

8 Foundational Things Every Christian Should Know

1. About Redemption

Question: "What is the meaning of Christian redemption?"

Answer: Everyone is in need of redemption. Our natural condition was characterized by guilt: "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Christ's redemption has freed us from guilt: "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23-24).

The benefits of redemption include eternal life (Revelation 5:9-10), forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7), righteousness (Romans 5:17), freedom from the law's curse (Galatians 3:13), adoption into God's family (Galatians 4:5), deliverance from sin's bondage (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:14-18), peace with God (Colossians 1:18-20), and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). To be redeemed, then, is to be forgiven, holy, justified, blessed, free, adopted, and reconciled. See also Psalm 130:7-8; Luke 2:38; and Acts 20:28.

2. Who you are in Christ and Him in you.

Understanding your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to your success at living the victorious Christian life. Learn to see yourself as God sees you. Accept what God says about you and become the spiritual person you are. God's opinion is the one that counts.

I am God's child ~ John 1:12

As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ ~ John 15:15

I have been justified ~ Romans 5:1

I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit ~ 1 Corin. 6:17

I have been bought with a price, and I belong to God ~ 1 Corin. 6:19-20

I am a member of Christ's body ~ 1 Corin. 12:27

I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child ~ Ephesians 1:3-8

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins ~ Colossians 1:13-14

I am complete in Christ ~ Colossians 2:9-10

I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ ~ Hebrews 4:14-16

I am free from condemnation ~ Romans 8:1-2

I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances ~ Romans 8:28

I am free from any condemnation brought against me, and I cannot be separated from the love of God ~ Romans 8:31-39

I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God ~ 2 Corin. 1:21-22

I am hidden with Christ in God ~ Colossians 3:1-4

I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me ~ Philippians 1:6

I am a citizen of Heaven ~ Philippians 3:20

I have not been given the spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind ~ 2 Timothy 1:7

I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me ~ 1 John 5:18

I am the branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life ~ John 15:5

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit ~ John 15:16

I am God's temple ~ 1 Corin. 3:16

I am a minister of reconciliation for God ~ 2 Corin.5:17-21

I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm ~ Ephesians 2:6

I am God's workmanship ~ Ephesians 2:10

I may approach God with freedom and confidence ~ Ephesians 3:12

I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13

Christ in You

Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. If we do, we shall then be sharing a life which was begotten, not made, which always has existed and always will exist. Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God. We shall love the Father as He does and the Holy Ghost will arise in us. He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has – by what I call 'good infection.' Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.

To be *in Christ* that is redemption; but for Christ to be *in you* that is sanctification! To be *in Christ* that makes you fit for heaven; but for Christ to be *in you* that makes you fit for earth! To be *in Christ* that changes your destination; but for Christ to be *in you* that changes your destiny! The one makes heaven your home the other makes this world His workshop.

3. Your Standing Before God

God's thoughts is man's salvation. He expects Christians to have the same mindset. We've been charged with advancing His kingdom by sharing the gospel and discipling others. As His servants, we're to focus on His agenda, not preoccupy ourselves with earthly concerns (2 Timothy 2:4).

To achieve His plan, God will open doors of service for each of us—in local churches, neighborhoods, workplaces, or foreign lands. Our part is to watch for opportunities and be ready to take part. Spiritual preparation includes prayer and a daily quiet time, plus accountability with other believers. Whether God assigns us major tasks or smaller ones, we must be in position and all set to say yes. When we answer His call, we'll discover He has equipped us with everything we need to fulfill our mission (2 Peter 1:3).

The most important work in our world is to help with the Father's redemptive plan: He is rescuing people from the power of sin, adopting them into His family, and transforming them from rebellious, self-centered beings into reflections of His obedient and loving Son Jesus. Those of us who have been the beneficiaries of God's saving work have an obligation to assist in His plan to rescue others. We have a responsibility to prepare ourselves—by surrendering our desires for His, committing to know Him better, and obeying His directions.

God has prepared work for each of us to do (Ephesians 2:10). How is He asking you to use your spiritual gifts and abilities to fulfill His plan.

4. The Righteousness of God

That they who know the righteousness of God are those in whose heart is His law, and therefore that the law of God is the righteousness of God.

Righteousness (*dikaiosune*) is the character or quality of being right or just; it was formerly spelled 'rightwiseness,' which clearly expresses the meaning. It is an attribute of God (Romans 3:5). The context shows that His righteousness means essentially the same as His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises.

In the sayings of the Lord Jesus, righteousness is, among other things, whatever is right and just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God (Matthew 5:6,10,20; John 16:8,10). It is the sum total of God's requirements (Matthew 6:33).

God's righteousness, then, is that infinite, eternal and unchangeable quality in His character closely related to His ethical holiness. God is necessarily righteous in His judgments, always rewarding all His rational creatures directly proportional to their works, showing partiality to none (Deuteronomy 10:17) but always acquitting the righteous and always condemning the guilty (Exodus 23:7).

Application of righteousness

Considering God as the all-righteous One, we arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Whatever has been appointed by God is to be acknowledged and obeyed by man (Matthew 3:15; 21:32).
2. Our religious duties are to be derived from His Word, not invented by us. They are to be performed in the right way; attitude of heart is just as important as external action (Matthew 6:1-18).
3. We are not righteous in ourselves. The only effective remedy is to apply to the righteousness of Another, even our God and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1). Christ's righteousness is the righteous dealing of God with sin and with sinners on the ground of the death of Christ.
4. Since God alone is absolutely righteous, the word (or message) that reveals to us true righteousness is His own Word for us (Hebrews 5:13). In the Scriptures, as containing the Gospel, the righteousness of God is known and declared in all its aspects.

5. God's righteousness should create in us a feeling of awe and a sense of punishment, for we fall short of it. But applied to us in Christ, it is a source of unspeakable comfort and joy. Paul uses "righteousness" to describe the gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus are brought into right relationship with God. This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man's own, or any other condition than that of faith in Christ. The man who trusts in Christ becomes "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He becomes in Christ and because of Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself. Is this our experience?

5. The Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus

The fact that Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected is the very foundation of salvation from sin.

Matthew tells us how Jesus was stripped, beaten, and mistreated (Mt. 27:27-ff). God foretold this over 700 years prior through the prophet Isaiah. "I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting" (Isa. 50:6). The scourging of Jesus, recorded by John (Jn. 19:1), was foretold in the Psalms. "The plowers plowed upon my back: they lengthened their furrow" (Ps. 129:3).

Crucifixion, the cruel type of death Jesus faced, involved the nailing of the hands and feet to a wooden cross. John tells of this crucifixion and how Jesus was mocked and stripped, lots cast for His garments, sour wine given to Him in His thirst, etc. (Jn. 19). Centuries before Jesus' crucifixion, David by inspiration uttered these Messianic words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?...All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him...I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws...They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps. 22:1-16; cf. Ps. 69:20-21; Zach. 12:10).

The fact that Jesus was crucified as a criminal along with thieves was no accident. The prophet Isaiah foretold how the Messiah would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). While on the cross the legs of the criminals were broken to hasten their death. The legs of Jesus, however, were not broken as predicted in the Psalms. "He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken" (Ps. 34:20; cf. Jn. 19:33).

Jesus was crucified as a criminal, yet, as God had predicted through the prophet He was buried in a rich man's tomb. "His grave was assigned to be with wicked men, yet with a rich man in His death..." (Isa. 53:9; cf. Jn. 19:38-42).

The Messiah was also resurrected according to what had been predicted centuries before. The apostle Peter made several references to this fact in his sermon on Pentecost. "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of His descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay" (Ac. 2:29; cf. Ps. 16:8-10). Peter continued to also explain how David long ago in the psalms spoke of how the Christ was to ascend to the right hand of God, quoting from Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to My Lord, sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet" (Ac. 2:34-35).

The fact that we not only have credible, eyewitness testimony concerning Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, but also have these and many more amazing detailed prophecies concerning these events leaves no excuse for disbelief (Mk. 16:16).

6. Jesus Ascension

Forty days after Easter, Christians commemorate Jesus' ascension into heaven.

Mark 16:14-19 - Jesus ascends while he and his disciples are seated at a table in or near Jerusalem

Matthew 28:16-20 - Jesus' ascension isn't mentioned at all, but Matthew ends at a mountain in Galilee

Luke 24:50-51 - Jesus ascends outside, after dinner, and at Bethany and on the same day as the resurrection

John - Nothing about Jesus' ascension is mentioned

Acts 1:9-12 - Jesus ascends at least 40 days after his resurrection, at Mt. Olivet

Jesus' ascension was prophesized in the Old Testament in Isaiah 52:13, as follows, "Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted."

7. What it means to be seated at the right hand of God

When He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (1:20b-23)

8. What Jesus is doing right now

Jesus Christ is now the Head of the Church.

Ephesians 1:20-23

(20) Which he [God] exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

(21) far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

(22) And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

(23) which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

As the “Head” of his “Body,” Jesus is constantly connected to each of his body parts, i.e., you and me. Thus we can have continuing communication with him, and that comes in handy as we pick our way through this fallen world. Jesus is the only human being who ever perfectly entrusted himself to God despite all the temptations thrown at him, and he is ready, willing, and able to mentor each of us in the art of faith and help us maximize our unique spiritual potential. We “re-present” him in the world today, and he will help us be our best for him.

Jesus Christ is building his Church, Jesus Christ is interceding for us as our mediator, Jesus Christ hears our prayers and responds to us, Jesus Christ is giving grace to all believers,