

# A CHOICE TO MAKE

In the last session we looked at what is involved in becoming a Christian.

- In light of what we've covered so far, how would you explain what is involved in becoming a Christian?
- What would be the implications for your life if you chose to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?

Jesus told these two short parables about becoming a Christian:

**Matthew 13:44-46** The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his joy, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

- What do you think is the main point Jesus is making here?

One Christian author elaborates on these parables like this:

*"Once we had no delight in God, and Christ was just a vague historical figure. What we enjoyed was food and friendships and productivity and investments and vacations and hobbies and games and reading and shopping and sex and sport and art and TV and travel ... but not God. He was an idea - even a good one - and a topic for discussion; but he was not a treasure of delight.*

*Then something miraculous happened. It was like the opening of the eyes of the blind during the golden dawn. First the stunned silence before the unspeakable beauty of holiness. Then a shock and a terror that we had actually loved the darkness. Then the settling stillness of joy that is at the soul's end. The quest is over. We would give anything if we might be granted to live in the presence of this glory forever and ever."*

**John Piper, Desiring God**

For some, recognising the wonder of God and his kingdom is a sudden thing. For others, it's a gradual process which takes time. Whether our realisation is sudden or gradual, the end is the same: God becomes the most important thing in our lives.

- Does anything that John Piper is saying resonate with you?
- What does God desire to be in our lives?
- What do you see as some of the benefits and costs of becoming a Christian? Does it seem worth it?

Jesus gives us this picture to help us understand what it means to open up to him.

**Revelation 3:20** Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will share a meal together as friends.

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE...

To a Jewish person, to share a meal is an invitation to deep friendship.

- What is the door that Jesus is talking about here? Why does he use this metaphor?
- What promise does Jesus give in these verses? How reliable do you think this promise is?

Just as in marriage, it's important to fully understand this commitment before you make it. However, if you've thought it through and want to receive God's forgiveness and new life, you can invite Jesus into your life by simply expressing these things to him. God's not as concerned with your words as he is with your attitude and that you mean it. You could say something like:

"God, I'm sorry for going my own way in the past. I choose to leave my old life of independence from you [take a moment to silently give over to him specific things you need to leave behind]. I accept the forgiveness that you've offered me through Jesus' death on the cross. Please come into my life and help me to become the person you want me to be."

- What do you think would be the implications of saying and meaning this kind of prayer?

If you understand what you would be doing and want to become a Christian this prayer can help you connect with God. God will forgive you and give you new life. Any genuine commitment to Christ requires us to "go public", so praying to become a Christian with another person is a great idea when possible.

Here are some possible options of where to go from here:

<p>I don't want to explore the Christian faith any further at this time.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to explore these issues in depth with the group.</p>	<p>I am already a Christian.</p> <p>Would you be interested in continuing to explore how to develop your friendship with Jesus?</p>	<p>I would like to become a Christian.</p> <p>When would you like to pray the prayer suggested above and connect with Jesus?</p>	<p>I am not yet ready to become a Christian but would like to discuss things further.</p> <p>Are there further questions or issues it would be helpful to work through together? What would make it possible for you to say "yes" to God?</p>
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If you have at some point in the past invited Jesus into your life or think you are ready to do so, here are just a few of God's promises to you:

**2 Corinthians 5:17** ... anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!  
**John 3:16** For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.  
**Colossians 2:13-14** ... God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.  
**Hebrews 13:5-6** ... God has said, "I will never leave you. I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

- How have you found exploring together the foundations of the Christian faith?

If you would like to explore further how you can grow in your relationship with Jesus, Agapé produces a series of studies called Living Online. They explore foundational principles for building a sure, deep and productive friendship with God. Thank you for being part of CONNECT.