



The BASIC Good News

IDENTIFICATION

Issue 4

Discovering the Essentials of the Christian Faith

The Color **WHITE** symbolizes that we recover our true **IDENTITY** by admitting our need, believing in Jesus & calling on God.

God Says “Bless” and We Say “Yes!”

Martin Luther, the main figure of the Protestant Reformation, is remembered to have once said “If God wants to save you, let Him!” It’s a wonderful piece of advice.

In our last issue we presented the Biblical idea that our SALVATION comes not in any way from ourselves

but entirely from the person and work of Jesus Christ. If we will believe this then what we are saying is that God indeed does want to save us. That is an amazing thing to say, but we do not say it by the power of our own hopeful imaginations. This is what the Bible teaches. This is the Good News of Jesus Christ. And the Gospel is the



power of God!

So how do we say “Yes!” to this Good News? It isn’t going to help us for Jesus to be the Savior of the World and the Lord of the Universe, if He is not our Savior

and Lord. How do we do that?

We open ourselves to receive what the Savior gives.

We **IDENTIFY** with the Lord of the Universe, God the Son, Jesus Christ, who chose to **IDENTIFY** with us. He came to earth from heaven. He became a flesh-and-blood man. He died the death of a very bad

man (though he was morally perfect).

A popular explanation for this crucial personal decision to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior tells us it’s as simple as “A, B, C.”

A—“Accept” God’s grace to you. “Admit” your need. Confess to God that you are a sinner and you need His mercy. “Ask” Him to forgive you.

B—“Believe” in Jesus Christ. Put your trust in Him. With as much faith as God has given you (and a little is enough!), trust in God and call Jesus your Lord and Savior.

C—“Call” on God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—to be involved in your life, to be your source of wisdom and strength, to guide you, every day. Make prayer a constant habit.

“T” is for IDENTIFICATION

Romans 10:6-13	2
I John 1:8-10	2
Acts 2:21-24, 36-39	2
Proverbs 3:3-5	3
John 14:1-7	3
II Corinthians 5:17-21	3

B.A.S.I.C.

- **BEST** (GOLD): The BEST of everything is found from, through, in and to the Living God.
- **ALIENATION** (BLACK): Sin has ALIENATED people from God and His best for them.
- **SALVATION** (RED): We are SAVED eternally only by the gracious sacrifice of God’s Son Jesus Christ.
- **IDENTIFICATION** (WHITE): We recover our true and best IDENTITY by *admitting* our need, *believing* in Jesus and *calling* on God.
- **COMPLETION** (GREEN): We *grow* as we live by faith, trusting and glorifying our God who is making us COMPLETE.

Identify Yourself!

How often each day are we asked to identify ourselves? When we write a check, check our e-mail, reach an answering machine, pay at the pump, meet someone new... *What’s your user ID?... Hi, I’m Joe. Who are you?...* People want to know who we are. They want to know that our identity is ours and not made up or stolen.

What do we do to identify ourselves?

God, on the other hand, wants *us* to know who we are. He already knows our mother’s maiden name and everything else about us. He doesn’t issue cards or numbers or passwords.

What has God done to identify us?

Jesus, God the Son, died to share His identity with us.

Living as a follower of Jesus Christ means discovering our true identity in Him. It means knowing more and more deeply who *He* says we are and agreeing with what He says, more and more, in both our thoughts and our actions.

Our true identity?... *Friend of Jesus... Saved by Him... Secure in Him... Made righteous in God’s sight... Belonging to Him... Part of His Family... White as snow...* And this is an identity we couldn’t make up for ourselves and don’t have to steal.

When God identifies us, it’s a positive ID.

Romans 10:6-13 — Confess, Believe, Trust, Call

⁶ But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is

with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—

the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Questions to Ask:

1. According to this passage from Romans, how far away is God's salvation from anyone seeking it?
2. What does a person do to accept this salvation?
3. What percentage of people who trust in God and call on the name of Jesus will be saved into eternal life? Does this include you?



I John 1:8-10 — Admission Necessary

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and

purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Questions to Ask: 1. Why is it a bad idea for people to claim they aren't sinners?

2. Why is it a good idea to admit we are sinners and make confessions accordingly?

Acts 2:17-24, 36-39—Everyone Who Calls, All God Will Call

¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

²² “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited

by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Questions to Ask:

1. What does Peter tell people they must do in response to who Jesus is and what He has done?
2. How does a person “repent?”
3. What is the relationship between those who “call on the name of the Lord” (v. 21) and those “whom the Lord our God will call” (v. 39)?

Proverbs 3:5-6 — Trustworthy Guide, Faithful God

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...”

Questions to ask: 1. Can you think of a time when you had to trust in God rather than “leaning on your own understanding?” What happened?
2. How do we “acknowledge” God in the things we do?

John 14:1-7 — Jesus: The Way, The Truth & The Life

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

“Trust in God; trust also in me.”

Questions to ask: 1. How does trusting in God help to untroubled our hearts? Why does Jesus say we should do this?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus is “the Way?”... “the Truth?”... “the Life?”
3. According to Jesus, God the Son, how many different ways are there to get to God the Heavenly Father?

II Corinthians 5:17-21 — New Creations In Christ

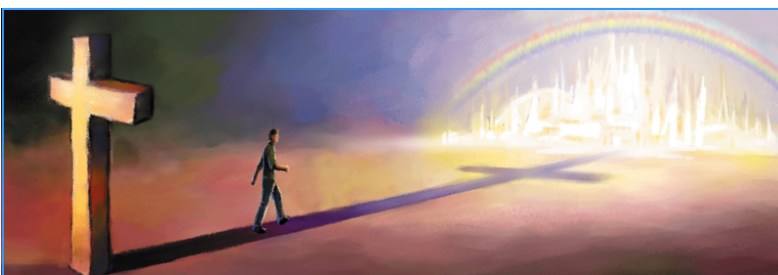
¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has com-

mitted to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on

Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Questions to ask:

1. What does it mean to be a “new creation?” Who makes this happen?
2. What is “reconciliation” all about? Whom is God reconciling? How can we be a part of this heavenly work?



“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

IDENTIFICATION



Reaching Out with
the Message and
Love of Jesus Christ

Covenant Presbyterian Church

6695 Mae Anne Avenue
Reno, NV 89523

Phone: (775) 746-8118

Fax: (775) 746-8195

Web-site: www.covenant-reno.org

Our Mission

Covenant Presbyterian Church is a Christ-centered church whose members seek to: reach out to others with the message and love of Christ, enable people to become faithful, mature disciples of Jesus, and help people discover and use their spiritual gifts through meaningful worship, nurture, prayer, education and service to our members and beyond.

Our Focus

Teaching the Word of God

Our Vision

To proclaim, teach and live the Word of God so that our members, their families and friends, and our neighbors in the community receive and respond to God's Word by coming to know Christ as their Savior and Lord, growing in their relationship with Him and with one another, fulfilling God's unique purpose for their lives, and sharing their faith with others.

We Share with You the Good News...

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... (I Corinthians 5:3-4)



The Basic Gospel Bracelet

✝ That Christ died for our sins

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; & the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

✝ And that He was buried

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19) ...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

✝ And that He rose again

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:22)... Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives & believes in me will never die..." (John 11:25-26)

🔔 Humanity's Need

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)... for all have

sinned and fall short of the glory of God... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)

🔔 God's Remedy

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

➡ What shall I do, Lord?

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved... for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9-13)

♥ Choose Life

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)... Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. (Isaiah 55:6)