

FIVE STEPS
Acts 16:25-34

Introduction:

1. On a mission trip to Africa I stayed in a hotel on the edge of the Great Rift Valley on the border of Kenya and Uganda.
2. Each day as we traveled to the village where we were preaching, we crossed the equator.
3. There was but one step that marked the difference between the two hemispheres.
4. If one were in the Northern Hemisphere, he remained there unless he took that one step which put him into the Southern Hemisphere.
5. In life, taking all the steps are required for moving from one state or condition to another.
 - a. In baseball one does not score if he stops on third base.
 - b. One is not married by walking down the aisle; he must say "I do."
 - c. One does not graduate from high school or college if he lacks one or more required courses.
6. One must also do all God requires in order to be saved.

Discussion:

- I. SALVATION IS BY GOD'S GRACE (Eph. 2:8-10).
 - A. God did for man what man could not do for himself (Rom. 5:6-8).
 - B. Most agree that one must do something to receive God's grace.
 1. Some teach God's grace is received at the point of faith.
 2. Others say one must believe and confess his faith.
 3. Some would also require repentance on the part of a sinner.
- II. THE BIBLE TEACHES THERE ARE FIVE SIMPLE STEPS ONE MUST TAKE IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.
 - A. One must first hear the Gospel of Christ.
 1. The Gospel is the good news that Christ has died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
 2. Unless one hears he cannot be saved (Rom. 10:13,14).

3. Without hearing there can be no faith (Rom. 10:17).
4. This is why it is essential that we take the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15).

B. One must believe the Gospel he has heard.

1. Faith in Christ is essential to salvation (Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6).
2. Jesus said: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who does not believe will not be condemned” (Mark 16:16).
3. The jailor in Philippi was told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:30,31).
4. The church in Corinth began as a result of Paul’s preaching: “Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).

C. One must repent of his sins.

1. Repentance is required (Lu. 13:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38).
2. Repentance is not simply being sorry you have sinned.
 - a. Judas was sorry he betrayed Jesus but he did not repent (Mt. 27:1-10).
 - b. Peter was sorry he denied Jesus; his sorrow led him to repentance (Mt. 26:69-75; Jn. 21:15-18).
 - c. Godly sorrow is not repentance, but leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).
3. Repentance is the hardest command of all.
4. Unless one has truly repented, he cannot be Scripturally baptized (Acts 2:38).

D. One must confess his faith in Christ as God’s Son (Mt. 10:32,33).

1. Peter made this confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mt. 16:13-19).
2. The Ethiopian eunuch made this confession (Acts 8:35-37).
3. Confession is a natural outcome of faith.

“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:8-10).

4. A preacher did not ask a man to confess Christ before baptism. N. B. Hardeman reminded him. The preacher said, "He made the confession by walking down the aisle to be baptized." Hardemen replied, "The Bible says, 'Confess with your mouth,' not with your feet."
- E. One must be baptized in order to be saved.
1. Many leave this out because they believe baptism has nothing to do with salvation.
 - a. They say, "We are saved by faith alone" but the Bible says "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jam. 2:24).
 - b. They say, "Be saved and afterward be baptized to enter a church," or "as an outward sign of an inward grace," but the Bible says "baptism now saves us" (1 Pet. 3:21).
 2. Many baptize infants, but those baptized in the Bible were old enough to hear the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, repent of sins, and confess faith in Christ (Acts 8:12).
 3. Many use sprinkling or pouring for baptism, but "baptize" means to "dip, plunge, submerge, overwhelm or immerse" (Rom. 6:4; Acts 8:38,39).
 4. Many do not understand the purpose of baptism:
 - a. Baptism is "into the name of the Father, Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19).
 - b. Baptism is "into the body of Christ" which is His church (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22,23; Acts 2:41,47).
 - c. Baptism is "into Christ" where all spiritual blessings are to be found (Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26,27).

Conclusion:

1. One is not saved if he has not taken all the steps God requires and in the order God requires them.
2. The accounts of conversion in Acts clearly show the steps of salvation (Acts 2:36-47; 8:12, 35-39; 9:1-19; 22:15,16; 16:14,15; 16:25-34; 18:8; 19:1-7).
3. Not every step is mentioned in every account but each step is implied.
4. Have you heard the Gospel, believed in Jesus Christ, repented of your sins, confessed Christ before men and been buried with Him in baptism for the remission of your sins?

