

**Welcome & Intro :: apology for my arrogance****apology for my arrogance, on: 2008/7/5 17:00**

Hi, my name is Ben and I've posted a few times on this site recently and I feel really foolish for doing so now. The reason is that I'm not sure I'm really a christian. I have studied the bible for 3-4 years. I'm afraid that God hates me. I expect most people who say they are christians are not. So far, the only person outside of the bible that seemed like a real believer to me was Menno Simon(s?) but I don't know if even he is for real - I really hope so though. I have met a couple other men almost "randomly" who seemed like maybe they had faith.

I don't want to be punished by God's wrath. I don't want God to be angry with me either but I don't understand what to do - I need to believe, repent and be baptised but everybody says believe this or believe that and I think they're all liars. I know that if God sees a genuine heart in me that he can answer all these things but my heart is so overflowing with ungodliness. I've been trying to pursue a clean conscience as best as I know how but I've kept giving up over stupid things like food or coffee or fear of people at my work. I have to confess things to people that could lead to going to jail and there are many evil things I've done that I don't know if it would be proper or shameful for me to confess or try to make amends for. My heart has been so full of bitterness and despair. How can Jesus not hate me? It seems like there is a bottomless pit of evil and pride in me that I cannot fill with all the tears in the world even if I wasn't constantly following after my flesh. Please if anyone is really born of God, please pray for me if it is ok.

Re: apology for my arrogance - posted by andres (), on: 2008/7/5 17:14

i will pray for you..

you need to trust in Jesus put your faith in Jesus's works, not your own.. God's wrath was paid for at the cross of Christ, Jesus swallowed the punishment of God for believers.. "now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus".. leave behind your old way of thinking and put your faith upon the lamb of God.. the ONE who stood in your place.. CHRIST..

love
andy

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2008/7/5 17:27**Psalm 6 (NKJV)**

O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.

Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint;
O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony.

My soul is in anguish.
How long, O LORD, how long?

Turn, O LORD, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.

No one remembers you when he is dead.
Who praises you from the grave ?

**I am worn out from groaning;
all night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.**

**My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.**

**Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.**

**The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;
the LORD accepts my prayer.**

**All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed;
they will turn back in sudden disgrace.**

Re: apology for my arrogance - posted by JoanM, on: 2008/7/5 17:28

Absolutely.

Re: apology for my arrogance - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2008/7/5 17:29

Dear Ben,

One of the most important things you have to come to realize is that nothing you do is worth any merit to God, and will not cause Him to love you. He will never love you because of anything in you. Even if you had a "genuine heart" it would not affect His mind toward you, because God's favor requires a perfection that cannot come from fallen men.

Know that God does love you, and that this love springs from nothing else but His own nature as the God who is love, who even though justice requires wrath for righteousness sake, still He loves sinners regardless of their unbelief, unrighteousness, and ungratefulness. God demonstrated His love by sending His Son Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man, to die upon the cross, becoming a curse for us, to fulfill God's righteous requirement in us and remove the wall of condemnation that separated us from Him due to our sin. Your reconciliation with God has nothing to do with what you can do, because you cannot do anything; not a thing. Not sincerity, prayer, tears, even faith, will cause God to remove the condemnation you deserve. Only His Son's perfect life and death pleases Him, and with Christ God is eternally satisfied. If you believe God's testimony concerning His Son, His death the sacrifice for sins, His burial and resurrection, His undeserved love for you, then you will be saved. Do not think that you must do anything to prepare for His grace. Only believe.

That's your only hope. Don't ever trust any man that tells you that you must do something to gain God's favor. There's nothing in you that has not fallen and only a perfect righteousness wrought by a perfect Savior can save you. Look not inward to yourself, but "look unto me all the ends of the earth and be saved, for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:22)

May the Lord reveal this to you; this unearthly wisdom of God.

Re: apology for my arrogance - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/7/5 19:16

Dear Ben,

I see that the Spirit of God has already started convicting you. God has put his blazing searchlight on you. You see yourself in your appalling and shameful condition.

You have 2 options:

- 1) Suppressing this conviction and going back to your old slavemaster Satan who told you that everything is fake and that there are no real Christians and further cultivate your bitterness. Let darkness cover your sins, meet your judge on the last day.
- 2) Allowing Him to accomplish his work and showing you the truth. Repent and believe in Christ and he WILL forgive you. Do not be afraid of confessing the things you have done. God knows anyway.

I can tell you from my own experience that God tried several times to lead me to repentance but because of my stubbornness I refused a couple of times.

I am praying for you! We all were at the crossroad. Let us know the outcome.

narrowpath

Re:, on: 2008/7/5 21:45

Hi Andy. Thank you for responding.

How does someone know whether they are truly in union with Jesus? I think there will be condemnation for those who believed they were his yet were not. Otherwise why would they have been taught to test and examine themselves?

Ben

Re:, on: 2008/7/5 22:08

Thank you for sharing such a tender psalm Christiaan. Some of these verses have been coming to mind here and there. Sometimes I feel embarrassed and ashamed comforting myself with them though since they are describing a sincere heart and someone who had "foes". The desire for trivial comfort seems to prevent the broken heartedness that I feel I should have. But what else is there to do?

Thanks again, Ben

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/7/5 22:28

I recommend reading Eli's post several times, and then read the book of Romans straight through. The gospel, not your willingness, is the power of God unto salvation. By the power of the Spirit, the gospel produces faith in the hearts of God's people. Take up and read. We'll pray.

Re:, on: 2008/7/5 22:32

Thank you Joan - and thank you for the other post.

Re:, on: 2008/7/6 0:33

Hi Eli. Thanks for your response.

I didn't mean to imply that a genuine heart in me would merit forgiveness of my sins - I'm sorry if I said it like that. Maybe I was expressing myself recklessly in my emotions. I wanted to be honest. What I've been concerned about is that there has to be fruit by which to discern faith. I don't mean that if I saw the fruit of true faith in my life that it would make the sacrifice of Jesus real. I want to have faith because his sacrifice is real and God really will judge men by their response to the truth. God has shown that Jesus' death for our sins is an undeserved gift. To think to earn even the opportunity to repent by our own filthy works is an insult to Jesus Christ and his blood. Even for me to acknowledge that God exists is an undeserved mercy of God. Yet if I really believed these things and the gospel of Christ with all of my heart I don't think I would have such hesitation and fear to call myself a Christian.

I'm sorry if my post was misleading in regards to the idea of earning reconciliation.

Thank you again for responding.

Ben

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2008/7/6 1:09

Hey, Ben, I saw this song tonight and thought of you and one other person on sermonindex:

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.

Refrain

I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.

Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.

Refrain

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Here's an audio version

(http://www.theopenlife.com/music/erinalderson/era_volume_5/04_come_ye_sinners.mp3) Come Ye Sinners

If you want to be saved by his free and gracious gift, and you understand that salvation will mean a life of sorrows over failures, attacks from the devil, persecutions and doubts, and many other costs... and if you believe God gives enough grace to endure all of this **whomever He wishes**... then understand that the ones He wishes to give it to are called "whosoever". Accept that today, if God wills, you are saved by His grace through repentance from dead works and faith in Christ. Cease from known sin, because it pleases God. When you fail, cease again. Cry out for grace to show you the way! How is good to all who come.

If it may help you, here is my testimony, which at the beginning sound similar to yours:

(<http://theopenlife.blogspot.com/2005/07/when-i-was-four-years-old-stranger.html>) My conversion

God bless you.

Re: - posted by wta (), on: 2008/7/6 2:23

Hey Ben...

I'm a Christian, some days are better than others though. I just wanted to say its really cool that you're open to talk in a real way. Thats a rare quality and I just wanted you to know I thought so.

I love ya man, if you ever need a brother to talk to I'm here for ya 24/7... Send me an email ANYTIME wta @ oomuse.com

In Jesus name,

William

Re:, on: 2008/7/6 17:42

Hi Philip, I appreciate you being so blunt.

I agree there are only two options and that one is death.

I try to remember that God doesn't desire that anyone would perish. I've wondered if my weak repentance, my reluctance and hesitation, my fear, if it means that I lack faith, if it means that I'm double-minded in regard to believing God. In a way, I hope it does mean that I lack faith because if my life were the result of faith - I think that could be an insult to God. Hopefully there's more than the church of "you can't be perfect". (I hope you understand me correctly) Thank you for your prayers, I'm very encouraged to see the concern people express for each other here. If only it didn't have to be over the internet!

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2008/7/6 20:17

Hi Benjoseph,

glad to hear from you.

You do not have to drum up your own resolve for clear repentance. Faith is a free gift. Do not think you can come with any merit of yourself. Come bankrupt, confused, wretched, dirty, foul, poor as you are.

Only the bankrupt can really appreciate the forgiving of their debt.

The lost and confused will be shown the way,

the wretched will be lifted up,

the dirty will be cleaned

and the foul will have the fragrance of Jesus.

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You are standing at the door, want to come in through the narrow gate or go back to where the rest of the world goes, enjoying their miserable pleasure for a short season until death seals their fate?

Man, your eternity is at stake, you have nothing to lose, the gain is indescribable. I did the jump 23 years ago, I am not looking back.

I will continue to pray for you, keep us posted!

I also pray that God will lead you to some real Christians where you live.

narrowpath

Re:, on: 2008/7/8 17:42

Hi Michael,

That was an intense song.

I think I understand what you said but it seems like something's missing. I've heard so many explanations and summaries (many out of my own mouth..) of "the gospel" that it seems like it's started to sound just like something I heard on the news. I don't think I mean to insult God or Jesus intentionally - it's probably my hardened heart and bitterness. People say "Accept", "Believe", "Trust", "Understand" and I've felt like "Yeah, I've tried that and nothing happened" - I know that sounds kind of unbiblical because God doesn't lie. But I know that SOMETHING happens because I've read about it in the bible without the influence (as far as I know) of extra-biblical "teachings" (I hope you understand). People think SO many different things about what being a christian will be like but in the bible it seemed like there was just one thing. I think I'm trailing on, Thanks for responding - I saw one of your websites and you were talking about modesty (in dress) and I've been thinking about it a lot recently so I hardly resisted submitting a book length comment.

Thanks, Ben

ps - I have been studying Romans - It seems like it explains everything in the world before and after someone becomes a christian (or doesn't) but it only briefly mentions faith in Christ and baptism and the indwelling spirit in any way that comes close to being evangelistic. I was thinking that maybe I shouldn't be surprised since it was written to people who were truly born of God - is that right? and if so how could reading it help?

I was talking to a man who calls himself one of "Jehovah's Witnesses" and he said "The bible wasn't written for me". I know that he was referring to something that is likely an unbiblical doctrine, but upon reflection - which parts of the bible ARE written to someone who does not have the Holy Spirit?

I've probably gone beyond the bounds of Welcome and Intro.

Re:, on: 2008/7/8 17:57

I appreciate that William! Thank you for putting yourself out there. I've mostly been focusing on inquiring about and considering my first impression (from the bible that is...) of christianity. There are not many (if any) people in my life who have much interest in this.

Thanks, Ben

Re: - posted by andres (), on: 2008/7/8 18:00

"don't think I mean to insult God or Jesus intentionally - it's probably my hardened heart and bitterness. People say "Accept", "Believe", "Trust", "Understand" and I've felt like "Yeah, I've tried that and nothing happened" - I know that sounds kind of unbiblical because God doesn't lie. But I know that SOMETHING happens" benjoseph

ben, what do you expect to happen when God accepts you?

love, andy

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Re:, on: 2008/7/8 18:34

wow, good question. I almost cried when I couldn't answer that.

I guess what I was getting at is that the faith that I read about in the bible sounded like so much more than the faith that people have encouraged me to have. Scratch that- It sounded like something completely different - like from another world. But the only "faith" I've felt able to have in God accepting me has been so pathetic in contrast. It's seemed more like just positive thinking and mind games rather than spirit and knowledge and power and a new creation. Could I have had the holy spirit without knowing? Should someone get baptised if they think their faith is unstable? I don't even know what's wrong with me. Am I making up excuses or am I confused by the false teachings that were foretold? How can I stop being double minded? How do I "believe"? Does it mean just fighting doubts? Is that what everyone does? because that seems so fake and powerless. Don't I need the power of God and not some contrived epiphany? How can I even genuinely seek God when my heart is so wretched?

It's like anything I do, including "believing" is just fake. I can do this or think that but how do I know that thinking believing thoughts is real faith?

Thanks Andy. It's nice to be able to share this stuff with people. Nobody I know ever wonders these things or seems like they ever wondered about them.

I don't want to claim that I believe and know that God accepts me only to wake up ten years from now and realize that I didn't understand true faith and was just playing mind games the whole time. "Lord, Lord, I cast out demons and I kept fighting my doubts!"

Ben

Re: - posted by andres (), on: 2008/7/8 19:42

my friend, every christian will struggle with fear and doubt, thats part of the life.. read psalms God's word is an encouragement to continue to trust in Him..

Not everytime but most of the time God builds a man slowly, but before he does that he destroys him and then builds Christ in him by the power of the Spirit. it a long and tough and painful experience but once God starts He will finish that work, so be patient and continue to expect God to do what he promises to do..

Listen i know you fell weak but remember what the scripture says " A bruised reed He (jesus) will not break and a smoking flax He (Jesus) will not put out" bring Him your weak faith with no fire but all smoke and see what will happen, as the scripture says " wait on the Lord be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart, wait i say on the Lord"

much love

andy

Re: - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2008/7/8 20:20

Quote:

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Ben, you aren't the only one that has thought like this. It's incredibly important that you are tripping and stumbling over this phenomenon of faith. Christ is the stumbling-stone that God has chosen: God has concluded the whole world in unbelief.

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ef (Romans 11:32). No man believes God. No man seeks God. No man understands. *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1 Corinthians 2:14) The whole issue is revelation by the Spirit of God. The gospel is a mystery that cannot be discerned by mere education. Blindness requires supernatural grace. Revelation is the key to faith (Romans 10:17).

This is what you need. You must have it, but you cannot have it through the power of your own flesh because your sinful heart will not submit to God. You will perish without it, but only God can give it. You need is grace. The revelation of Jesus Christ and the cross. It's foolishness to them who perish, but to us who are saved it is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Salvation is by grace through faith and not of works, lest any man should boast, and the world despise that message, and Satan resists it with all his might, but nothing can stop God.

God commands you to believe, Ben, and your flesh will not. There is no excuse for your unbelieving. May the Lord be gracious unto you.