

Christianity 101 Basics of the Christian Faith

Basic Christianity is a commitment to the making of disciples through the sharing of the gospel followed by believers' baptism and connection to the local Body of Christ.

I. Sharing the Gospel

1. Definition of Salvation

"SAVING FAITH IS CLAIMING BY **PERSONAL** CHOICE AND RELYING **EXCLUSIVELY** UPON CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CROSS TO BE SUFFICIENT PAYMENT FOR MY SIN"

2. Three Basic Issues of Salvation

- 1) Man's **PROBLEM**: All men are **SINNERS**, and sin separates man from God (Romans 3:10, 23; Jeremiah 17:9, Isaiah 53:6).

- 2) God's **PROVISION**: Calvary is God's only provision for sin (Romans 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; Hebrews 9:22).

- 3) Man's **RESPONSIBILITY**: Every sinner must exercise saving faith in order to be saved (Romans 3:24-25, 10:9-10, John 1:12).

II. Baptism

Baptism is an important aspect of our Christian experience. It is important to us because it is connected to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is more than a ritual or a part of our church tradition – it is about how Jesus taught us to declare our faith in Him and His salvation.

1. Baptism is an **ORDINANCE** of the church

By "ordinance" we mean that baptism was commanded ("ordained") by Christ as a part of the commission to the church to make disciples (Mat 28:19-20).

2. New Testament baptism is by **IMMERSION**

The Greek term BAPTOW or BAPTIZOW literally means, "to immerse" or "to dip." It is clear in the New Testament that people were immersed when baptized.

3. Baptism is for **BELIEVERS** only

Baptism is an expression of our faith – therefore the pattern is clear – baptism FOLLOWS faith.

- **Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost – Jews were saved and baptized (Acts 2:41)**
- **The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:35-38)**
- **Gentiles – Cornelius & his household (Acts 10:43, 47-48)**
- **The Philippian jailor & his household (Acts 16:31-34)**

4. Baptism **PUBLICLY** identifies us with Christ

One of the marks of a Christian is identifying publicly with Christ. Baptism is one of the means by which we identify publicly with Him (Romans 10:9-10; Mat 10:32-33)).

5. Baptism expresses our UNION with Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Col 2:11-12)

Our union with Christ results in a NEW LIFE – our old life was buried with Christ, and we are raised to a new life in Christ.

6. Baptism publicly identifies us with the BODY of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13)

Water baptism is a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit baptizes (immerses) us into Christ. Water baptism identifies us with the Body of Christ manifest in the local church.

7. Baptism TESTIFIES to the Trinitarian salvation of God (Mat 28:19)

We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit because we HONOR each person of the Trinity for their part in our salvation.

III. Local Church Membership

1. The Local Church is a place of COMMUNITY (fellowship) (Heb 10:24-25)

2. The Local Church is a place of MATURITY (Ephesians 4:7-15)

3. The Local Church is a place for MINISTRY (Romans 12, 1 Peter 4:11)

4. The Local Church is a place of ACCOUNTABILITY (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

Church discipline is to be exercised for irresolvable disputes among members (Matthew 18:15), persistent teaching of false doctrine (Titus 1:9-11, Titus 3:10-11, Romans 16:17) and continuous immorality and disorderliness (Ephesians 5:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 1 Corinthians 5:11). Discipline is necessary in order to keep the church doctrinally and morally pure (1 Peter 3:14-16, 4:14-17) and to restore sinning Christians to fellowship with God and with other believers (Galatians 6:1-2).

5. The Local Church is a place of CHARITY (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Acts 4:32-37)

Our giving ought to reciprocate the source of spiritual blessing. It builds LOYALTY. **Matthew 6:21 (ESV), 21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Study Questions:

- 1) What hinders Christians from sharing the gospel?
- 2) Reflect back on your own salvation experience. What people did God use in your life to lead you to Christ?
- 3) Share from your own personal experience specific stories how God has used the Body of Christ to minister to you?
- 4) Consider the statement that many Christians “date” the church but do not want to commit to being “married” to the church. How does Christ’s covenant commitment to the church provide an example to us in how we should love the church?
 - Ephesians 5:25-26
 - Ephesians 2:4-7 – note how God took the initiative to bring us into fellowship with Him.
 - Psalm 147:10-11
 - Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6
 - Matthew 20:28
 - Jeremiah 31:3; Lamentations 3:22