

3 Stages of Salvation

Testimonies

Pete: I was saved when I prayed next to my bed one night at around 9pm just before my 19th birthday. I was soon to start university. I was not connected to any Christian group to learn what my newfound faith was all about. However, the Holy Spirit was in me just as he is in you. So even though I did not really understand, I knew in my inner being that something profound had happened. I started reading a bible we had in the house and I started to pray. My mum was a Christian and I knew she prayed and read the bible so I copied her. As time went by all sorts of questions arose about what was right and wrong regarding my own life and life in general. My learning was rather like finding bits of a puzzle that may or may not fit together because without the big picture I had no idea of what becoming a Christian was meant to look like. Over the next years as I grew in faith, more bits of the puzzle came into view and I could confidently begin to join some of the pieces together. Looking back, my faith could have developed quicker and my confusion could have been reduced if I had a set of foundational teaching aids to guide me.

Pip: In contrast to Pete, I came to faith when I was 15 mainly through the prayers of my family. I had gone to a Christian event and I was impacted by a different spirit I saw in people who loved God and realised I didn't know him. When I got home I knelt at my bed and asked Jesus to be Lord of my life and I knew I had changed. I found a lively church which had a vibrant youth group. We did weekly bible studies together and we were encouraged to read the bible for ourselves and develop our own times with the Lord. When I went to university I found myself in a desert spiritually which meant I either had to choose to stand clearly for the Lord or I let him go and join in the student culture. I am sure that due to the foundations of faith laid in my life in the early years I was able to choose the Lord and I grew in faith through the challenges.

In both of our experiences we recognise that without good foundations to help us understand our new found faith, a new believer will drift and drift away. Because of this we have developed the following set of teaching sessions titled 'Foundations'. Along with biblical truths, we have included examples from our own experiences that we hope will help your understanding toward living a supernatural life of faith. This first session begins with some of Jesus's teaching on the importance of foundations and then looks at the 3 stages of the journey of faith that you have begun.

The importance of foundations

Foundations are important because they give stability. Jesus told a story about two houses. One was built on sand the other on rock. When the storms came the house built on sand collapsed but the house built on rock stood firm. The difference between these two houses was not the test they went through but their ability to withstand the test.

Matthew 7:24-27

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock." But

everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Here Jesus was teaching that if you want your life to be like the house on the rock that can stand firm through all the storms of life then you need to do two things.

1. Listen to the words of Jesus.
2. Do what he says.

In becoming a believer you did those two things. You repented and believed the words of Jesus and a miracle happened as you chose to follow him and do what he says. Your repentance dealt with what separated you from God and your believing brought you into union with God. In the first miracle Jesus performed these two principles are at work. It was at a wedding in Cana. When a need arose his mother said to the wedding staff, *'do whatever He tells you'* (**John 2:5**). They did, and a miracle happened.

Miracle means *'an event that cannot be explained naturally but is supernatural in origin.'* You will spend the rest of your life realising the magnitude and eternal nature of the miracle of your spiritual birth! You will only fully realise it at the end of time when you physically meet Jesus and enter into eternal life. On becoming a believer, a door was opened to you into the very throne room of God which means that living life supernaturally is now available to you. The teachings of this course are designed to help you do just that.

The teachings that follow are based around the 3 stages of salvation and supernatural living. These 3 stages begin with what has already happened, what is happening, and finally what will happen. The biblical words used to describe these 3 stages are:-

1. Justification
2. Sanctification
3. Glorification

Justification

The moment you repented and believed God made a legal declaration in heaven. He declared that you are now justified in his sight. Justified means 'just as if' you never sinned. Your sins have been forgiven and now you are fully accepted by God and are part of his family. The moment you repented and believed he also sent the Holy Spirit to live in you. You are now empowered to live life God's way. The bible calls this 'regeneration'.

Romans 5:1-2

'Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

Romans 5:18

'Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.'

Romans 10:9

'If you declare with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved.'

Titus 3:5-7

'but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.'

Sanctification

Living the life of a believer in Jesus is only possible supernaturally. That is why God put his Spirit in you. As we follow the Spirit's leadership we grow in godliness. This growth in godliness is called sanctification. It means to be 'set apart'. Being sanctified or being 'set apart' is a lifelong process of personal choices. As we make right choices, we become experientially what he has already made us legally. Legally he has already declared you righteous, now he asks you to become righteous experientially. As you make righteous choices a transformation takes place within your soul so that you think righteously and then act righteously.

Consider this illustration. It not perfect but it may you to help understand. Imagine someone who has just completed training as a policeman. He gets his uniform and begins his work. He knows the law and understands in theory the authority he has been given. The ruling authorities have declared him to be a policeman even though he has no experience, lacks confidence and is yet to apply the law. However, his legal status as a policeman leads him into operational experience. 10 years later, he is still the same policeman knowing the law and the authority he represents, but now he is an experienced policeman who acts with confidence. He has now become what he was declared to be the moment he completed his training 10 years ago. This is the same for you. You were declared righteous when you first believed yet now through making right choices, you become righteous and experience the fruits it releases.

1 Peter 1:15

'...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."'

1 Thessalonians 4:3

'For this is the will of God, your sanctification...'

Glorification

Glorification is the last part of your salvation journey. Like justification, glorification happens

in an instant. Like justification, it is something entirely done by God. In an instant of time final physical and spiritual transformations take place for us. These are hard for us to imagine because they are so wonderful, just as a baby cannot imagine life beyond the womb. The physical transformation is our receipt of an immortal body that is without defect and that is both physical and spiritual in its make-up. The spiritual transformation takes place as our living environment changes and we are no longer afflicted by the presence of evil spiritual powers. Currently we experience life as though constantly on a battle field, then we shall live in peace when all that is evil is removed by the final decree of God.

Romans 8:30

‘Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called, whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified.’

Philippians 3:20-21

‘For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...’

Revelation 20:10

‘The devil who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.’

Revelation 21:3

‘And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’

Eternity

From the above you can see that although we are saved having received forgiveness and eternal life, we are still being saved as we are transformed through our obedience to Christ. Finally we will be fully saved when we receive a new physical body and enter into a new environment of eternal life. In the next session we will focus on the first of these, **justification**.

If you are a new believer and you have not read the Introductory Session to this Foundations series then we recommend you do so.

Suggested Further Studies

Discipleship

Water Baptism