

Closeness to God Is Only Through Christ

Hebrews 11:6 says: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Christianity is more than the sum total of the things that we do for the God. Jesus said: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:19-23).

We need to diligently seek Him; otherwise, when we approach the Lord and present our list of the things that we have done, He may rebuke us. How do we avoid this? We need to do the will of the Father. What is the will of the Father? Believe on the Son (John 6:29). The answer is simple because we need the Spirit of Christ living within us before we can do anything and bear fruit (John 15:5). When we are told to believe *on* Christ, this emphasizes the role that Christ has in connecting us with the Father because we cannot have the Father without the Son (John 14:6). This needs to be done before our religious activities have merit before God. Works will follow. Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

Jesus became a life-giving Spirit (1Corinthians 15:45); "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Corinthians 3:17-18). The Spirit of Christ brings us the mind of Christ (1Corinthians 2:9-16). Without the Spirit, none of this is possible. This is a prerequisite for our Bible reading, prayer, praise, worship, and other activities because it brings us a spiritual discernment that is not otherwise available.

The definition of the word 'believe' is important in this discussion. In most cases, its Greek root word is the same as the one for 'faith'. When it is the same, 'believe' and 'faith' mean the same thing. 'Believe' is the verb form of the noun 'faith'. More than intellectual belief is required for connecting with God and opening up to His grace because diligently seeking Him is part of faith. There are 2000 years of differing opinions on how to diligently seek God. The Bible provides the best answers because it not only describes the Biblical God, but it also instructs us on how to relate to Him.

1Peter 5:5-7 says to "be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, Casting all of your care upon him; for he careth for you." This is basic Biblical spirituality which applies to both the Father and the Son (John 5:23-24; 14:1; Proverbs 3:5-6, Philipians 4:6-7, James 4:6-10, Psalms 37:7, 55:22, Isaiah 26:3-4, 55:7-9, and Galatians 5:22-23). The Father's graces flow into us through Christ's Spirit when He lives within us. This is why our faith in Christ is the prerequisite for everything in Christianity, "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1Peter 1:21). The man Christ Jesus qualifies for our faith. When we have the Spirit of the Son, we also have the Spirit of the Father within us because the Father inhabits the Son. (John

14:23; 17:21-26; Romans 8:9).

The Spirit of Christ is the conduit for God's peace and strength to enter into us, which are fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). In order to get the peace of God that passes all understanding, we are told to be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:6-7). This keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Everything that we receive from the Father is through the Son. Unconditional trust or surrender is required for this peace. The strength that we also receive helps us to resist lusts of different kinds. This comes from putting on Christ as a garment (Romans 13:14). This level of peace and strength does not come to us as a result of our religious activities. It needs to precede them.

It's only through believing on the name of Christ that we get the power to become children of God (John 1:12). This is why not everyone qualifies for this. Many say that all human beings are children of God. The Bible restricts this only to those who have faith in Christ Jesus and have put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). Power is required to be children of God. Without Christ, this power is not available.

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