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Christmas is the simple message of Advent - the preparing for and receiving of Immanuel: God with Us. The Gospel message is the simple message that Jesus is the Messiah who saves from sin and gives life. The simple start is to have faith and believe in that message. Faith and belief lead to action.

John 3:16 (NIV) - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 (NIV) - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does it mean to have faith and believe in the Gospel of Jesus?

Acts 2:37-39 (NIV) - When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Faith, Belief, Response, Repentance, Confession, Baptism, Reception

FAITH: Greek, πίστις [pistis /pis-tis/]; assurance, believe, fidelity, conviction of the truth. Faith is the belief and conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon).

BELIEF: They believed and were cut to the heart. **Belief is in the heart, not the head.**

RESPONSE: "What shall we do?" **Belief leads to action. Did they seek out Direction or Protection?**

REPENTANCE: Action that comes from faith and belief, not just a feeling or a thought. An acknowledgement of error combined with corrective action. 180 degrees.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV) - Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

CONFESSION: Action that comes from faith and belief. A public profession and acknowledgement of one's faith in Christ that is to be lived out.

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV) - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

BAPTISM: Action that comes from faith and belief. Also, action that is a result of obedience:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Baptizō: to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. To follow the EXAMPLE set by Christ.

Mark 1:9-10 (NIV) - At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased."

2. Christ and the Apostles COMMANDED it. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38)

3. It shows that you are a BELIEVER.

Acts 18:8b (NIV) - "... many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized."

4. Baptism has a great deal of SPIRITUAL significance. It is a picture of Christ's death and resurrection.

Romans 6:4 (NIV) - We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Colossians 2:11-15 (NIV) - Your whole self-ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, 12having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

It is a picture of a new birth—a starting point.

John 3:5 (NIV) - "Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

5. Obeying Christ's command shows you KNOW Him, and that you LOVE Him.

John 14:15 (NIV) - "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

1 John 2:3 (NIV) - "We know that we have come to know Him if we obey his commands."

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? Those who BELIEVE and have REPENTED.

Mark 16:15-16 (NIV) - He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

At Real Life Ministries, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the Gospel and baptism before we baptize them. We believe that a baby or a young child cannot understand. It must be their decision, and their decision must be accompanied by faith and repentance (Romans 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:15). We believe God loves little children. (2 Samuel 12:23; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:13-15)

We do have **Child Dedications**. Child dedication is a parent(s) commitment service. It's the parents' decision to dedicate their child before the Lord and to dedicate themselves to rearing their child for the glory of God.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED? As soon as you possibly can upon belief and repentance!

Acts 16:31-33 (NIV) - They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Acts 8:35 (NIV) - Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" [37] 38And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

RECEPTION: Those who believe the Gospel message will be saved and receive the Holy Spirit. A result of faith and belief.