



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – October 3, 2010

## ***Heart to Heart...***

Are you really convicted about when and how one is saved? How does one know when their sins have been removed and they are acceptable to God? Too many are going by what someone tells them or what they feel or what the religious world speaks and not what God says about the matter.

Many are looking for a "religious experience" as their indication of their relationship. Let's look at this carefully. You are going along and struck down by a blinding light and fell to the ground. As you were trying to gain your senses, a voice started speaking with you calling you by name. You respond asking, "*Who are you?*" The voice responds that you need to get up, enter a certain city and it will be told you what you must do. The voice reveals to you personally that it is Jesus who has caused this. What would you think? Would this convince you, that you were saved and in a relationship with God? We know from the above this is what happened to Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9. But how would people interpret the situation in their own life? If the Lord didn't reach out to save me, why would he speak and offer what He offered?

There was one problem. Saul was still in his sins! He had not yet been released and was not a "Christian" according to God's terms. Would you consider yourself a "Christian" at this point? Saul tells us what he was told he "must" do in Acts 22. Ananias was told that Saul had seen in a vision that he was coming to lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight. A vision! Wouldn't that be proof that one was saved? Surely only a "Christian" would receive such a vision, wouldn't they? Saul had to wait on a message to be brought to him from Ananias.

As Ananias explained the message from the Lord and God giving Saul back his sight, the question was asked: "***Why do you delay?***" (Acts 22:16) Saul must make a heart response if anything was to move forward. If there was going to be a relationship with the Lord, there had to be a faith response. "***Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.***" Saul responded to the word of the Lord what he must do. He was baptized into the name of Christ Jesus. Then and only then was there going to be a cleansing. Saul thought everything between he and God was fine until this encounter. He believed he was serving the Lord while trying to destroy this new teaching, this new covenant. It was at this point he had to be confronted with his sins and only baptism in the name of the Lord was taking them away.

Too many are calling others "Christians" who have never been immersed into Christ Jesus and His name. Too many believe that as long as someone reads their Bible, goes to church somewhere and has a belief in the Lord Jesus then they are Christians. Too many believe that baptism is nothing more than an outer sign of an inner faith. They don't believe their baptism was into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. It was Jesus Himself that sent His own apostles into all the world preaching the gospel message (Mark 16:15-16) and those who believed that message, were baptized and would be the saved. It's the point of baptism that one comes in contact with the blood of Christ and His death. It takes faith to accept that. That is the word of Jesus and the teaching of His apostles. No one is saved at any other point and

time, no matter if they have some type of spiritual experience! That word of the Lord stands! How convicted are you on when and where one is saved? When and why were you baptized? Think about it!!!

Brent