declare it. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test each one's work, what sort it is” - what quality, or character, is around what you have done.

So what God will look for is this: what Motivated you in doing what you did? Were you just trying to get ahead, look good, impress people; or was there genuine love motivating your work? Without love, no matter what you've done, it doesn't count for anything. Prophesying without love is “clashing cymbals”.

Giving your life to be burned, and not having love is quite a waste of time; so what He'll be looking for is the motivation of the heart - have I grown in love; has it been motivated by love? Has it been motivated by obedience?

Have I listened to what God wanted me to do; or I just went and did what I wanted to do, and then asked God to bless it? Come on, a lot of people do that. They just do whatever they want to do, ask God to bless it, and think they've done a great thing for God. Listen, God will evaluate all of these things.

What He's interested in, is your stewardship of His plan for your life. He's already written out the plan. The question is: whether you discover it, and walk with Him in the outworking of it.

In Matthew 7, Jesus spoke over a number of people who had worked miracles, cast out demons, done all these kinds of things. He said: “I didn't know you”. Your work is of inequity. You just basically did your own thing, using my name. The Bible is full of these stories.

So the first thing then is: what is the motivation behind the works we have done? Did we listen and respond to the Lord; and do we depend on Him for His strength in helping us day by day? So clearly prayer and listening to God undergird the kinds of things that He calls us to do.

Here's another one, in Matthew 25. So firstly God looks at the underlying motivation, He looks at what lies under the work, what kind of work it really is. If it's just selfish, advancing yourself, doing your own thing, and feathering your own nest, then it won't last, because it's got no kingdom nature in it. The nature of the kingdom is love.

Now these are Parables of the Kingdom. They all come in response to Jesus being asked: “Tell us about your coming”; and He told them a number of parables. I don't have the time to go into each one of them in depth. I want to just highlight some things. I encourage you to study them, because these are parables that you will one day fulfil in your own life.

Matthew 25:14-30 “There is a day coming, the kingdom of heaven...” - notice it's about the kingdom. So the issue here in hand is not salvation, the issue is your stewardship of the resources God gave. “The kingdom of heaven is like a man went to a far country, who called his servants, delivered his goods to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his own ability”.

You have a king, going to a far country, that's Jesus Christ. The servants of the king, are the servants of God, and everyone is given an entrustment. They have different ability, so one of the principles is our potential. Did you fulfil your potential? One of them had more ability than another; so he was given more talents than the other one was given: one was given five; one given two; one given one - each according to their own ability. So here's the thing.

When making evaluation of your life service, God will take into account your potential. So you don't need to look at someone who's highly gifted, and say: well I wish I was like them. Actually, you're you; and God knows your potential. He's given you an entrustment - just take what you've got, and put it to work. So He will evaluate on the potential.

Now you notice the one that had five talents, he went away and got another five, so that's 100 per cent increase. The other who had two, went away and got two talents - he also got 100 per cent increase. So both of them, although they have different ability, have got different results, but they both realised their potential.

They both did the very best they could with what they had, and the commendation to both are identical. The fact one had five, and got another five, and had more ability - that's not taken into account. What's taken into account is: he actually fulfilled his potential; so the commendation to that one there, in Matt 25: 19 - “A long time after, the lord of those servants came, and settled accounts with them”. He that received five came and said: Lord, you delivered to me five talents; I've gained another five. He said: good and faithful servant, well done.

He gets commended - and he's called 'good'; and he's called 'faithful'. Faithful means productive, and fulfilling what God has given us. "You were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter the joy of the Lord. The one who had received two talents came: Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents beside them; and the Lord said: to him well done you good and faithful servant; you've been faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter the joy of the Lord."

Notice just a couple of things in there. The first thing you notice is, they had different ability - but they both fulfilled their potential. Second thing you notice is: they both got the same commendation - well done good and faithful servant.

Now notice what happens - this is in eternity now. "You were entrusted with things in time, now I call you to be a ruler over things in eternity" - and so what's at stake is our inheritance in the Kingdom of God, for eternity. So we see there, in that particular story, that both of them received joy, and they entered into what? [Authority, Eternity].

It delights God, when we fulfil our potential. It delights Him when we're productive. He loves it. He says: I'm really joyful, really happy about this.

But the one who had one talent, he said: oh, you're a hard man. You reap where you didn't sow; and gather where you haven't scattered. "I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground". So that is a believer, it's a servant of the Lord, who has opportunity, has talent, has gifting, has ability, but refuses to be productive.

Why is he refusing to be productive? Number one: wrong concepts of God. He didn't really take the time to find, and get to know, what God is really like. Secondly: he looked after himself - "I was afraid", and so I just looked after myself, making sure that I get by.

What the master says to him is this: "You wicked and lazy servant".

The word wicked means: you have a negative influence in the kingdom. You actually demoralise, and discourage other people, because of your slackness - that's what the word wicked means. It doesn't mean its evil; it just means it's a destructive influence, or harmful influence, or demoralising influence in the kingdom.

And he called him lazy. He said: "you knew that I reaped where I haven't sown, and gather where I haven't scattered. You should have deposited the money in the bank at my coming, and I would have received interest. So he took from him, for everyone who has more will be given, he will have abundance. He who does not have, he will take away what he has, so he cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth".

Principle #1 is Quality. What is the kind of motivation in our work?

Principle #2 is Potential.

Now there's another parable that looks the same; but it is not - there's a vital difference. It's the Parable of the Pounds (Minas), in Luke 19:11 - "Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return". That's: Jesus has gone to heaven, has received His kingdom, and will return.

"He called 10 of His servants, delivered to them 10 pounds, and He said to them: do business (or trade), until I come." Here that there are 10 servants, and 10 pounds, so everyone gets one each. So this time, all have an equal opportunity. One of them, with his one pound - he has 10 - he produced 10 from the one; and another one produces five from the one; and another one doesn't do anything - like in the first parable - he just buries it, and hides it.

So notice what the master says, when He comes back, in Luke 19:15 - "wanting to find out how much everyone had gained by trading, he came and said: well Lord, Your pound..." - notice he said: Your pound. It belongs to You, it's an entrustment - it's earned 10. Wow! And He says: "well done, you good servant. Because you were faithful over little, have authority over 10 cities". The second came and said: "master, your pound has earned five". Wow! Likewise, be over five cities.

Now notice the difference here: they both had an equal start, but one was far more productive than the other. The one who was more productive received a greater reward. Notice the nature of the reward - it isn't clear, all we know is that it has to do with the responsibility of governance in the kingdom; and it's in proportion to how productive he was - in this life. Think about that - How productive are you?

So he was faithful. To be faithful is to be productive. An opportunity in the eternal kingdom was given to each of the two that were productive - the other one lost the opportunity.

So we get down to the last one; and you think: well man, I didn't get to be a Christian until I was very old - sort of been around a few years, you know, and wasted a lot of my life. You feel: man, I've wasted my opportunities; or: my circumstances have not enabled me to do what I really wanted to do. Many people find themselves in that, and they feel a lot of grief over that.

This will help you then, in Matthew, 20:1, there's another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner, who went out in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. When he agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them to his vineyard. When he went out the third hour he saw some others, and he said you go out into the vineyard and whatever is right I will give you. Again he went the sixth and ninth hour, and about the eleventh hour he found some still standing idle. He said why are you standing idle here, and they said no one's hired us. He said okay, go to the vineyard and whatever's right, you will receive it."

"So when the evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said the steward: call the labourers and bring them their wages, beginning from the last to the first. And those who were hired about the eleventh hour, they got one denarius". Then the others came - the first came, and they thought: I should get more.

What happened was, they got the same - so they complained against the landowner, saying: "these last have only worked one hour, but you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day". He answered and said: "Friend, I'm not doing you wrong. Didn't you agree for one? I'm giving you what's just".

First of all, it's a Parable of the Kingdom; and it's a parable of labourers being put into service in the kingdom, to be productive. Notice the vineyard, which always speaks of people in the kingdom of God; so it's talking about being productive for the Lord in His kingdom.

That one guy, who got in at the beginning of the day, got one denarius for the whole day. Then through the day he employed others; until finally get the last one. It was a 12 hour day, the last one in the eleventh hour just got in, only did one hours' work, but he got rewarded exactly the same. Of course it got them a bit upset, because that's 'not fair'. God is fair, God is just - "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?", so the issue here is one of opportunity. What kind of opportunity did you have?

They were all employed to serve. Some had more opportunity than others; and some had less opportunity. God took into account, in dealing with them, how much opportunity they had. So you may serve the Lord all your life - saved at 16, served faithfully all your life; and then someone else, at the age of 40 gets saved, and they look back and think: well I didn't get a chance. They've come in later on in life. They still get the chance, and they still can be completely productive with the opportunity they have.

Some may come in, and they're in the last decade of their life - they can still be completely productive, and completely fruitful, in the last season of their life. God takes into account these four things.

1) Quality, the nature of what you've done; what motivation what was in it; and whether you heard from God, and did what He wanted you to do.

2) Potential - did we fulfil the potential in our life? Did we actually labour, and come to the best that we could accomplish with our life?

3) Productivity - did we actually produce anything? If a person has produced more, they're rewarded more.

4) Opportunity - how much opportunity do we have?

All of those, of course, you could study in detail. I encourage you to do it, encourage you to look at it, read it; and begin to think then, and reflect back to your own life: what am I doing with my life while I'm on the earth?

Many Christians are not established in this truth. Because they're not established in their truth, they just do whatever they want to do - live their life the way they want to live. Their life is very similar to the world; their values are very similar to the world. However, what they're doing is, losing an opportunity to invest in eternity. They're losing an opportunity in life to actually, not only benefit now, but to gain for all eternity.

So we'll just finish with the last scripture. In Revelations 20, there is another judgement called: the Great White Throne Judgement. This is an eternal judgement too.

So after the Judgement Seat of Christ, comes the beginning of a thousand years. The Great White Throne Judgement, as far as I see it, comes at the end of the thousand years.

Revelations 20:11 - "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things written in the books. And the sea gave up the dead that were delivered in them. Death and hell gave up the dead that were in them, and they were judged, each one according to his works."

Now I want you to see these two statements; the Book of Life; and 'books'. They're two different things. The Book of Life, is a book in heaven, a literal book, where is written the name of every person who has come to trust in Jesus Christ to be their saviour.

Their name is written in the Book of Life. They are born again; the Spirit of God has come into them. They are acknowledged; they belong in the Kingdom of God; they're children of the kingdom.

Revelations 20:15 - "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire".

Anyone; everyone; so what is crucial? Number one - crucial thing - is that you and I come to Jesus Christ, come to faith in Jesus Christ, come to trust Him as our Saviour and as our God, to give our life to Him. Why? Because at that time, your name is written in heaven, your name is written in the Book of Life; and when the final day of judgement comes, that will be the only basis upon which you'll be judged - is your name in the Book?

If your name is in the Book, then that judgement's not for you. If your name is not in the Book, then you're in deep trouble, for eternity.

The next one: notice it talks about 'books'. It says: "the books are opened"; and it says: "everyone is judged according to their works", by the things written in the books".

Remember I said at the beginning, in Ephesians 2:10, that: "God has prepared works for you to accomplish"? So they're written somewhere. God has a scroll written in heaven; and a scroll is different to a normal book. A book has got pages in it, you just open the pages. A scroll, you have to unwind it; and as you walk into and fulfil what God is giving you now, the scroll unwinds - He gives you a bit more.

He doesn't give you the whole thing. He's written the whole thing; but He's actually gives you opportunity to choose whether you: walk with Him; obey Him; walk and open that scroll; and begin to walk out your life and your destiny.

Now you notice that there are books (plural) - so every person, for every person - there is a book in heaven with your name on it. There must be a room where all the books are kept. It must be a big room; so right now, you know that there is a scroll, or a book, that has a destiny in heaven - God's plan for what you could accomplish with your life on the earth; and there is also a record written, of everything you've ever done.

If you've sinned, then your sins were blotted out of that - no record, it's taken away, it's erased. "Your sins, I'll remember no more" - but what you have done as a servant of God is recorded. It will play back like a video; and in that video, you'll not only see what you did - you'll see the thinking that was behind it; the motivation that was behind it; the actions that you did; and the effect of your actions on others.

It always disturbs me when Christians act and do things, without considering how it will affect others. There is a ripple effect, when you throw a stone in a pool. Whatever we do affects others; so part of the evaluation of our life will be like a video - and I don't know how God does it, like a great hologram, or a video.

You'll just see your life played out very, very quickly; and you'll become aware of your thoughts, of your fears, of your motives, of your intentions, of your feelings, of the actions - and the effect it had on people. You become aware of it, in a very short space of time - and God will evaluate it completely.

What He evaluates will determine what level of reward He'll give you for eternity. So this is an amazing, wonderful, hope that we have. The Bible tells us in Titus – “Every believer should be careful to ensure they're doing good works”. We should be careful to maintain a life where we're actively doing good; and every one of us needs to take into account that one day. We may have fooled people - we can't fool God.

One day, there's an eternity at stake. Can you imagine that great day, when you stand before the Lord, and all those things that nobody noticed, those sacrifices you made, that secret giving, that praying that you did, when your heart was broken but you stood firm before God. No one saw what you were doing, but you stood firm in the midst of difficulty. Others left you, but you remained firm, you remained steadfast. Things went wrong. It seemed like God had let you down, people hurt you in various ways, but you stood firm with the Lord, and you walked out your destiny.

I tell you, on that day - you will rejoice! There is a crown for you! There are opportunities for you in eternity; and He will say: “well done, good and faithful servant”. That's what you and I should have as a motivation (or could have as a motivation), in our life.

It's not what people say: “You have your 15 minutes of fame, it's all over” - there is an eternity! The one person that you want to be saying: oh, I'm so glad to see you, well done you good and faithful servant! Come and enter into the joy! I want you to rule over, I want you extend my kingdom; I want you to be responsible for these things in eternity! What a tremendous hope, what a tremendous joy.

So how will it work out in your life? Well, don't copy me - I've got my own scroll to walk out; but neither hinder me in doing it. Every person has their own distinct and unique call. Together as a family, we build and encourage and strengthen one another.

The ‘giftings’ of ministries are to equip you to do things God called you to do. They're not what I was called to do. They're what you're called to do, and it's our responsibility to discover how God has wired us, and what He has gifted and called us to do; and wherever that is, however that is, whatever form it takes; and then passionately, wholeheartedly just get about doing it. Amen!

[Closing Prayer]

Father, we just thank you today, for the great and mighty truths of the foundational doctrines of Christ. We thank you Lord for all that you have taught us, as we've done this series. Those of you who are listening or reading this online - you're just looking at: maybe you don't know Jesus Christ, but you've already been struck by what I've said. I'd love you just to follow me in a very simple prayer...

“Father in heaven, I come to you in Jesus' name. I confess Jesus Christ is my saviour and Lord. I turn away from all sin. I turn to you, the living God. Jesus, I give you my life today. I declare before heaven and earth, you are my saviour and my Lord, and my friend forever. Amen.”

May the Spirit of God just touch you where you're watching, minister His love and peace into your life right now; and may your life become productive in serving God.

Father, we just thank you for this great church. Thank you Lord for the opportunities you've given us over many years, to touch the nations of the earth, to be productive, so productive in so many ways.

Father, I pray that from this people many will rise up, be productive in their homes, their families, their schools and the community, in business - wherever God, you have designed and directed them to serve. Let them be incredibly productive, incredibly fruitful.

Father, I just pray that you'll continue to bless us as a church in every way, that we would be fruitful in extending your kingdom. Lord, we just give you the honour today.

It is incredibly sobering to us, to know: not only do you love us deeply; but that we will also give account for our lives. So Lord, we live our life, and choose today, to turn to you with a humble heart, and ask you to forgive us where we've fallen short, and to empower us to hear, see and do all you've called us to do. And everyone said: Amen. God bless you.

It's been a great series - trust you go over the scriptures I gave you today and have a good think about them. God bless you. Have a fantastic day.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction

Heb.6:1-3 "Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation ..."

Eternal Judgement is a key foundation in the life of believer.

Judge = to separate, to distinguish, to see through.

Current Judgements – these occur in time:

(i) Principle of Sowing and Reaping – Gal.6:7-9

(ii) God brings discipline to our life – Heb.:2:5-11

(iii) God's direct intervention in History e.g.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Noah

Ananias and Sapphira

Eternal Judgement – judgement awaiting every person in eternity.

- Heb:9:27 It is appointed for men to die once and after this the judgement.

- Eph.2:10 created in Christ unto good works.

2. Accountability for our Actions is Foundational to the Kingdom of God

(i) All of us shall give account of our Lives

Rom.14:10 "We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ ... each of us shall give account of himself to God".

No person is exempt - all of us shall give account.

Judgement Seat = "Bema" = rostrum, place a person was sent for trial and called to account.

Place of judgement used by Roman Empire – Acts 25:10

(ii) What will be judged in our works

2 Cor.5:9-10 "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done whether good or bad".

The issue to be judged is how we have behaved.

Every act good and bad is brought to the light.

Every act has some value or influence.

Bad = 5337 = phantos = worthless, no value.

(iii) The Purpose of this Judgement is Reward

2 Cor 5:10 "...each one may receive the things done"

The Judgement Seat is to determine what we receive.

The believer in Christ will not be condemned.

- Jn3:18 "He that believe in my ...not condemned"

- Jn 5:24 "He that hears and believes – shall not come into judgement"

The believer in Christ is judged for purpose of Reward.

(iv) Believers will be Rewarded or Suffer Loss

1 Cor.3:8 Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour"

v14 work endures judgement – receive reward.

v15 Work not endure judgement – suffer loss but saved.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that salvation is free but that Servants of God are rewarded for the works they have done – their service for Christ.

(v) Eternal Judgement is a Key Foundation

Since all of us will give an account of our lives we are motivated to:

- Centre our life on eternal values.

- Be productive and fruitful in serving Christ

- Remember our life on earth is a preparation for eternity.

- Continue to grow in our relationship with Christ.

- Love people in every situation.

3. How Will we be Judged?

There are several principles that God will use to evaluate our lives. Jesus message was about the Kingdom of God and entering that Kingdom.

(i) Quality – What sort of work?

1 Cor.3:9-15 “...test each ones work, what sort it is”

2 categories of works described.

Our works are tested by fire to discover the nature of them.

To discover the value of our works

- What was the motivation behind actions - Motives
- Did we listen to and obey the Word of God - Obedience
- Were they done in our own strength and ability - Power

(ii) Potential – did we fulfil our potential?

Mt.25:14-30 Parable of the talents – 1 talent – 15 years wages

Each was given according to ability – potential.

Each had opportunity to serve and be productive.

The 2x talent and 5x talent servant both were 100% productive.

They received the same commendation and reward.

Faithfulness is not assessed by what we have but how we use it – how productive.

(iii) Productivity – what quantity did we produce?

Lk.19:11-27 Parable of the Pounds – 3x months wages

Each was given the same amount to work with.

Each had opportunity to serve and be productive.

The King wanted to know how much every man gained by trade.

Each possessed equal ability.

Each was different in their faithfulness.

Faithful = productive.

The more productive servant received greater reward.

Rewards for serving Christ = extended opportunity in Kingdom.

Failure to make active use of talent/pound entrusted is considered : wicked.

Wicked = 4190 = having a negative, hurtful influence.

By God's standard of wickedness is not just doing evil but failure to do good.

Mal.3:18 “He will discern between righteous and wicked, the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him”

Outer Darkness = outside, outside the door

= Shade, shadow

Placed for a season of time outside the door in a shadow e.g.

- Mt.22:11-14 Wedding Feast

- Mt.25:1-13 Parable of Virgins – 5 wise entered supper.

(iv) Opportunity – How much opportunity did you have?

Mt.20:1-16 Labourers in the vineyard.

Labourers were employed to serve in the vineyard.

Each agreed to a reward for their labour.

The ones employed later in the day had less opportunity (time).

They received the same reward as the others.

God takes into account how much opportunity.

4. The Great White Throne Judgement

Rev.20:11-15 “They were judged, each one according to works”

A record of our life is recorded in a book – a scroll. It is written in detail; thoughts, motives, actions. Not just your actions but everything concerned with them:

- emotions, thoughts, motives, all displayed.
- The impact or ripple effect of your actions on others.

Book of Life – those who have received Christ.

- Not in book = eternal punishment

Books – your personal life story in detail.

- every sin repented of is blotted out, erased.
- Every aspect of a believers life is judged.

Kingdom – Levels of reward and levels of punishment.

Ps.139:23 “Search me oh God and know my heart today”

Titus 3:8-14.

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