

# Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

10 March 2024

The Blessing of Believing

Text: "There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, that through him all men might believe."

*John 1:6-7.*

The apostle John stated that the guiding reason for writing the fourth Gospel was the desire that people might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, The Son of the Living God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

He also describes the purpose behind the ministry of John the Baptist: "so that through him all men might believe."

The writer of the book of Hebrews declares that faith is essential if we are to find ourselves pleasing to God and experience the rich reward that comes only from him.

To believe in Jesus means that we accept him to be all that God claims for him and intended him to be.

To really believe in Jesus is to be open to him and responsive to his instructions and commands. It is to agree with him and cooperate with him in his work in the world.

Rich blessings come to those who truly believe in Jesus.

Through believing in Jesus we become the children of God.

Most of Jesus' contemporaries robbed themselves in the privilege of becoming true sons and daughters of God. *John 1:11*

Those who did recognize and respond to him affirmatively as Savior enjoyed the privilege of becoming God's children.

We become the children of God through faith.

The faith that makes a full commitment to Jesus Christ is that which brings us into a child's relationship to the Father God.

Baptism, church membership, and a life of spiritual growth and ministry grow out of and result from this basic relationship that is established through believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Through believing in Jesus we avoid the death that sin brings.

God spoke words of warning at the dawn of human history regarding the penalty of eating the forbidden fruit. "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." *Gen 2:16ff*

Adam and Eve did sin and die spiritually.

They cut themselves off from the life of God and from fellowship with him.

From that day until this, the human race has lived under the sentence of spiritual death until a new birth takes place that imparts the gift of eternal life.

Through believing in Jesus as the one whom God has sent to be our Savior, we regain the life of God that was lost because of sin.

Through believing in Jesus we receive the removal of the condemnation of sin.

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

The consequences that sin has brought on the human race break God's heart.

The bible is a record of God's redemptive activity in making provisions that make possible the removal of condemnation for sin and the restoration of life and the fellowship that was lost in the Garden of Eden.

John declares that God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn the world but that through

him it might be saved.

He also affirms that those who put faith in Jesus as Savior experience the removal of condemnation, and this means they receive the blessing of acceptance into God's family.

These great verses of Scripture declare that God is for us rather than against us.

God is far more eager to be gracious and forgiving than he is to be just and judgmental.

Many people have negative feelings about God, but when they analyze these feelings they often discover that they are only the results of their own guilty conscience.

God is more eager to accept us than he is to reject us.

Through Jesus Christ we can experience the joy of his acceptance.

Through believing in Jesus we are granted God's full self-disclosure.

John's gospel opens with the declaration that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God who came to earth to be God's language, speaking to us of his love, his nature, and his purpose for us.

The writer of the book of Hebrews declares that Jesus Christ is God's final revelation of himself to humankind.

In *John 1:51* Jesus makes an amazing claim in terms that we can understand today.

He claims to be the stairway by which God comes down to us and by which we can ascend to be with God.

To appropriately understand what Jesus was saying, we need to be familiar with Jacob's great dream at Bethel in which he saw a ladder set up on the earth with the top of it reaching to heaven.

He saw the angels of God ascending and descending, and the Lord standing above it.

The God of Abraham and of Isaac revealed himself to Jacob in the loneliness of that night experience.

God appeared to him with promises and encouragement.

Jacob recognized that experience as being "the house of God and the very gateway of heaven".

It is one thing to experience the presence of God in the starry skies above or in the beauty of nature around us.

It is another thing to come to know God personally through faith in and faithfulness to Jesus "The Christ".

We need to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

We need to believe in him because of who he is, because of what he accomplished, and because of what he can do in our lives today.

It is through believing in him as the Christ of God that we experience the peace of God.

We experience these great blessings of believing not because of human connections nor because of the accumulation of vast amounts of knowledge.

We receive these blessings not because of the money we might possess or the successes we might achieve.

We receive these great blessings through believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who came to be our Savior.

Through believing in Jesus we find the way to the Father.

Believe in him today for the good of your own heart and life and for the good of those around you.

And because He is the Truth and Life, there is no other life than through Jesus "The Christ" the Son of the Living God.