

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ACCEPT JESUS?

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(In this message, Bertie teaches on acceptance of Jesus as much more than just confession of sins in the hope of salvation. This message is a life-changing message that will help your heart to get established in all Jesus has done for you. Be ready for some challenging truth.)

Today I am going to be ministering on what it actually means to receive Jesus. We have had a traditional view of receiving Jesus as, "I feel so sorry about my sin." Then you come to the "altar" and cry a bit and you repent of your sin and then you just say, "Jesus, save me!", and that means you have received Jesus. I do believe that if you do that and you come and call upon the name of the Lord and you ask Him to save you, He will bring forth salvation and that the Lord will meet you wherever you are. So I am not saying that a person cannot receive a new life that way but I what I would like to do is explain what the Bible says and what was in the mind of God, and what was in the mind of John when he wrote about the New Birth and what he wrote about receiving the Lord.

Receiving the Lord is simply when a person comes to a place where you can actually receive who and what the Lord is. We will look at some scriptures that explain all of this. Many times I have met with pastors who would tell me, "Bertie, I don't know if I am saved. I don't know if I have received Jesus." The reason why there would be doubt in a person's heart that believe in the Lord as if he really received the Lord or if he is really saved is simply because of a System that continually disqualifies him. That's what it is all about and if you are at a place where you are continually feeling disqualified, if you are in a place where you continually feel that you are just not good enough and you just don't qualify, you always wonder if you are saved. That doubt is normally based on a belief system that is not stable. That means that belief system is not based on what God believes about you.

John 1

:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

What is important in that verse is that he said that He came to His own. When He came to His own, the true context of that is that He came to the Jews and the Jews did not receive Him. That was written by John from the perspective where the Jews believed that they were the people who belonged to God and God came to them but they could not receive Him. But the truth is that none of the Jews were born again. None of the Jews were believers in Jesus. Even if they were not believers in Jesus, God still called them His own. I will use the argument that Paul uses in Romans where he says that the Jews are sinners and the Gentiles are sinners. Therefore they are the same. When God comes to His own, He just doesn't come to the Believer. He comes to mankind. That's who He truly comes to. He has come to touch mankind. He has come to visit mankind. Mankind has not been in a place where they could really understand who God was but God decided, "Let Me go and just visit them. Let Me go and sit with man. Let Me go and explain to man. Let Me take time and explain to man who I really am and how much I really love them." Then we can actually receive Him.

Before we get to the "receive" part, I want to stretch a point. All the people on the planet are the people of God. Now you might say, "Bertie, you have jumped off the wagon! How can all the people be the people of God?"

If you recall Matthew 6, Jesus comes to people who had never accepted Him, who didn't believe in Him and they just followed Him to see miracles. Before He died, before He rose again, before blood flowed, before any of those things, He said to them, "Why do you worry about what you eat, about what you drink or about what you will wear? Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things." Jesus didn't say, "Your Heavenly Father," just because it was just a slogan. He even said to Mary, "My God and your God and My Father and your Father." (John 20:17)

What He was saying to people even before they believed on, called upon, the name of the Lord, before they could, what we in the Charismatic Pentecostal Circles would see as the "born-again" experience or a radical change, the Father already called Himself the Father of people. So all people belong to God but the problem that we have had in Christianity is that we have been in a place where we preach such a shallow Gospel that we have defined salvation only on the terms of Who we belong to. If I belong to that Person, if I know Him or not, if I have anything to do with Him or not, if He lives in me or not, I don't care as long as I belong to Him. If one day in my life if I just once said, "Jesus," that means I belong to a certain Person and because I belong to Him, I am saved and He will not murder me one day when He comes back to pour out the final wrath that Jesus couldn't satisfy. That is a very shallow Gospel. That is actually not the Gospel or Good News, at all.

When it comes to receiving Christ, what it is all about is actually that God saw that His own people, His people, were lost and His people were taken captive. The people that belong to Him, the people who He loves, went to a place where their minds got corrupted in the lie that Satan started to spread about who the Father is. When they believed the lie about God, they felt lonely, they felt, "Who will give me life?" and then they would have to get life by their very own works. In that lie a picture about God was painted which was not the truth. I said this last week, and this is the big thing about how God dealt with people and the closeness and how He dealt with people. After Adam and Eve sinned, they were hiding from God and God asked, "Why are you hiding?" They said, "We are naked and we are ashamed." Then God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Adam and Eve weren't ignorant about their nakedness like they were walking and thinking that they were clothed and then one, "Wow! Help me! What's happening? I never knew that I was naked!" That's not the case.

Adam and Eve always knew that they were naked but the thing was when God came to Adam and Eve He said, "Who told you that you are naked?" If God speaks to you about your nakedness, you will not be ashamed. But if Satan starts to speak to you about your nakedness, you will be ashamed. We see that in the woman that was caught in the very act of adultery. In those days if you were caught in the act of adultery, they grabbed you just like that. They had no value for your life. Like that movie, "Dead Men Walking," you are going to be stoned right now. They would just pull you out into the street naked and people would come and stone you. Here was a woman, dragged before Jesus, half-naked or naked, before the Lord, in a place of utter embarrassment and when the Pharisees spoke about her nakedness, or her inability, or her sin, she was ashamed. But when Jesus spoke to her about her inability and her shame, she felt clothed. I believe that when Jesus said to her, "Where are those accusers of yours? Go and sin no more." When He showed love to her and said, "Neither do I condemn you. I am not going to kill you. I don't have the ministration of death. I cannot kill anybody!" When He said that, I tell you, in that moment she wasn't even aware that she was naked... although she knew that she was naked. Her nakedness was not in her mind.

And here we find Adam and Eve come in a place where Satan started to talk to them about their inability to be like God by their own works. He started to talk to them that they are actually a creature that is dependent on God for their life and they should try to have life by their own works. He said that God tries to hide things from them and here they feel ashamed about that and all of mankind was dumped into that lie! All mankind was dumped into the argument of Satan, or Satan's description of our nakedness and we started to feel ashamed. We started to feel that we are not good enough. We don't qualify. God saw man living in that deception and He said, "My people are deceived. My people are living in the alienation, or the separation that is in their mind, because of lies." And He said, "I am going to save My people!"

John 1:11 says that God came to His own... The first point that I want to make is where he says, "His own." The true context of this scripture he talks about the Jews yet I just want to say that He didn't just come for the Jews if we look at the bigger picture. He came to His own which is all of us. I want you to know that you belong to God! Do not think that you only started to belong to God once you do what God says. No, you belong to God! You have always belonged to God and you will always belong to God. Some that belong to God can be lost and some that belong to God can die but you should never forget your origin. You should never forget the place where you actually belong. It's like the prodigal son. When he was lost, to whom did he belong? Who was his father? Did Father God all of a sudden become a stranger to him or not his father anymore when he went to join himself to some citizen from another country? No, what happened was the son of the father went and joined himself to the citizen of another country. If you would ask the father, "Where is your son?" He would say, "My son has joined himself with the citizen of another country and he is now a slave of that person and I want him to return!" That is the attitude and the heart of God.

So before we even talk about receiving Jesus, before we even talk about, "born of God," or any of that, I want you to have that established in your heart. If it's not established in your heart and you doubt that, let the Lord speak to you.

You know, Church, there has to be a place in our lives, and I say that for everyone who is listening to this, there has to be a place in your life where you go into your inner room where it is not about you and your spouse, or you and your children, or you and your parents, but where you close the door and it is you and God.... just you and God. And when you speak to God where you don't have a relationship with God via just anybody else but where you can just come and speak to God yourself and say, "Lord, I belong to You. I don't understand everything but I belong to You and show me how I belong to You!" Glory to God, and you will see how the Lord shows you those things.

If you listen to these webcasts and you listen to any preacher's message, and you think that by listening to that preacher you are going to have all revelation, I want to tell you that you are going to be disappointed all the time or you will get addicted to running to preachers all the time thinking you can't miss one message thinking, "If I miss it, then what then?" God wants a relationship with you! You belong to Him!

John 1

:11 ... and his own received him not. I don't want to focus on the negative here which is that the Jews did not receive Jesus. I want to explain the word, receive, there where it says, "... they received Him not."

That word, receive, there means, “to receive near; to associate with one's self; to take; to learn from; to be near; to receive as close.” Do you know what God did in Jesus? He came and He said, “I want to show you how close I am to you. I want to show you that there is no distance between God and man. The way that God did that was by incarnating a human body that was sinless, that could receive the sin of all people and while He received the sin of all people on Him in the baptism of John, He could still walk and fellowship with man. Do you see the closeness?

We have always seen this thing that my sin has separated me from God. God has seen my sin and now He cannot fellowship with me and now He is far from me. What do we see God do? God has come to His own and now He fellowships among the sinners. He hangs out with tax collectors. He has prostitutes that he fellowships with. He has drunkards around Him. He was even called a drunkard, a winebibber and a glutton. That's what He was called because He was hanging out with all these people. What He was actually showing was the closeness of God to a sinner where God has never rejected man. He accepts man and He has, “I receive you!” The word, receive, here is associate with or receive you as near. The first thing that God has come to show is that He can come close to us. He can come familiar with us. I don't know the English word for familiar. I am not very acquainted with the English use of it but in Afrikaans. I was in the South African Defense Force in 1990 and when you were there and became friendly with the Corporal or friendly with the Sergeant Major, then they would say, “You are becoming familiar. You are thinking that this Corporal is family. That's what you are thinking. You should never cross the bridge!” Then they would punish you because you would think that you are becoming too friendly with the Corporal, too familiar with him. He comes too close to you where you just start to share your heart and make jokes and those kind of things. Yet the definition of receive is to receive as close or to receive close. That's the definition of receive.

So when we first see that God received us, how did He receive us? He received us by fully associating with us, by becoming familiar with us... associating with oneself. How did God associate us with Him? He took a man and put that man in the Trinity. Now the question is or the Gospel is, “Would you receive God?” Can you receive God? Can you see as close, can you become familiar, with God? That is what the whole thing is all about. Can you come to a place where you see God as your friend? Can you come to a friend where you enter the presence of God but you don't have that distance of sin in your heart?

The other day I was stopped for going through a Stop sign. The officer said, “Sir, you know why we've stopped you.” I said, “Yes, because you are collecting money.” They said, “That is not why we stopped you.” Then I said, “No, you stopped me because I did not stop at the Stop sign.” Then I thought that the ones who caught me makes up for the five hundred times I skipped stopping there. It is like you get in a habit of doing this of not stopping properly. It's not like I the U.S. or Europe where they have a very strict law enforcement. It's not like they are always there. You become a bit familiar. You become a bit relaxed and then the moment the traffic officer sees you, all of a sudden you realize that this is the authority. You need to watch what you say and if they catch you, you can feel guilty but when I come home I am not going to first say to my wife and my children, “Listen, before we can continue with this meal or before we can go anywhere again, let me first confess to you that I got a speeding ticket or I got a ticket for not stopping. Being familiar overrides the power of doing something wrong as pertaining to a law. Church, I hope you get what I am trying to say.

So, can we come to a place where we see the closeness of God.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God...

To as many as received Him... I want to explain it this way: The word, receive, in this verse, has a little bit of a different meaning. It means to take with the hand; to lay a hold of any person or any thing in order to make use of it. So what Jesus said was, "If you can grab a hold of Me, if you can see this closeness, if you can see who I am, if you can see where I am seated, if you can see that My innocence is your innocence, and you can grab a hold of that with the purpose to use it. In other words, when you can say, "I am innocent. I am righteous. I have been set free from death. I will partake in the resurrection. I am the child of God. I have been delivered from the enslavement of sin and death. God is MY Father..." When you can say that from the depth of your heart, that is when you receive Jesus. That is receiving Jesus... grabbing a hold of with the purpose to make use of.

Let's be practical. If you are in a situation where you have done something wrong, are you going to receive Jesus in that situation or are you going to receive the word of the devil and condemnation? We receive Jesus. Listen to what happens when we receive Jesus: ***:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God...***

A legalistic mind will see it this way: (Bertie folds a piece of paper and says, "Let's say that this is the power to become a son of God." And now God puts the folded paper in His back pocket and then He says, "Let's see who has received Me. Come on, come on, angels, just give a report. Who has received Me?" He then says, "I now give them the power to become the sons of God." and boom, you fall out under the power. Then you stand up and all of a sudden now you have that anointing to be the son of God! That's not what it means! That's how our minds read it: "Accept Me and I will give you power!" that's not how it works!

The way it works when we can come to a place where we can embrace the closeness of God and we can have God so close to us where we can see our union with Him, our oneness with Him. Once that takes place, the fact that His closeness gives us a power that overrides our fears. Let me put it this way: My son plays cricket and he can receive me as his coach. That means that if he can bring me in his heart to a place where he can actually learn something from me, where he can say, "Come close to me. I will open up my heart and I will show you my weaknesses in this sport. You come and you show me. I am willing to learn from you. I see you as my friend. I see you as the one who wants to help me. I see you as my coach and my dad." If he can do that, guess what? Who I am and what I know will empower him to reach the level of my understanding of that game. That's how the empowerment works. That's how the authority works. There's another side to that authority that I will also touch on but when we can receive, when we can see that God is close to us, when we can say, "I am united with God in Christ, my sins are forgiven." When all these things happen, the fact that we don't walk anymore with a sin consciousness, that we don't walk anymore with guilt and fear ruling our lives, we will find that since guilt doesn't rule my life but peace rules my life, it gives me the authority or the reason to be happy when I would normally be sad. That's how simple it is!

When you become familiar with God, my way of looking at it is, is when you become family orientated with God. That's what happens. And when you are inside that, it is not that God is going to take that paper out of his back pocket, and give me authority if I obey Him. I have seen that many times. I remember when I fasted for more authority and when I wanted to take authority over the town and over the city.... listen, I have news for you: ALL authority belongs to Jesus.... and not to you! You don't have to police the devil! We can police the devil all day long and then the devil tresspasses and now we want to bind him and the seven fold comes back, and all of that... Church, let us not be that immature. I want us as an internet church to come to a place where we think inside family terms and that is when we receive God. That is when we receive Who He is when we start to receive inside family terms.

When I am here at home and something goes wrong here, they don't say, "In the name of my father I am now casting you out!" I am not saying that we can't cast our devils but I want to explain to you how this works. When my family walks here, they know all authority on this property belongs to me. The way they walk in that authority is by resting in the fact that I have jurisdiction over them and that I will exercise this authority of love to see that they are safe and cared for all the time. That is how they make use of this authority because in Christ, when God raised man from the dead and when you receive, when you can see this closeness, you find that you enter the realm of His authority where He rules over you with peace. Where He rules over you to the point where you are not worrying anymore and you are actually wondering if you are irresponsible or if you are in faith. That kind of a thing starts to grab your heart where you start to feel forgiveness, just comes naturally. That is the rule or the authority of God over you. That is the authority that He says who He is. That authority is now given to us in this sense that His power comes to us where He brings us over into His kind of life simply by receiving Him as close to us.

Let me just summarize this and we are going to go to one or two points and end off. To receive Jesus, this is what I want you to remember, to receive Jesus, know this: You have always belonged to God but what you receive is what He has done and how that implies to you. When you believe that, when you believe that when He died, I died. When you believe that when He rose, we were raised with Him. When you believe that He went and sat down at the right hand of the Father, as a human, you grab it for yourself.

One of the best ways that I can say it is to take it personally. Many times we say, "You shouldn't take something personally. Don't take everything personally." When it comes to the Gospel, you should take it personally! Take it personally. That's the only way that you can take it! When you take it personally when you see Jesus died, He died my death. He rose. That's my resurrection. His life is my life. When your heart believes that as the truth, you have received Christ! That is receiving the Lord. That is the receiving that has the authority, the power.

Let me explain the word, authority there. It is the power of choice; liberty of doing as one pleases. So what happens is when you come to the place where you see your closeness to God, it's the first time in your life where you will ever be able to do whatever you want. Before that day, before receiving Christ, you could never do what you wanted. You were always doing what the flesh dictated to you that you had to do. You were under the power of the Law. You were under the power of sin and death. That brought forth thoughts in your heart and you would say, "I can do whatever I want and I am going to follow my heart!" You thought you were doing whatever you wanted That's not what you wanted! You want peace. You want joy. You want to be kind. You want to be at the place where you can love and where people can love you. That's what you actually want but you cannot do it. But the moment where you come to a place where you see your union with God in Christ, you are liberated to, for the first time in your life, actually do what you really wanted. .

Let's use a practical example in finances. Maybe there was someone in your town that you wanted to give money to or you wanted to give someone a car, or something like that. For a long time in your life you wanted to do something like that but you could never do it. The harder you tried, you couldn't do it. Then to justify your thoughts you would think, "Will that person look after the car? Is he faithful? Is he this... You will find all kinds of excuses trying to justify your thoughts because you now do not want to stand guilty before God. You find reasons and that's how you live but the moment you see this closeness, if that is what you really want to do, to actually give something to somebody, you would find that your union and the revelation of the eternal provision of the Father actually now sets you free and gives you the authority now to do whatever you want.

This is what it says: It gives you the authority to do whatever you want to become or to receive the very being of God. That's what the next verse says.

:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become (the word, become, in the Greek, to receive being) **the sons of God...**

When you say that you are a son of God you are saying, "I am possessing immortality as Christ would live and never die. In the very same way, even if I should die, I will live and death can never conquer me for I am of God. That is who and what I am! That brings forth that liberty to not try to fend for yourself anymore... to not try to have a life where everything just revolves around what is right and wrong but where you can actually do what you want. That is awesome, isn't it! Could you think that God would love you to the place where He could then give you the freedom and His life would end resulting in you doing whatever you want? And in that doing whatever you want, you would find the Son of God. You become a son of God with your life and your thoughts and your intents born of God? Isn't that beautiful! That's what God has for you! That is what God has intended for you.

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The word, born, in this verse says that these that received, or could receive God as close, have the authority or the power of God's love empowers them to manifest God in them and this life they have is born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man but of God. You know we can have a "holy" life and fear is the father of our actions, or guilt or obligation. It is the father of everything you do. Then you might have a good life but the father of your life is not God. But here God says that if you can come to a place where you can embrace how close He is, it will bring forth God's life in you and then you can say, "This life I live is not because I am obligated to do it. I'm not forced by God to do it. The Law doesn't force me. It's not me in my own will power bringing it forth. It is actually God who gave birth to these emotions and the passions in me, shaping my will, and now I can actually do what I want to do.... and God would so live in you.

That word, born, in the Jewish sense means: of one who brings others over into his way of life. So this is the Gospel, this is the Good News: God has seen us as His own and He was seeing that we were not living His way of living. We didn't have His closeness of living. The way it works in the Trinity is the way of closeness, the way is the family way. That is the Trinity's way of doing. It is a family way. God calls Himself, Father. So if He calls Himself, Father, and He says, "The God and the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ", we see family there. We see that people can become familiar or family orientated or family dynamics can manifest inside those circles and we can see that. And then He says, that He will now bring you over into His way of living. The way the Father and Son works is with this closeness, this oneness. Jesus said, "My Father and I are One and whatever I do it is not I who do it but the Father in Me who does these things. It is not I who speaks but it is the Father in Me that speaks." That's the closeness that He saw and out of that closeness it gave Him the liberty to actually be the Son of God in this world. In the very same way, when we can receive that closeness, it's not, "Let me receive that closeness and now I am going to do good." That's not how it works. The way that family works is a husband and wife come together and then they bear fruit. That's how it will work. In the midst of closeness, on account of the union and the seed that we receive, or the word that we believe, it bears fruit. It's not, "You must bear fruit and then you will be saved!" It bears fruit in you. So he comes and says, "What God will do is He will bring you, by you just seeing His love for Him and believing His love, He will bring you into His way of living. That's what it means to be born.

The word, born, means to bring someone else over into your way of living. That's what it means! To bring someone else into your way of living, and now you are born out of this person who brings you over to his way.

The way that God is going to bring you over to His way of doing is by loving you and He's going to love you and as you can believe His love towards you, that's when you receive Christ Jesus. Hallelujah! Isn't that good news!

I want to end with an example of that. When Stephen was stoned, he saw a vision. To the Jews, this vision was blasphemy to the greatest degree. The Jews believed like the Muslims believe today that you could never call yourself equal with God. God is a Supreme Being and you cannot actually put your name and God's name in the same sentence. He's so high and you are just so low. Here comes Stephen and when he was stoned by the Jews, listen to what he said. He saw a vision, he saw the glory of the Lord and he said, "Behold, I see the Son of man, standing at the right hand of God." What he was saying was, "I see man in equality with God!" That is what He was saying. By saying that and actually seeing it, believing it and revealing what he saw, he saw the union, the perfect oneness between the Father and man, in Christ... including himself. He didn't say, "I see Jesus." He saw Jesus but what he said was, "I see the Son of man." This meant he saw the Representative of all mankind. He said, "I see mankind there." Then the next thing that happened was the men got very angry and started stoning him. As they started to stone him, listened to what happens: Then for the first time in his life he had the authority to say to people who stoned him, he prayed, "Father, don't keep this sin against them."

Do you see how Jesus, when He was crucified, they nailed Him to the cross and while nailing Him, He saw His union with the Father and He said, "My God, don't keep this sin against them. They know not what they do!" Do you see the fruit of God in Him? And He was liberated by the closeness and God brought Him over into that kind of a life... which we can never, by our own power, ever access! I want to tell you that it is crazy to ever think you can access that kind of life by your own power! It is impossible!

And here we see Stephen when he saw that union, he received the fact that God and man is one in the throne of God! In that closeness and in that embrace, he says, "Don't keep this sin against them Father, who are stoning me now." When he said that, he was brought over into God's way of living by the very Spirit of God! That is receiving Jesus and bearing fruit! That's what it means to be born of God where your life is not born of the will of the flesh, not born of the will of man, or born of ethnicity but where you have come over into the very life of God by God loving you into it! Amen and amen!

Father, thank You so much that we can come at the end of this Service with hearts overwhelmed by Your goodness and Your love.

I pray for people who have sickness in their body, who have stress. I thank You, Father, that they are part of the kingdom where Your authority and Your kingdom is a Kingdom where You rule over them with peace and safety and healing.

Thank You, Lord, that we don't have to try to make Your kingdom work but since You have received all authority, we can go for You will exercise that authority in our lives by our simply just looking at the the closeness there is between You and us. Thank You for that Father, in Jesus' mighty name! Amen and amen.