

“Christianity Explained: How Do You Become A Christian? (Part 3b) [Believe the Gospel]”

Here's today's emphasis: ***a person must believe the Gospel in order to become a Christian.*** The “Gospel” means “Good News,” and the Good News about Jesus Christ is the best news ever! Mark recorded these words as the first spoken by Jesus in his Gospel (Mark 1:15): “... ‘*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*’” Acts 11:19-21 records this testimony: “*Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.*” Before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:7 the Apostle Peter testified that the Gentiles had heard the message of the Gospel from his lips and believed. Like it happened to Lydia and the members of her household in Acts 16:14-15, we desire that the Lord would open people's hearts so they will respond to the Gospel message and become believers. In Romans 10:16 the Apostle Paul expressed his desire that people would accept the Good News and believe the Gospel message. In the next verse Paul writes in Romans 10:17: “*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*” Paul shared this testimony about the Ephesians in Ephesians 1:13: “*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*” And then he reminded the Thessalonians, in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 that they had believed the Gospel-presenter's testimony to them. These Scriptures are all saying that ***a person becomes a Christian by believing the Gospel about the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Here's the Christian Gospel in a nutshell: Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God whom God sent to be the world's Savior. God gave His sinless Son to take away the world's sins because He loved the world so much. Whoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but shall have eternal life. Things started off good between people and God, both in overall human existence and with each individual in the womb. But then we messed things up by choosing to sin (every person has sinned, except Jesus). Sin separates us from God and entangles our lives in an inescapable snare – robbing us of everything God desires for us. We can't free or rescue ourselves from sin. But God has made a way for us to get back into right standing with Him again. Jesus is that Way – He is the only Way. Sinless Jesus took the place of guilty sinners when He died for the sins of the world on the cross and rose again on the third day. Jesus is alive and ever lives to pray and intercede for us! When you believe in Jesus and receive Him as your Lord and Savior – you are saved, forgiven, set free from sin, and made right with God! Having believed we then live for the One who died for us!

Here's some General News that must be believed:

- **There is a God.** A person will never become a Christian until they believe that God exists, and by faith see Him who is invisible.
- **God is our loving Creator.** A person will never become a Christian until they believe that God owns the rights to their life (because He's their Creator), and that His motive and reason for every command and actions is His great love for us.
- **The Bible is reliable.** A person will never become a Christian until they believe the Bible is absolute truth, and is the inspired, inerrant, unchanging, authoritative Word of God. A person must believe the Bible gives us accurate and exclusive information about God, His plan of salvation, and what He requires.

Here's the bad news and Good News contained in the Christian Gospel which must be believed in order for a person to become a Christian:

Bad News	Good News
Everyone has sinned, and sin separates us from God.	Communion with God is restored by believing in Jesus Christ.
Your sin requires either your eternal death, or your belief in a sinless substitute.	God has sent a Sinless Savior (Jesus) to take the place of guilty sinners.
All roads don't lead to God. Even the best of humans can't save themselves.	Humbly accepting that Jesus is the only way of salvation leads to the Father and salvation.

Some people reject the bad news and Good News contained in the Christian Gospel because they don't want to relinquish control of their life and lifestyle. How foolish it is to believe that sinful living is better than righteous living. The pleasures of sin are fleeting at best, and leads to brokenness, destruction, emptiness, alienation from God, hardness of heart, ensnarement, and being robbed of everything God desires for you. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would give people eyes to see that: God's ways are the best ways; living God's way leads to abundant, blessed, and meaningful living; righteous living leads to true joy, peace, happiness, and contentment; living for Jesus is the best way to live and it's the only way to die.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Do you believe in Jesus?
2. Do you believe the Gospel?
3. Do you believe both the bad news and the Good News contained in the Christian Gospel?
4. Are you willing and available to be the Lord's ambassador and faithful and true Gospel witness?