

## The Fullness of the Gospel, Part 1

Regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it cannot be fully encapsulated by one verse, but it's expressed in various ways throughout the Scriptures.

Even the most popular verses do not contain ALL the facts about the Gospel.

We do know the Bible tells us that a man can only be saved by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not by his own works. (**Joh 3:16-18, Acts 16:25-34, 1Co 15:1-4, Eph 2:8-9**, etc.)

But there are different ways the Gospel is presented throughout Holy Scripture, which can lead a man to genuine saving faith in the Lord.

Let's look at just two examples of the Gospel being given to a group of people. It's simply different ways of giving the same Good News message, and it's according to the Spirit's guidance for the benefit of the people listening.

Let's turn to Acts 2...

This was immediately after the apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit. Clearly, in context, they were filled with the Spirit when they gave the Gospel in these ways.

Here we see Peter giving the Gospel to the Jews who had rejected Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah.

**Acts 2:36-41** *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

Notice in vs. 40, it says Peter went into greater detail, and who knows how long his message went on, as he "kept on exhorting them".

But in this Gospel offering, does anyone see the word "believe" used here?

Not seeing the command to "believe" here, should we say this was a poor way to present the Gospel?!

Or, would it be better to say this was the way the Holy Spirit led Peter with these particular people that were before him... that it was what they needed to hear?

We know from many scriptures that it's by faith in Christ that a person is saved, but the WAY Peter led them to faith here was by commanding repentance, and even baptism.

**But consider that these things (repentance and baptism) are acts which express faith. In other words, they can only be done BY FAITH, even though faith is not directly mentioned here in this passage.**

This is something for us all to think about.

Peter speaks to another group of Jews in Acts 3, and he uses a different approach.

*Acts 3:17-21 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. 18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 "Therefore **repent and return**, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.*

There we see another way the Spirit inspired giving the Gospel : "repent and return".

Let's skip forward to vs. 26...

**Act 3:26-4:4** *"For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."* 4:1 *As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the message **believed**; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

Here again, we see a different Gospel presentation that led people to believe in Christ.

When someone chooses to turn from their wicked ways, that's BY FAITH, which only comes from God! (**Eph 2:8-9**)

We can conclude that God may use us to give a variety of Gospel presentations, through His Word and Spirit in us.

In a way, the fullness of the Gospel is like telling the story of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

**There are all different calls to a trusting faith in Jesus as one's Lord and Savior, and we must trust that the Spirit knows what's best to lead each person to Christ in that moment!**

Do you remember what Jesus said to the apostles regarding when they're arrested and brought before kings?

He basically said that He, the Spirit of Jesus, would give them the right words to say in the moment, and to NOT make up their minds beforehand, to NOT prepare what to say.

**Luke 21:12-15** *"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. 13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. 14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute."*

The Spirit will lead us in our Gospel presentations also, so long as we have been learning the Word of God as the foundation in our souls.

So, we are talking about "The Fullness of the Gospel".

**A big picture thought** that has hit me lately (regarding giving the Gospel) is that people don't understand the magnitude of the gap between them and our holy God.

**The Magnitude of the Gap:** Notice in Peter's Gospel messages in Acts 2 and 3, he elaborated on the guilt of the people and their rejection of the Holy One from God. **He elaborated on their sinfulness and the great gap between them and God!**

And Peter even said that Jesus came to "turn" man from his evil ways (repentance), and that includes the religious thinking that his own ways can save him and preserve him.

Here's a key point we must convey when spreading the Gospel:

**The difference between man's self-righteousness and God's perfect righteousness is as high as the heavens are above the earth; it's not even close! Isa 55:8-9, 64:6**

People might think they're close to being good enough for God, but they don't realize **they're infinitely far away from God** due to the sin within each and every one of us.

**Isa 55:8-9** *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. (it's not even close!!!)*

**Isa 64:6** *"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.*

This is how God sees sinful man and his good deeds. As sinners we cannot even approach His holiness!

Only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can wipe away our sins!

This misconception that man could possibly be good enough on his own is the battle we face as we encounter different religions.

And many of us have first battled this religious thinking in our own souls, falsely believing we would go to heaven because we're supposedly a "good" person...

... and now, out of love, we also battle it when sharing the Gospel with others who are "self-righteous".

In today's age, people think they can be good enough to get to heaven ON THEIR OWN, if they live fairly "good", moral lives...

... OR they think God is one to overlook their sins out of love, and that they don't need to repent and believe in Christ alone to be saved.

But this is NOT what the Word of God tells us!

Many people don't realize the MAGNITUDE of the situation and how big their problem is before God (it's even impossible from a human standpoint)...

... and this needs to be shared when we give the Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as Peter confronted the Jews and was very honest and heartfelt with them.

Some people will reject the message, but they need to understand the dire situation they're in before they will turn to Christ from the heart.

**If people aren't willing to admit they're totally depraved (sinful) in God's eyes and helpless to save themselves, then they will never honestly turn to Christ as their Lord and Savior.**

And this goes for all people, even the "best" of us, as we know from **Romans 3**.

Another unfortunate reality out there is this...

**The Gospel message today is often made about the individual and THEIR COMFORT, not about the need to satisfy the Lord's perfect righteousness.**

This is a sneaky, subtle problem that gets in the way of the true purpose of the Gospel!

Some well-meaning Christians "water-down" the Gospel into something that bandages people's wounds for self-serving reasons, but not for peace with our Almighty God.

Some Christians preach the Gospel and Jesus can give people a better life on earth, and the call to be saved from their sins is secondary! I think that's backwards; they're missing the point!

As sinners, we need to be reconciled (granted peace) by the holy God of the universe, and that's only possible through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world!

Often, the deep sinful nature of a person's selfishness is never even addressed when giving the Gospel.

**The deeper need of reconciliation with a holy, righteous God on His terms of unconditional surrender is never addressed.**



A man must realize and admit his helplessness to satisfy God on his own, and he therefore must look to Christ alone to be saved!

This is one reason Jesus said that a man must deny himself and follow Him. It's because "self" is the god which he must be willing to turn away from.

**Mat 16:24-26** *Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?"*

This is a picture of turning away from self and instead turning to Christ for one's salvation.

It's a picture of saving faith and what takes place in the heart of a true believer!

**Very simply, a person must be WILLING to turn away from self-righteousness and trust in Christ alone.**

And nobody is able do this in their own power, but they must be WILLING! - it is then the Spirit of God will empower them to change their mind like this.

This is the humble attitude found in true saving faith.

Therefore we might say the following:

**Saving faith is like a surrender of the heart to God, which means repenting from self-sufficiency or self-justification, and trusting in the Lord Jesus instead of oneself!**

We might rightly say that saving faith is a willingness to turn from self and surrender to Christ to be saved.

As Jesus said in the first words of His public ministry in **Mark 1:15**; *'repent and believe the good news'*!

And this is a clue that **the heart is involved in saving faith**. (see our lesson called "Saving Faith and the Heart")

After all, WHERE does a person "repent and believe"?

In other words, saving faith is a turning away from self/sin and turning towards Christ alone to be saved. And that very real decision takes place IN THE HEART of a man. It involves his very motivation within.

The Word of God is... *"able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* **Heb 4:12c**

**We see here that man's thoughts and intentions come from his heart. And we also cannot get around the fact that God sees the heart.**

So again, giving the Gospel should not be about man's discomforts in life.

Even man's **legitimate desires** can become idols in his heart (i.e. to be loved, to be healthy, to be accepted by others...)...

... and if we appeal to these things, this can "water-down" the Gospel presentation, making it about them instead of the Lord and His righteous demands.

**At the core, the Gospel is about man being saved from sin and its judgment; which is eternal death!**

We need to let people know there's a perilous situation they need to be saved from, and **only the Lord is able to save them!**

That's another subtle problem in presenting the Gospel today.

Really, we're back to the need for proper "fear of the Lord". (**Psa 115:13, Pro 3:7, 2Cor 5:11**)

**2 Cor 5:11** *Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.*

What the Spirit is saying is that it's about the Lord and His sovereignty... it's really not about us and our earthly lives and comforts.

He is the King of the universe whom we will all face one day!

**The Gospel is NOT "believe in Jesus and all your problems will go away".**

That's a subtle WRONG motivation, leading people to believe in Him for selfish reasons.

**When we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it should be about eternal salvation from sin, the righteous demands of Almighty GOD, and His sacrificial love revealed at the Cross.**

And in Ephesians 2 we have another good example of this full presentation of the Gospel, speaking from the point of view of those who have already trusted in Christ...

**Eph 2:1-10** *"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

*4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in*

*Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."*

Do you see the fullness of that presentation by the apostle Paul??

Do you see how he reminded us about our sinfulness before a Holy God (as Peter did in **Act 2 & 3**), and then about God's mercy and the loving solution to our sin in the Person of Jesus Christ?

Yes, in context, Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, but this is still a good example of "telling the whole story", which we need to pass on to others.

Presenting HIM: **The fullness of the Gospel begins with God's Justice and then it flows to His love...** that's why we have the call to repentance towards God (the Judge), and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (the Savior)! **Act 20:21**

This was the apostle Paul's habitual way of presenting the Gospel.

**Acts 20:21** *"solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Please notice, for all types of people, Paul shared the fullness of the Gospel the same way.

He knew people had to first understand their sinfulness before God before they would even look to the Savior!

And this brings us to another part of the fullness of the Gospel:

**People need to be told about the PERSON of the Lord, Jesus Christ.** An actual PERSON came down to save us from our sins; Who happens to be God Himself in the flesh! (see **John 1, Colossians 1, Hebrews 1**)

The Gospel is not only about believing in the facts themselves, but it's about believing in the Person who came for us.

**Jesus Himself IS the Gospel message, just as He IS the Word of God (Joh 1:1,14, 5:39).**

His amazing, selfless PERSON is the One who DID something greatly sacrificial for our eternal salvation!

And Jesus confronted the Pharisees about this. They refused to believe in HIM, not realizing the scriptures spoke about HIM as their promised Savior.

**John 5:37-40** *"And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.*

*39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; **it is these that testify about Me;** 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*

Notice how our Lord said people must come to HIM for eternal life, not just believe the scriptures. An actual Person, the God-man, came to save us from sin and death!

Again...

Presenting HIM: **The fullness of the Gospel begins with God's Justice and then flows to His love!** - Thus the call to repentance towards God (the Judge), and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (the Savior)! **Act 20:21**

*Acts 20:21 "solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Let's put this in perspective: This Person, Jesus Christ, willingly gave up His own life for us, even though He was totally innocent and without sin! **Heb 4:15**

**Heb 4:14-16** *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.** 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

In other words, God didn't just send a salvation pamphlet to save us... He actually sent His only Son down from heaven, personally, to do the good work necessary to save us from our sins!

As we share the Gospel, let's make an issue out of who this wonderful Person is!

Think about the OT prophets...

God didn't send them to tell people the facts alone. He sent them to tell people about the PERSON of the Messiah, the Savior who would come to suffer and die for their sins and be resurrected, and even forgive them completely (if they humbly turned to Him)!

The Gospel should be focused on the PERSON of Jesus Christ because what He did for us on the Cross is very PERSONAL.

As a balance statement, there are situations where salvation pamphlets might be the only way to pass on the Good News, but that honestly shouldn't be our main method of sharing the Gospel with others.

People need to hear the full story about the Person of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, AND people need to see that we care about them, just as Christ cared for us even "while we were still His enemies". **Rom 5:6-11**

**1Jo 4:19** *"We love because He first loved us."*

**In witnessing to others, we must let the love of Christ shine through, by our words AND our actions. And thankfully, that doesn't require our own ability, but simply our humility; our willingness to go out and be used by Him, to pass on His grace to others.**

It is then we can watch God work through us.

Again...



People need to hear the full story about the Person of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, AND people need to see that we care about them, just as Christ cared for us while we were still His enemies. **Rom 5:6-11**

**Rom 5:6-11** *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the **ungodly**. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still **sinner**s, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if **while we were enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

And let's just say this about presenting the Gospel...

Instead of worrying about having the perfect wording in our Gospel presentation (which is really relying on human effort/wisdom)...

... we should instead be focused on building A RELATIONSHIP with others and even being a friend to them, whether they immediately accept the Gospel or not.

If we relate to people with His love, they will see it.

God's love must be at the forefront of everything we do, and that's how Jesus Himself lived His life and reached people with the Gospel.

Even when Jesus had some hard sayings for people, LOVE was His motivation, and so it should be ours also.

And as Holy Scripture tells us, we shouldn't worry about what we're going to say to people, because the Holy Spirit will fill our mouths at the right time. **Luk 12:11-12, 21:14-15**

We should focus on building a loving relationship, not on a preconceived presentation.

Let's set our minds on following the Lord's instructions... shall we?!

**Luke 12:11-12** *"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."*

At times we will have the chance to share the Gospel while under attack, but that's an honor, for His Name Sake.

**Luke 21:12-15** *"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. 13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. 14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15*

*for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute."*

Isn't that beautiful?

Let's all remember this when you're put "on the spot" in front of a group of people, whether with family or strangers.

**Just relax and trust the Lord. If your heart is right before God, the Spirit will lead you in what to say at the right time.**

Now, back to witnessing for the Lord, and even forming a friendship with others in the process...

"A friend loves at all times", right? **Pro 17:17.**

It's forming that type of friendship (loving at all times) that might eventually lead someone to accept Christ; because over time they see His love flowing through you.

Over time, they see that you love and care about them no matter what, and that's the light of His love that people don't see in this world.

**You may even get the opportunity to act as a friend towards an enemy! - And that Light of Jesus Christ will be so glaring in the darkness they will stare at it in awe!**

**Luke 6:27-36** *"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who*

*mistreat you. 29 "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. 30 "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. 31 "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.*

*33 "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount.*

(wow Lord, You're spending a lot of time on these examples huh? Are you saying "stop thinking you're spiritual because you love those who love you?")

*35 "But love your ENEMIES, and do good, and lend, expecting NOTHING in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

To be filled by His Spirit means we will love others that DON'T love us. That, my friends, is the supernatural work of God in us!

We are acting like God our Father when we are KIND to ungrateful and evil men. (and of course, God wants us to have the right heart when we do this; not just be a religious robot)

And I think we need to read that passage over and over to truly see how far He desires us to go for our enemies.

And when we obey His command to love our enemies, we can't take credit for that because that's HIS supernatural light shining through us!

And the light of His love may end up being the greatest witness of all... the greatest way to show others that Christ is the answer.

So, we're back to **being a friend** and allowing that friendship to create fertile soil for the Gospel...

**God's love is what softens people's hearts so their soil is ready to receive the seed of Gospel** (you might think of the Parable of the Soils in **Mat 13**).

That's what God's love does!

The fact that He is "*kind to ungrateful and evil men*", like all of us, is what leads us to repentance, isn't it?! **Luk 6:35, Rom 2:4, 5:6-11**

**Rom 2:4** *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?***

**God's kindness, which comes from His love (1Co 13:4), is meant to lead people to repentance.**

We are called to pass on His kindness to ungrateful and evil men, just as we believers were His enemies at one time (**Rom 5:10**)!

It's not about giving the Gospel with our predetermined words and then walking away... although there will be times and situations for us to just walk away after saying only a few words.

**It's not only what we say, but it's the heart behind what we say.** (i.e. - Are we speaking out of love, as a concerned friend? And is our motivation for loving others the fact that God first loved us? **1Jo 4:19**)

How much have we been learning about God looking at the heart of man?!

The truth is that He ALWAYS does! He ALWAYS sees our hearts!

Our heart, which is where our motivation lies, is one of His measuring sticks on whether the good we do is "of God" or is fleshly. **1Co 3:10-15, Heb 4:12, Rev 2:23**

And we ALL fail at times!! - We shouldn't get condemned (**Rom 8:1**), but we repent towards Him when necessary, confessing our sins (**1Jo 1:9**).

**Rom 8:1-2** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

**1 John 1:8-9** *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and*

*just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

But this is why we should **check our motivation** in whatever we do (and we want our motivation to be His love for us).

**Rev 2:23** *'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.*

God is after WHY we do what we do. Our motivation is everything in God's eyes.

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Now let's step back and take a look at the big picture.

Salvation is a PROCESS for many people, and as we go out and "plant seeds", the Holy Spirit is the One convicting people of their sinfulness and their need for Christ to save them.

And with salvation being a process, we should reach out to enter into a RELATIONSHIP with others,... maybe even asking for THEIR help at times, as part of building a good, real relationship.

**In other words, we need to learn to BE REAL with people and give others a chance to enter our lives. God doesn't want us to be robotic Christians who give the Gospel and run. He wants us to love and care for others, like He cared for us!**

And this is all part of the fullness of the Gospel, with the Lord Jesus Himself as our Great Example.

For example, Jesus once asked the Samaritan woman at the well for some water to drink!

Did Jesus "need" her to get Him some water?, - OR, was Jesus entering into a relationship with her, as a real person, by asking for her help?

**John 4:5-14** *So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

*7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. **Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."** 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)*

*10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"*



*13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*

**WHY** did the Lord ask her for a drink of water, in the first place? He certainly didn't **NEED** her to do that for Him.

Maybe it was to create some normal human interaction, or to create a bond of some kind, and open up a door in her soul.

And it was then that He was able to offer her *'living water'*.

Again, the point we are noting:

**We need to learn to BE REAL with people and give others a chance to enter our lives. God doesn't want us to be robotic Christians who give the Gospel and run. He wants us to love and care for others, like He cared for us!**

As believers in Christ, we are called to be witnesses of HIS WONDERFUL PERSON... and **if we represent Him we should act like Him**, passing on His love and compassion to others.

And if you have a difficult time with this, may I suggest you remember all that He saved YOU from! (make it personal, because it is!)

Are you having trouble loving your enemies? Well, let's quickly recall, the Lord didn't have trouble loving YOU, when YOU were His enemy! **Rom 5:6-11, Col 1:21**

Do you remember what He did for YOU, and all the sins He forgave YOU of at the Cross?

In **Luk 7:47**, Jesus said: *"He who is forgiven much, loves much"*.

**We were all originally AGAINST the Lord!!**

**Col 1:21-22** *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.*

**It will be EASY for us to love others who don't deserve it... ONLY if we recall how much He forgave US of.**

And then, from that place of gratitude in our hearts, we are able to lovingly tell of His marvelous deeds done on our behalf!

In Luke's version of the Great Commission, we are told our objective is to witness of HIS WONDERFUL PERSON. **Luke 24:45-48**

**Luke 24:45-48** *"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things.*

We are to tell others about Christ's selfless work done on the Cross on our behalf.

And we are to tell of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in His Name!

And in **Acts 1**, Christ's last words commanded the disciples to witness about Him, His Person.

**Acts 1:8** *"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be **My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

We are to make an issue out of the Lord Himself; His very precious Person.

Jesus Christ loves every person, individually, and offers them full forgiveness of their sins.

And God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. **1Tim 2:4**

I'll often say to people when sharing the Gospel, *"do you realize who Jesus Christ really is?! - He's not only a man or a prophet, but He's the Son of God Himself in the flesh! "*

We are to testify that Christ is who He says He is! - And that includes the reality that He is LORD, of all people, and that must be recognized as part of saving faith.

**People need to understand the Bible says they are even born in sin, and are therefore under judgment from God if they don't humbly turn to Christ, Rom 5:12, 1Cor 15:22.**

And thus the need for “repentance for forgiveness of sins” being proclaimed in His Name. **Luk 24:47**

**Rom 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*

**1Cor 15:20-23** *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Without Christ, we are dead in our sins; spiritually DEAD.

But when a person repents towards God (**Acts 20:21**), he is adjusting to the Justice of God! He is wisely agreeing with God (confession, **1Jo 1:9**) about his sin and guilt.

And let's also remember, the Bible says **even repentance is a grace gift from God**, granted to the humble heart/the willing soul.

**Acts 5:31** *“He (Jesus) is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to **grant repentance** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

**Acts 11:18** *"When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, **God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.**"*

Apparently, there's a repentance that leads to life; spiritual LIFE with God!

And here we see that **man cannot take any credit for repenting**; it was granted to him by the Spirit of God!

And we also see **repentance** was not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles (for the whole world, **Joh 3:16, 1Jo 2:2**).

**Rom 2:4** *"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that **the kindness of God leads you to repentance?**"* (this is done supernaturally)

It's God's grace that leads man to repentance; which is a true change of mind.

And an important part of the fullness of the Gospel is calling people to repentance...

... to admitting they have sinned against God, and they can't save themselves...

... and also letting people know that the whole time God has been patiently waiting for them to turn to Him!

Understanding the MAGNITUDE of that reality makes fertile soil in the soul; it helps ready someone to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Another way to put it is this:

The fullness of the Gospel must include an emphasis on **our need for reconciliation with a perfect, holy God... our need for peace with the God of absolute righteousness!**

And if people don't really believe they've sinned against God (just look at the 10 Commandments), then they're not going to look for a Savior in Jesus Christ!

As the Spirit mentioned earlier; The Gospel is first about God and His majesty, it's not about man and his comforts!

The Bible says a certain message has been committed to us; what is it??

It's the word of RECONCILIATION to the entire world.

**This means it's a very gracious offer of peace with God... that through Christ, God is offering eternal peace to His enemies (those who have sinned against Him, which includes all of us)!**

**2 Cor 5:18-20** *"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for*

*Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God.***

As we share the Gospel, we should make an issue of **the need for reconciliation** with the Holy God of the universe!

We are all sinners, and people must admit that first of all.

Each person needs to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior to have peace with our Holy God.

People everywhere want peace, I believe that's the reason for the "coexist" bumper stickers.

And the problem is that many "good" people (only "good" if compared to others in the world) think they have peace with God based on **their own attempts at goodness.**

But that's not true and that's not possible, according to the Bible.

In fact, that's the horrible lie of religion... that people could possibly be good enough on their own to please God!

For example, the Bible says in the end times people will be saying "peace peace", but they are deceiving themselves, and then destruction comes!

**1 Thess 5:1-6** *"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" (i.e.-coexist!) then*

*destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.*

Unbelievers can deceive themselves into thinking everything is OK in their lives, when it's not!

**Those who are spiritually sleeping in this world (without Christ) need to be made aware that as sinners, they DO NOT and CANNOT have peace with God on their own merits!**

And this is part of our job as evangelists.

They need to be made aware of their need to repent, admitting the guilt of their sinfulness, submitting in humility before their holy and righteous Creator.

Who did Jesus come for? - Sinners.

And what did He come to lead them to? - Repentance.

**Luke 5:29-32** *"And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. 30 The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who*



are sick. 32 *"I have not come to call the righteous but **sinner**s to repentance."*

I imagine Jesus having a loving, but truthful, talk with all of us sinners at the dinner table.

He wasn't just eating with the prostitutes and tax-collectors and condoning their sin. He was gently leading them to repentance!...

... to a change of heart, and to follow Him as the Way to true life.

### **Joh 14:6**

**Luk 13:1-9** *There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

*6 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"*

Repentance is a reality that the Lord calls us to!!

And as we've been seeing, that's part of the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

**It's GOOD NEWS for a person to finally admit he can't please a perfect God on his own! If you think about it, it's an unbearable load off of his shoulders!**

And the humble person will embrace that reality and repent and be set free through faith in Jesus Christ; his Savior and his Substitute!

People first need to realize that as sinners they NEED peace (reconciliation) with a Holy God,...

... and then there's the Good News that Someone has paid their debt, namely Jesus!

**The two sides of the coin of the Gospel are repentance and faith.**

Here's something that we believers can wholeheartedly claim:

**Col 1:13-14** *For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Again, the fullness of the Gospel begins with God's Justice, and then it flows to His love.

As we've been learning, if there's nothing to repent and be saved from, then there's no need to turn to Christ for salvation!

**This is one reason Jesus said "deny yourself" and "follow Me", Mat 16:24, Mk 8:34, Luk 9:23. It's because "self" is in the way of one's salvation!**

A person must be willing to turn away from self-reliance before they will trust in Christ for salvation.

**Matt 16:24-27** *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.*

There we see a picture of coming to saving faith; as losing one's soul is in view here!

Here's what I believe the Lord is saying here:

"deny yourself" (deny that you can save yourself... you're a sinner, you're not good enough to please God on your own),

"take up your cross" (Jesus is being completely honest with us; it's not going to be easy if we choose Him, so "count the cost"! **Luk 14:28**),

"and follow Me" (if you really do believe in Me, you'll follow Me).

**My friends, true saving faith** that is granted by God **has substance!** (for example, remember **Heb 11:1**)

**Heb 11:1** *Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.* - NKJV

True saving faith is a CONVERSION of the soul, it's being "born again", "born of the Spirit", according to the Lord Jesus in **Joh 3:3-8**,...

... and the point is that only God can miraculously give the believer a new heart!

And another part of this "substance" is that good fruit, such as "following Jesus", will show up to some degree in the believer's life because he's been changed by God!

However, **spurious faith** has no substance, as there's no submission to Christ in the heart of "false brethren".

Some people might intellectually choose for Christ "just in case", to try to cover all their bases,... but there's no real trusting in Him as their Lord and Savior from their sins, and therefore no salvation granted by God.

In a person's own soul, they need to be **willing** to turn (repent) from their sinful self and turn to Christ to be saved. It is then that the Holy Spirit enables them to believe!

Let's remember that a "dead" man can do NOTHING on his own! (the Bible says we are all born **spiritually dead**, separated from God, because of sin!)

**Eph 2:1 NIV** *"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins"*

This spiritual death is why Jesus said *"you must be born again"*, in **John 3**.

And this is why Jesus said *"repent and believe in the gospel."* in **Mar 1:15c**.

If a person is humble/willing, God will provide the ability and strength for them to repent and believe! **Jam 4:6, 1Pe 5:5, Luk 18:13-14**

**James 4:6** *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

**Luke 18:13-14** *"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; **for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.**"*

God gives grace to the humble, and even saving faith is granted to them, by grace, as a gift. **Eph 2:8-9**

That's what conversion looks like, what true saving faith looks like!

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Here's another test for us as witnesses of the Person of Christ: **is your Gospel presentation more about yourself or about Him?**

i.e.- When you're in love with someone, you can't help but talk about THEM, right?

They're always on your mind and you love to boast about THEM. (it might be a spouse, or child, or friend, etc...)

And that's how it should be with our Lord and Savior! - If He's FIRST in our hearts, then He will be FIRST in our Gospel presentation. :)

**A Christ-centered Gospel will reveal your love for Christ to others. After all, it is all about HIM, isn't it?!**

It's truly amazing ... when we simply keep our eyes on the Person of Christ, everything else just falls into place without a struggle!

In a book by Will Metzger, called "Tell The Truth", he shares with us a great perspective:

*"Understanding that God, not us, is the Evangelizer (the One who brings results) is wonderfully liberating. This makes witnessing an adventure in which we merely ride along with God as He moves out."*

What a great perspective to hold onto! - Our only job is to be willing servants of God, and to watch Him work through us!

**We must never forget: we believers are only messengers. God allows us to "ride along" with Him, to plant a seed, or even to water it, but ONLY GOD can cause the growth in a person!**

i.e.- Can you cause a vegetable plant to grow?? :) The fact is that once we plant it and water it, all we can do is hope and pray! That hope for good results is completely in God's hands!!

And so it is with sharing the Gospel with others.

**1 Cor 3:5-9** *"What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but **God was causing the growth.** 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but **God who causes the growth.** 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.*

Here's the right perspective for us to hold on to: **We have the privilege of participating in God's work, but ONLY GOD can produce the results.**

If this is our perspective, then we are FREE; free to be bold and transparent and loving when we share the Gospel, as the apostles were throughout the book of Acts.

The apostles simply went around boasting about the Lord Jesus and His Person, and they also explained about the righteousness and the love of God.

The point is they told about HIS works, HIS sacrifice, HIS resurrection, and HIS forgiveness.

As you read the book of Acts, you'll see they kept it simple and they trusted the Holy Spirit for the right words to say to each audience.

And how's this for fun and adventure?

**Food for Thought: The Holy Spirit will lead us into a slightly different Gospel presentation each and every time! This is because each soul needs to hear certain things in that moment, and the Holy Spirit within you knows it!**

**(Not only that, but God doesn't need to repeat Himself in the exact same way, ever! :)**

Please take a moment to think about that dynamic. This means we shouldn't memorize a script in how we approach others with the Gospel.

We should instead trust the Spirit of Christ within us and that He will guide us every step of the way!

And if you read the Word of God daily, you WILL know what to say at the right time.



If you read your Bible in context, you come to fully know the good news of the Gospel, and with that the Spirit has a lot to work with in your soul.

Therefore, as you "go out" and share the Gospel, **Mat 28:18-20**, you can be at rest in your soul and trust Him for guidance!

Remember what Jesus said in **John 4:24**... *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

**Being prepared in the Word of God, we should simply be concerned with having the right heart/motivation and submitting to His Spirit for guidance.**

With that humble, reliant attitude on His Spirit, we can go out and properly share our love and admiration for Christ and what He has done for us!

THIS SHOULD SET US FREE - because it doesn't depend upon our planning or our intelligence, but it depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God!

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Now here's something else we need to think about as we spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ... **what if you're dealing with someone who says they're a believer?**

Here's the question for us to consider: **What's the right way to respond to them, or encourage them??**

**Instead of assuming they're saved**, maybe we should ask them "what's it like?" or "how has God changed you?", and let them simply talk about their faith, or lack thereof.

In other words, we should avoid assuming and prematurely telling people they are "saved" (after all, how do we know someone else's heart? - only God does).

**Being "Saved": we should allow that realization to come from the Spirit Himself, as the Bible says the Spirit also gives believers assurance, as they see the fruits of a changed heart within.** (For good examples, read 1Jo 3&4 and Rom 8, in context.)

We've been learning lately about a mere **profession** of faith vs. a real **possession** of the faith.

In fact, a lot of Jesus' parables addressed this particular issue! (i.e. - the parable of the sower, the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, etc...)

**We should be careful to not lead others into a false sense of security, when maybe they haven't yet surrendered in faith to Jesus as their Lord and Savior!**

Or maybe they believe in "another Jesus"... as do many people in various religions, calling Him just a prophet or a holy man, or even a little god.

The Bible warns us about this:

**2Cor 11:3-4** *But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.*

**There we see it's possible to use the name of Jesus and NOT trust in Him as Who He really is... our Lord and Savior, who died for our sins and then rose from the grave!**

We also see in Holy Scripture that NOT all "disciples" are born again and saved.

Some disciples/students followed Jesus for the wrong reasons, such as being provided food, and eventually they walked away from His teachings; and Jesus said they never actually believed in Him in the first place!

**John 6:25-29** *When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.** 27 Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*

**John 6:53-66** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

60 Therefore **many of His disciples**, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, conscious that **His disciples** grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? 62 "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 "**But there are some of you who do not believe.**" For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." 66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Again, Jesus clearly stated that some of His disciples did not believe! - The clearest example is Judas Iscariot, but there were more here.

The point is this: **we never know who is saved and who is not. Ultimately, it's between each person and the Lord.**

It's simply not for us to judge, nor to jump to conclusions.

However, as a balance statement, let's not forget the following truth,...

... we DO know that if someone HAS placed their trust in Christ, then they are saved and they have eternal security, being "in Christ" once and for all, as in **John 10:22-30**.

**John 10:22-30** *At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. 24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. 26 "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 "I and the Father are one."*

Those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus as their Savior are not only saved, but in His hands forever!

**Eph 1:13-14** *In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, 14 who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

There we see the assurance and security that the genuine believer has in the hands of God, forever (Thank God!).

But the Spirit's point on dealing with other people: *who are we to tell someone else they are "saved"?!...*

... we might wrongly be giving a mere professor of faith a vote of confidence, when they haven't yet turned to Christ with their heart. **Rom 10**

That's why I don't believe in "altar calls", as in some churches they call people up to the stage as a profession of faith.

**But where do we see that example in the scriptures?** Is that found in the book of Acts, in the activities of the early church? (honestly, let me know if you find that)

Here's why I don't like "altar calls": What if someone comes up the aisle at church only to look good in front of others?

**And might that then give this person a false sense of security, when they haven't turned to Christ with their heart yet?**

And where do we see in the scriptures a person leading another in a salvation prayer; saying “repeat these words after me and you’ll be saved”??

Is that fair to say to someone? Is salvation really just saying some words?

What if they repeat your words, but their heart isn't humble before God?

**Isn't salvation a heart issue between each person and the Lord???**

**Rom 10:9-10** *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

What if their heart's not ready, but they just repeat your words to please you? And then, in your excitement, you tell them they are "saved", but is their heart still far from God?

**Salvation is between each person and the Lord. And we should avoid artificially getting in the way of their coming to the Lord.**

What we DO see in the book of Acts is the apostles declaring the truth about Christ, sometimes to individuals and sometimes to groups, and then those who believed the message followed them!

That's it. That's what we see in Holy Scripture, for our example.

Here's something else to think about:

**In the book of Acts, do we see the apostles telling people “you are now saved”?** (*I'm not talking about when Paul would write a letter to a church, but about how the apostles gave the Gospel to groups of people, and whoever chose to follow them, followed them!*)

We're talking about the actual giving of the Gospel, and that's why we're using Acts in this discussion.

What we DO see in the book of Acts is the disciples helping people clearly understand the Gospel; freely sharing the offer of salvation like water and encouraging people to accept the message and to continue in the Word of God.

I looked up in a concordance the phrase “you are saved”, just to see how many times that may have been said in the Bible to a potential new believer.

Here's the only verse that came up:

**1Cor 15:2 NIV** *“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”*

Here we see CAUTION in pronouncing someone to be saved, not presumption.

This is a good example that we shouldn't assume people are saved, especially new people who might not really understand



the Gospel yet (*they might look at it like a cookie jar instead of a surrender to the Lord*).

And there's a big "if" statement in this verse, too. Holy Scripture teaches us that the genuine believer WILL follow Christ and His Word, at least to some degree.

As in **1Cor 15:2**, the genuine believer will "hold firmly to the word", because he has placed his trust in the Lord.

If their heart has been changed by God, there is a corresponding change in their life somehow.

So let's think about this...

... how many times have we **assumed** a new person to be saved, possibly giving them a false sense of security, when they may not have surrendered to Christ yet?

God only knows, and I think the point of the Spirit is that **we don't need to do that**.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ASSURE EACH BELIEVER OF THEIR SALVATION, in a personal manner.

**Rom 8:16** *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,"*

**1Jo 3:21** *"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;"*

If our heart does not condemn us, that's the Spirit's conviction to us!

That's the Spirit giving you peace in your heart about your relationship with God!

One of the times Jesus DID confirm a person was saved was with **the woman with the alabaster vial.**

And MAYBE it was because there was clear evidence of her saving faith before He made such a statement about her salvation. (not to mention, Jesus had all knowledge! 😊)

**Luke 7:44-50** *"Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47 "For this reason I say to you, **her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.**" 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50 And He said to the woman, **"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."***

**Her humility and love were evidence of her changed heart, and Jesus declared her saved!**

The fruit of His love in this woman was so obvious, and the Lord reassured her of her salvation without hesitation.

The Lord Himself can do that, but WE are not the judges.

We don't have the ability or the wisdom to say another person is saved for certain.

In fact, the scriptures tell us to be concerned with our own salvation, **Phil 2:12**. It's between each of us and God.

**Phil 2:12-13** *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

So what's our job? - **We are to share the Gospel in its fullness and rely on the Holy Spirit to convict people of their need for a Savior and to change their hearts.**

The very best we can do is share the Truth, in love.

Only the Spirit of Jesus can change the heart of man.

Amen?

Let's close in prayer:

"Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for another wonderful day together as your family, fellowshiping in your Word.

And if anyone is listening right now who has never trusted in the Lord Jesus for their salvation, we ask that You graciously help them turn to your Son.

Whoever is listening right now, you are a sinner, as we all are, and you need a Savior. Repent, turn from your self-reliance, and bow down to Christ as your Lord and Savior. He is there right now with loving open arms, waiting for you to surrender.

*Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. - Act 16:31*

Father, we thank you for anyone who has believed today for the first time. We welcome them to your family, as your children, adopted by Your grace.

Please bless us as we go, and help us continue in your Word. We praise You, Father.

In Christ's precious Name we pray, by the power of your Spirit.  
amen.