

Our Relationship with Christ

Isaiah 1:18-20 - *“¹⁸Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. ¹⁹If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”*

Introduction

In the beginning we read that God created the whole world, into this world He put a created being called man. Man was unique to all the other creation in that man was able to reason, speak and think.

One of the greatest things that God gave mankind was a free will! We each have the God designed ability of choice – We can choose to serve or reject God. He did not make anything in all creation like us, we are not robots, we have choice.

Here and unimaginably powerful God gives a created being the ability to choose who he will serve. And that choice is available to all mankind, today! There are many people in this world who have said no to God and to His invitation to come to Him, through the way He made (John 14:6).

Unfortunately we say, No we will not serve you, No we reject Your plan of salvation, No we reject Your Son, Jesus Christ – each of these decisions have consequences when we died and determine where we will spend eternity.

The Disciple

I want to remind you that there were twelve disciples who Jesus called. All twelve had access to Jesus, all had the right and ability to be His closest friend, but only three disciples chose to be closer and one in particular, John was the closest and became the beloved disciple.

There is nothing more important than our relationship with God! Nothing, no work no assignment, no ministry, no family member, no money, no sports event or anything else. Absolutely nothing is more important than your relationship with God!

God wants you to be His friend

God is in this room, right now! He is saying, “Here I am, come to Me and I will be your closest friend!”

God, the creator and the God of the entire universe, the God who made everything, He and He alone wants to have a relationship with you and only you!.

That is truly amazing! My question to you today is, How is your relationship with God? Is He just a swear word? Is He a lucky charm, do you only call on Him when you are in deep trouble? Who is God and how is your relationship with God?

The magnifying glass in on your life, you are under the microscope of God. No one else, you, yes you are being examined but God and yourself and you will become the judge of your relationship with God!

Private Devotions or Quiet time

I just want to talk to you a little about devotions. I trust that everyone here has a Bible and is reading through it!

Bible

Your daily devotions, the time you spend each day with God is more important than you can imagine, and you need regard this time as most important and extremely special.

We need to get into the daily habit of reading our Bibles. There are three distinct methods or ways of reading our Bible:

1. You can read it as a complete work, try reading it through cover to cover
2. You can read it as a study guide and reference, trace through topics in your Bible and see what God is saying to you or to answer some question.
3. You can read it as a daily guide to your day, where you read a short passage each day and then meditate on it, ask these questions:
 - a. What is this passage saying to me?
 - b. What can I learn from this passage
 - c. How can I apply this passage to my life

Reading program

I suggest that you start to read your Bible in the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John will give you a look at Jesus' ministry and life on earth. Next I would go to the Gospel of Luke and then follow it up with the Book of Acts, this will give you an entire perspective of the New Testament, the rest of the New Testament will slot into these two books.

The four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are different accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus. All the epistles of Paul from Romans to Hebrews will slot into the Book of Acts. And then there are 7 other books that discuss other aspects of Jesus and Christianity and lastly there is the book of Revelations which talks about our future.

Prayer

Your prayer time must not be rushed, take time to talk to God about the issues in your life! Expect Him to give you direction in His Word, a thought, good ideas, through nature and creation.

You might ask me, pastor I do not know how to pray so I will teach you a method I use till this day. It is called the ACTS method and works like this:

- A for Adoration – Tell God how great He is, give Him praise and worship
- C for Confession – Confess your sins to God and Repent of them, tell God you are sorry.
- T for Thanksgiving – Here you thank God for everything you can think of, thank Him for your house, your meal, your family etc

- S for Supplementary –This is where you pray for your family, your country and leaders. You pray for the people that you know and are around you, lastly I close off by praying for myself and the things I am believing God for!

The most amazing thing about prayer is when you start taking God's word and giving it back to Him ,you start to see God move in your life.

You pray something like this,

“Lord your word says in Psalm 37:4 that if I delight myself in You, You will give me the desires of my heart, now Lord I am doing my best to put you first in everything and I am trying to continually delight myself in You and I know that You know the desires of my heart and I ask that You give me a car so that I can have transportation to work and back...”

Notes

It is a good idea to have a pen and paper nearby while you read the word of God and while you are praying.

The reason for this is so that you can make notes in your Bible or in your book about what you are praying for, what you are trusting God for and when God answers your prayers so that you can see when you prayed for it and when you got your answer. (remember to record the date)

Sometimes God will give you a word, give you direction or ask you to do something, so you record and date it in your note book and then do what God is telling you and when you see that start to happen you record the date next to your notes.

You can also use your note book to read special scripture you recorded that God gave you during your quiet time.

This is called journaling! You record your thoughts, what God is saying to you, what you are praying for and trusting God for and what God has already answered in your life.

This journal will become a special resource where you can see how God moved in your life and you can be encouraged and your faith will be renewed as your read what God has and will do in your life.

Biblical Characters

The Bible is full of people who may have started out as pagan, who initially did not worry who God was but moved in the supernatural once they met/had an encounter with God and gave their lives over to Him and His plan for their lives.

I trust that as I tell you about some of these people that you will be encouraged to draw near to God and build a relationship with God!

We will be reading and you can follow along in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11. The first man we will look at,

ABEL (Hebrews 11:4) – Do it right and come through the Way

Abel was the second born son of Adam and Eve, Abel was the youngest and Cain was the eldest, both were farmers. Cain farmed the ground and Abel with sheep, but Abel chose to be closer to God than Cain. He chose to bring offerings according to God's requirements. **Genesis 4:4**. God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's offering.

Surely they were both correct making an offering to God, but God required an offering of meat and also Abel brought the best offering he had, the first fruit of his sheep.

Now you might say, shame! God is unfair, Cain was a farmer of the soil he did not have sheep? That might be true but I am sure Cain could sell some of his produce to Abel and bought a sheep or battered for an acceptable sheep!

This story shows us that in our relationship with God, we need to come through the correct sacrifice. You cannot come to God with your works Isaiah says that our best deed, our best works are as filthy rags.

We need to come to God through the way He made it possible, Jesus Christ said in **John 14:6** – *"**Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.**"*

The way we build a relationship with God is through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gives us the access to a relationship with God.

By not coming through Jesus Christ our sin will always be an issue and will always drive us away or separate us from God!

Enoch (Hebrews 11:5) - Relationship

The next person we will look at is Enoch, the Bible says that Enoch was so close to God that one day he just disappeared because God translated him and took him home with Him.

We need to read our Bibles, pray and go to church so that we can get to know God and build up with Him. Remember the Holy Spirit is helping us but our prayer time is when we talk with God, His Word is the one of the ways God talks to us and by going to church God teaches us to be committed to Him.

NOAH (Hebrews 11:7) – Listening to God

Noah was a unique man in his time. The Bible tells us that he was the only person righteous during his time. I believe he was also the only person who had a relationship with God and because of that relationship he heard God speak to him.

What God told Noah was mind boggling. God told him that it was going to rain. Now maybe today rain is no big deal but in Noah's time they had never seen rain, let alone so much rain that the whole earth would be flooded. Up to that time the earth was watered from water seeping up from the ground during the night, it had never

rained until then. And to make matter worse the sea was very far away from where Noah lived.

How the people must have laughed at him and called him all kinds of names, but Noah knew God had spoken to him and he knew that if God said it then it will happen just as He said.

God gave Noah amazing details on how to build the ark and Noah followed these instructions step by step. Noah was not a seafaring man, in fact we do not know if he ever saw the sea or another boat in his life. Noah was a farmer, and now he was going to build a large boat to save creation.

You know what? One day the arc was finished, it looked so out of place, but soon animals from all over the world came to the arc, imagine the people who stayed around Noah, wow here comes Lion, a Tiger and elephant animals they had never seen before. Whoop here comes a kangaroo, a possum and monkeys of all shapes and sizes.

All went orderly into the arc, not one of them ate the other, and neither did they harm Noah or his family. Then God said to Noah go into the arc and God Himself shut the door and then it started raining.

All the living creatures on earth were destroyed except 8 people and 2 of every kind of animal! Now imagine if Noah said, no God, I do not believe in rain. I doubt that animals from all over the world could find their way here!

No praise God, Noah listened to God, when God spoke he reacted.

This is exactly how we need to be if we want a relationship with God we must learn to listen to Him and when He speaks, to act on what God is saying. So from today, listen to God, hear what He is saying and soon you will be doing great exploits for God.

ABRAHAM (Hebrews 11:15-17) - Faith

Abraham started his life a total pagan, he lived in modern day Iraq but one day he had an encounter with God. God told him to take his family and move to another country and that God would make him a father of many people.

Abraham had many choices, he could say, no God I like it here in UR, I have a nice house, a beautiful wife, no God it is too nice here in Ur, find someone else.

No, Abraham believe God, he believed that God would indeed make him a great nation. That God would lead him to another country and give it to him as an inheritance.

All through his life, Abram saw God move in events in his life and he even spoke to God directly.

It took tremendous faith for Abraham to follow God, one day after he was very old, he had, had a second son, Isaac, then God asked him to take his only son and sacrifice him! What would you do if God asked you to sacrifice your only child?

But Abraham knew His God, he knew that God has promised to make him a father of many nations. He knew that God was going to bless him through his son Isaac so he put his faith in God's promises and God came through for him.

Conclusion

In closing let review the ways God wants us to come to Him

- We need to come through the Door that God created for us to enter a relationship with Him. We need not only to believe that Jesus Christ is the Door but that He is the only door to God and we need to make Jesus Christ the Lord and master of our lives.
- We need to have a relationship with Him, where we communicate, us to God and God to us. We need a time each day when we spend time with God, just you and God. You need to read His word, study it, learn it by heart, make it part of your life. We need to pray to God and believe he is listening and we need to get trained and have fellowship in our church – each one here needs to commit to one church, to go there faithfully and to help the church grow.
- We need to listen to God and what He is telling us and to act on what He says. Unless we get quiet and make ourselves available to hear God we will not hear Him. God says that “His sheep hear His voice” so ask God to speak to you and take note of what He is saying.
- We need to put our faith into action and believe that
 - God is who says He is
 - He will do what He says He will do
 - He is no respecter of persons
 - God cannot lie
 - If God did it for someone He will do it for you
 - That He wants to speak to us
 - That He wants a relationship with you

Let's Pray