

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is the fifth day that two teachers explain the good news from the Bible. The good news in the Bible answers 5 questions of people: One. "How do we know that God exists?" Two. "Why is there so much suffering and death in the world?" Three. "What is the solution to the problem of suffering and death?" Four. "Which response does God require of people?" Five. "What may every Christian expect from the new life in Christ?" As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE KNOWS THE CHRISTIAN'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEW LIFE.

(S) AFTER you have received Jesus Christ into your heart and life, you may have very certain expectations about your POSITION, your PROGRESS and your FUTURE as a Christian. These 3 aspects of salvation in Jesus Christ will help you to understand God's plan for your life when you have become a Christian.

(T) **THE FIRST EXPECTATION. OUR POSITION IN CHRIST.**

The Bible teaches us Christians *what we already are in Christ*. Already now we have three things in Jesus Christ. We have a justified relationship, a sure relationship and a family relationship with God. These three things are called *our position in Christ*.

(S) First. Our position in Christ: We have a justified relationship with God!

One. What does it mean that we have been *justified*? Romans 5:1-2 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. *To justify* us is to declare us completely righteous in God's eyes. On the cross, Jesus Christ took the unrighteousness of everyone who believes in him onto himself. All our sins were nailed to his body onto the cross. Jesus Christ was pierced by nails for our iniquities. He was punished in our place for all our sins. God made his sinless Son to become the sin bearer of every believer in the world. God *declares* every believer in Jesus Christ 100% righteous and will always *regard and treat* the believers in Jesus Christ as 100% righteous! God has once for all forgiven all the sins of the believer. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ receives the 100% perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, an exchange takes place. Jesus Christ takes all our unrighteousness away onto himself and gives his perfect righteousness to us. As a righteous person we are forgiven and stand in the right relationship with God.

Two. What does it mean that we have been *reconciled*? According to Romans 5:9-10, *to reconcile* us to God is to change us from an enemy of God to a person loved by God. God no longer regards or treats us as his enemies, but as his friends. On the great and Last Judgement Day, we will no longer be condemned for our past sins! We are "saved from God's wrath!" This happens the very moment we believe in Jesus Christ!

(T) Second. Our position in Christ: We have a sure relationship with God!

Jesus gives us three great assurances! In John 5:24 he promises, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life". In John 10:27-28 he promises, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

When we have heard and believed the gospel or good news, then we possess a new life that will never end! We will not be condemned on the Last Judgement Day. Then we have already passed from our old position of "death and separation from God" to our new position of "life in Christ". And when we follow Jesus Christ and learn from him, then he promises that our new life will never end, that we will never go to the destruction of hell and that no one can snatch us out of his hand. The three assurances that Jesus Christ gives to Christians are: eternal life in God's sovereign presence, eternal righteousness in the Judgement Day and eternal safety from all enemies!

(S) Third. Our position in Christ: We have a family relationship with God!

What does it mean that we are *members of God's household*? Ephesians 1:5 says, "God predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ" Ephesians 2:18-19 says, "Through Christ we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." When we heard and believed the gospel, God adopted each of us as a member into his own family or household. God himself is now our *Father* in heaven. No matter how imperfect our earthly fathers might have been, in our new family, we have a perfect Father. He is perfect in his love, righteousness and power to help us. No matter how unhappy we might have been in our earthly families, in God's family, relationships are also determined by love, righteousness and care. Believers all over the world are now our *brothers and sisters*.

(T) Summary. A believer in Jesus Christ has a POSITION IN CHRIST: He has a justified relationship, a sure relationship and a family relationship with God!

(S) THE SECOND EXPECTATION. OUR PROGRESS IN CHRIST.

The Bible teaches us Christians *what we should become in Christ*. We should make progress and live the Christian life in the following three ways:

(T) First. Our progress in Christ: We should live a holy life in our body.

What should we do with the parts of our body? Romans 6:13,19 says, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ... Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness." Before we believed in Jesus Christ, we were slaves to sin. We offered the parts of our body to sin, impurity and wickedness. However, now that we believe in Jesus Christ, we should offer the parts of our body to God, to righteousness and to holiness. We should no longer follow the example or pattern of this world and of people who do not believe. We should be transformed by the renewing of our mind, know the will of God and do the will of God with our body. Our body is the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit. Therefore we should glorify God with how we live in the body! There are two things we should do very regularly. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, the words in the Bible teaches us the truth about God, man and how to live. It rebukes us if we sin and shows us how to correct our lives. It trains us how to live a righteous life and how to serve God practically. Therefore we should regularly read, study, meditate, memorise and apply the words of the Bible. According to Philippians 4:6, through prayer we tell God all our problems, needs and desires. God will answer all prayers that are according to his will and that are best for us. Prayer is God's way of keeping our hearts and minds in Christ. Therefore we should regularly pray alone and together with other Christians.

(S) Second. Our progress in Christ: We should live a life of service towards others.

What does it mean *to bear fruit*? In John 15:16 Jesus says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last." Before we believed in Jesus Christ, we lived for ourselves. However, after we have received Jesus Christ into our heart and life, God wants us to bear fruit in other people's lives. We serve God by helping other people to know Christ and to grow in Christ. *Lasting fruit* means *lasting influence* on other people's lives. When other people believe in Jesus Christ, they too will have eternal life! They will change, their families will change and the influence they have on other people will change. Christ gives us the most meaningful task in the world and at the same time, the most satisfying task. It is unselfish and it is influential! According to Colossians 3:16, one way in which we have influence in the lives of others, is by teaching them the words of God, teaching them the wisdom found in the Bible and by encouraging them to make the right choices and decisions in life. A very practical way is to meet once a week for singing and sharing, Bible Study and prayer. According to 1 John 3:16-18, another way in which we have influence in the lives of others, is by sharing some of our possessions with needy Christians elsewhere. Love is shown by our actions of sharing with the needy and caring for the helpless. Together with teaching and encouraging, sharing and caring becomes the ministry of Christians in the world. Therefore we must get involved in some kind of service for Christ.

(T) Third. Our progress in Christ: We should live a life of victory over spiritual enemies.

How should we relate to temptations? 1 Corinthians 10:13 teaches, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful: he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." One. Before we believed in Jesus Christ, we succumbed to many temptations. The attractions of the world and of the flesh, of money, power and fame were simply too strong to resist. As a result, many of us fell deeper and deeper into sin and bondage to evil things. However, after Jesus Christ has come to live in our hearts and lives, his Holy Spirit and his words help us to say "no" to temptations. God promised that he would not allow any temptation in our lives that would be too strong for us to resist. He also promised that there would always be a way of escape out of every temptation! Therefore, we should fight against temptations and gain the victory over temptations!

Two. Before we believed in Jesus Christ, we could not distinguish the truth from false teachings. However, now the Holy Spirit lives in us and guides us into all the truth. Therefore, according to 2 John 7-11, we should not welcome people with false teachings into our homes. Three. Before we believed in Jesus Christ, the kingdom of darkness dominated us. However, God has rescued us from this kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We have turned from the power of Satan to God. Satan and all his evil spirits still oppose and fight against believers in Christ. Although these evil spirits cannot possess Christians anymore, they can still trouble and hurt Christians. Therefore Ephesians 4:27 teaches, "Do not give the devil a foothold". We should avoid getting involved in any of Satan's practices, like idolatry and occultism. Ephesians 6:11 teaches us to resist Satan and struggle against him with God's weapons until the day that God destroys him and all his evil spirits. That will happen at the Second Coming of Christ to this earth. Then Satan and all his helpers will be thrown in the fire of hell.

(S) Summary. A believer in Jesus Christ should make *PROGRESS IN CHRIST*. He should live a holy life in his body! He should live a life of service to others and he should live a life of victory over spiritual enemies!

(T) THE THIRD EXPECTATION. OUR FUTURE IN CHRIST.

The Bible teaches us Christians *what we will become in Christ*. We have a wonderful future in Jesus Christ. We may look forward to the following three future events:

(S) First. Our future in Christ: We will receive a Christlike character.

What does it mean that “when he appears, we shall be like him”? 1 John 3:1-3 teaches, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ... We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” Already now we Christians are children of God and we are committed to live right, holy and in love. All the time we are growing as a Christian here on earth, we become more and more Christlike. We commit ourselves to live a righteous and fair life. We purify ourselves again and again from any kind of sin that enters our lives. We practise to love more and more like Christ loves. The final goal is to possess a complete Christlike character. As long as we Christians are still on earth, we will not yet reach that final goal. That final goal will only be reached when we meet Jesus Christ face to face in the future. When we see him as he is, then he will transform us to be like him. He does not transform us into his divine nature. But he will transform us into the likeness of his perfect character. Then we will be righteous as he is righteous. Then we will be holy as he is holy. And then we will love as he loves.

(T) Second. Our future in Christ: We will receive a Christlike body.

What kind of a resurrected body will we receive? Philippians 3:20-21 teaches, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” As long as we Christians are still on this earth, our bodies will experience the weakness, dishonour and perishable nature of this sinful world. We still bear the likeness of the earthly man, called Adam. We are still flesh and blood that waits for the complete transformation of our bodies. Christians still get sick and Christians still die. But Christians have a hopeful future! When Christ returns again, he will raise our bodies from the grave and transform our bodies to be like his glorious body! According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-54, our bodies will be spiritual, glorious and imperishable! When Christ returns to earth again, he will destroy death itself and death will never again have power over us!

(S) Third. Our future in Christ: We will receive a Christlike universe.

In what kind of a universe will we live in the future? Revelation 21:1-5 says, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things have passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” As long as Christians are still on earth, we know God and fellowship with God in a personal and spiritual way. But we still do not see God. We live by faith and not by sight! According to Romans 8:19-21, the earth on which we live is so to speak *groaning* and *frustrated*, because it is still in bondage to decay. The earth shares in the punishment of sin, and it produces thorns and thistles. The people of the earth do not take good care of the earth and it is polluted, deforested, abused and wasted.

However, when Christ returns to earth, he will do three mighty things. One. He will resurrect all the dead that ever lived on the earth. Two. He will judge all the people on the Last Judgement Day for how they lived. Only those who believed in Jesus Christ will be saved and inherit God’s kingdom in its final form! Three. He will burn this present earth and transform it into a new earth in which only righteousness will dwell. On this new earth, God himself will dwell visibly among the Christians. On the new earth there will be no more death, no more sickness, no more pain, no more persecution! On the new earth there will be no more suffering! On the new earth, God himself will make everything new!

(T) Summary. A believer in Jesus Christ will have a wonderful *FUTURE IN CHRIST*. He will receive a Christlike character, a Christlike body and a Christlike universe!

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Consider the true and sure expectations of every Christian. If you have received Jesus Christ in your heart and life, then find a group or church where you can grow as a Christian. Listen every day next week to “Discipleship Training on the air”. We will study the work of God through the law, through death and resurrection and through the Second Coming of Christ.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www.etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.