

Celebration Services (November 3rd and 4th)
"Can I Get a Witness"

John 1:19-28

MEMORY VERSE(Last Week): Jn 1:11-13

RECEIVE = lambáno – 1. From the basic sense "to take," lambáno acquires the active senses a. "to take to oneself," "to receive," "to collect," and b. "to seize. (from Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)

BELIEVE = pisteuo – "to believe," also "to be persuaded of," and hence, "to place confidence in, to trust," signifies, in this sense of the word, reliance upon, not mere credence. It is most frequent in the writings of the apostle John, especially the Gospel. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

INTRO ... the Concern Over "True Converts"

“ According to a U.S. News & World Report survey:

- > 95% of Americans say they believe in God
- > 60% say they attend religious services regularly
- > More than 80% believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God
- > More than 1/3 believe the Bible should be accepted literally word for word
- > 76% believe that God is a heavenly Father who can be reached by prayer
- > 9 out of 10 pray
- > 7 out of 10 believe in life after death
- > 7 out of 8 identify themselves with a Christian denomination
- > 46% of Americas say they are born-again

HOWEVER...

- > 38% of Americans say there is no set of values that is right or wrong
- > 70% say it is up to each individual to determine what is right or wrong
- > Of those who say they read the Bible regularly, 1/2 could not name any of the four Gospels
- > Fewer than 1/2 who say they read the Bible regularly, knew who gave the Sermon on the Mount

Quoted by Greg Laurie in "Why Believe?", p.59-60

“ Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man's sinfulness and guilt, calling on 'all men everywhere to repent,' results in shallow conversions; and so we have myriads of glib-tongued professors today who give no evidence of regeneration whatever. Prating of salvation by grace, they manifest no grace in their lives.” H.A. Ironside (quoted in The Gospel According to Jesus, p. 176)

?... *Is There a Breakdown in "BELIEVING/RECEIVING"?*

— Synonymous with "ACCEPTING Christ"?

“ But the Bible knows absolutely nothing about passive reception, for the word "receive" is not passive but active. We make the word receive into "accept." Everyone goes around asking, "Will you accept Jesus? Will you accept Him?" This makes a brush salesman out of Jesus Christ, as though He meekly stands waiting to know whether we will patronize Him or not. Although we desperately need what he proffers, we are sovereignly deciding whether we will receive Him or not... We have been taught that passive acceptance is the equivalent of faith when it is not.” A.W. Tozer, "The Tozer Topical Reader, no. 529

... Might Our Historic & Present Concern be connected to our Christian "Witness"

WITNESS = A Pattern of Gospel Ministry — Witness that Precedes RECEIVING & BELIEVING

John 1:19-28

The Significant and Designed Role of John a WITNESS

LEARNING FROM THE MASTER ON HOW TO BE A WITNESS

How Does the apostle John Describe the Ministry of a Witness?

v. 6 He is one "sent from God"

- A Witness is NOT Self-Directed, Self-Employed, or Self-Defining His Activity is Defined & Directed by Another

v. 7 His calling is to bear witness

- a word from the LEGAL SETTING; he's called to Testify About Christ

- witness about the light — As He is Revealed

— Who is the Light in John's Gospel? — He is GOD, who Came as a Man, to Reveal the Glory of God through His life, Teaching, Ministry, and DEATH/RESURRECTION!!

— He is also the Fulfillment of Prophecy — Particularly to be the LAMB OF GOD

v. 7 the Outcome of His Witness = People Believing

- Do We See "Witnessing" as a Significant and Necessary Event?

v. 23 He is "preparing the way" — FOR WHAT? for people to RECEIVE/BELIEVE Christ

Lk 3:2-9 John's Message of Preparation Here we have some insights into an element of preparing to "RECEIVE CHRIST"

WE ARE PREPARED TO RECEIVE CHRIST, WHEN WE:

(1) **Have a God given picture of our condition** — seeing good and bad through God's view (Sin must be seen as SINFUL)

"The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of saving Christianity. Without it such doctrines as justification, conversion, sanctification, are 'words and names' which convey no meaning to the mind. Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most of the errors, heresies, and false doctrines of the present day. If a man does not realize the dangerous nature of his soul's disease, you cannot wonder if he is content with false or imperfect remedies." J.C. Ryle, Holiness, p. 1

— ***Are You Broken?*** Am I Aware of my Sinful Condition?

— ***What's It Going to Take to Fix You?***

(2) We Understand Our Need to be FORGIVEN ...The Message of the WITNESS was Teaching or Proclaiming FORGIVENESS ... Lk 3:3, 7

— Not Only have we done the wrong thing... but we ARE NOT FORGIVEN— we are IN DEBT

“ Our message must be the sacrificial death of Christ! It is dangerously easy to move away from the blood of the atonement in our thinking. ... Christianity is a bloody religion— the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin! This reality must be primary in our witness and in our thinking! Yes, Christ came to give abundant life. Yes, Christ worked miracles, and he can work miracles in our lives today. But these are the benefits of the gospel, not the gospel itself. The gospel centers upon Christ as the sin-bearer” **Kent Hughes**, “John”, p. 46

“ ...I came to the conclusion that people are not concerned about an atonement. They are basically convinced they have no need for it. They aren't asking: “How can I be reconciled to God? How can I escape the judgement of God?” If anything has been lost from our culture, it is the idea that human beings are privately, personally, individually, ultimately, inexorably accountable to God for their lives. ... If everybody in the world woke up and said, “Someday I have to stand before my Maker and give an account for every word I've ever spoken, every deed I've ever done, every thought I've ever thought, and every task I've failed to do....” **R.C. Sproul**, “The Truth of the Cross”, p. 8

? Am I Aware of My Need to be Forgiven?

(3) When Our Faith is in What GOD Has Said ... Lk 3:4

- The AUTHORITY for the message proclaimed Doesn't Originate with the Witnesser it Lines Up with the Road Map God's Already Given. — It is VALIDATED by something Outside itself.

2Pet 1:16-21

– The O.T. Prophetic Lamp:

- Jn 1:45 ... the “Witness of Moses and the Prophets” to the disciples
- What's the Prophetic Witness for ISLAM?
- What's the Prophetic Witness for BUDDHISM?

(4) When We are Willing to REPENT Lk 3:3,7ff

“ The converted man is both reformed and regenerated. And unless the sinner is willing to reform his ways of living he will never know the inward experience of regeneration. This is the vital truth which has gotten lost under the leaves in popular evangelical theology.” **A.W. Tozer**, “The Root of the Righteous”, p. 43

? Am I Willing to CHANGE?

— Not Just add the Comfort & Care & Help of Christ to Your Life?

NOTE: a Response to Christ is an INFORMED Response. If these things are NOT in Place, then I don't know that you can be saved. I don't think your response to CHRIST is a correct response, if these things are absent.

“ All hurry to get one into the church is most mischievous, both to the church and to the supposed convert. I remember several young men who were of good moral character and religiously hopeful. However, instead of searching their hearts and aiming at their real conversion, the pastor never gave them any rest until he had persuaded them to make a profession. He thought that they would be under more bonds to holy things if they professed religion; he felt quite safe in pressing them, for 'they were so hopeful'. He imagined that to discourage them by vigilant examination might drive them away. To secure them, he made them hypocrites. Presently, these young men are much further from the church of God than they would have been if they had been affronted by being kept in their proper places and warned that they were not converted.” Charles Spurgeon, The Soul Winner, p. 12

NOTE: Not Everyone Will Respond Positively to the Witness

NOTE: Preparing to Receive the Savior DOESN'T SAVE YOU!!

IF WE'RE GOING TO BE A "WITNESSING COMMUNITY" FOR CHRIST, WE MUST:

1. GO we've already been sent (Matt 28:18-20)

“ I suppose that the greatest mistake a person can make as he reads about the witness of John the Baptist is to think that the task of the witness was somehow peculiar to John. No doubt there are many who think this just as there are many who think that the task of witnessing today should be fulfilled primarily by ministers. But this is an error, and a serious one at that.” James Montgomery Boice, "The Gospel of John", vol. 1, p.104

“ In a recent survey of a thousand church attendees, respondents were asked, 'Why does the church exist?' Among laypersons polled, 89 percent said the church's purpose was to 'take care of my family's and my spiritual needs.' Only 11 percent said the purpose of the church is 'to win the world for Jesus Christ.’” Greg Laurie, The Upside Down Church, p. 43

2. Have an Accurate Grasp of the GOSPEL

- ***Are there Other Ways?***
- ***Who is Jesus?*** (What views of Jesus are unacceptable)
- ***How Does One Respond to Jesus in a Saving Way?*** (Repenting, Believing, & Receiving)
- ***Are you aware of what an "INADEQUATE" response to Christ can look like?***

3. Live and Proclaim a Message that Prepares People to REPENT (of who we are), BELIEVE (what God has said), & RECEIVE (who God has sent)