

Five Evidences of Genuine Conversion

by Reuben Walter

This sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine conversion in Christianity, highlighting five key evidences to determine if one is truly converted.

Duration: 46:10

Scripture: Psalm 25:5, Psalm 143:10, Luke 12:8, John 6:68, Acts 4:33, Romans 1:16, Hebrews 10:25

Topics: "Genuine Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses five evidences of genuine conversion. He emphasizes that Christians should not skip over the first four evidences and focus only on the desire to tell others about Christ. The first evidence is not being ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is the power of God unto salvation. The second evidence is the transformation of lives, which is lacking in Christianity today. The preacher urges believers to examine themselves and ensure that they truly know Christ and are known by Him.

Transcript

To speak of the things that pertain to our salvation, to challenge ourselves, examine ourselves, that His Word may have free course in our individual lives, so that we can be productive vessels in our public life, and bring glory to His Name, and seek to know His will, not only so, but to be found centered in His will. And for a Christian, that is always a challenge. That is always a pressing thing, that we be found in the center of His will.

Because, as we were just saying in this psalm, there's many verses there that challenges us. We call ourselves a Christian, and it lists all those points that need to go along with that proclamation. All those points that need to be integral to what we confess openly, and publicly.

And it's no secret, you know, many of us, most of us, know that Christianity as a whole is not in a very good condition. Christianity as a whole is being splintered into more and more little, ineffective pieces. And the ultimate one who's suffering is our Lord.

There's rifts in families, in Christianity, in churches. There's a lot of gossiping going on amongst Christianity, a lot of brother bashing and sister smashing. And we can't help but wonder, what's going on? Why are God's people not living more effective lives? Many are choked by the cares of this life, money, lusts of other things enter in.

And except for scattered remnant here and there, we don't see much of it anymore. Praise God, he does have a people, and he will have a people. A people that are going to seek him from his whole heart.

Brothers and sisters, we want to be amongst them. We want to be called those people. And of course, when you ponder all these things, you can't help but wonder, what is it with Christianity? What generally is such a holdup? Why doesn't Christ have this power that he said he has? Why doesn't his kingdom, why is the Church of Christ so weak? And I've been pondering this one for several weeks, and I've been meditating on it and studying on it.

And one of the major, major points with Christianity that needs to be addressed and talked about is the beginning of the Christian life. You know, we often talk here of the deeper Christian life. We often have many of our messages here are concerning those that are mature in the faith, those that are walking with God, to press on, to press on, to press on.

And you know, we're often kind of overlooking the ABCs, kind of overlooking some of the initial things that pertain to Christianity, the ABCs. And I've come to the conclusion that genuine Christianity starts with a genuine conversion. Genuine Christianity needs to have a genuine beginning.

And we can't stick our heads in the sand. We have to be open, truthful, loving. And we can't be effective ministers of the gospel if we do not speak all of God's Word.

God's Word needs to be taken as a whole. We can't just, we can't pick out the parts we like and exclude those we don't. We need to realize that effective Christianity comes through an effective ministering of the gospel, an effective, and that gospel having a genuine effect on an individual.

And our message this morning is called Five Evidences of Genuine Conversion. Five Evidences of Genuine Conversion. Some of the brothers already know about, little about it.

I've been studying on it. And before we turn to the Word this morning, I'd like to have a word of prayer. Dear God, we come before you this morning.

We are humbled at your great love to us. But Lord, we also have questioning minds. And we're seeking, Lord, what your answers are to many of life's dilemmas and many of the reasons why your church is not as effective as it should be.

Why Christianity has not made an impact as it should have, especially in this land. Dear God, we pray that you open up your Word to us and help us realize the calling to which you've called us, and how that walk, and how that life of Christ that we have claimed is to affect the world around us. Dear Father, we pray for your Spirit's anointing.

We pray that our words may come forth as your words. And we trust, Lord, that you will supply in Jesus' name. Amen.

Five Evidences of Genuine Conversion. Let's begin by opening our Bibles to Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6, verses 43 to 45. And it also pertains a little bit to what we actually talked about last night at our prayer meeting.

Here Jesus says some profoundly simple words, to the point, and we can't wiggle our way around them, or out of them, or explain them away. They are so to the point that they actually, it's a fearful thing to

consider. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure in his heart bringeth forth that which is good.

And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Brothers and sisters, we're not pointing to anyone in particular, nor neither we're just pointing to the young people that haven't been accepted Christ yet.

We are, this message is for each of us to do a personal examination, where we stand with Christ today. This word is as straightforward and as simple as the Lord has allowed me to do it. I don't pretend to be a super-apostle, or someone who knows everything, but I do know, as I've been a Christian for many years, that Christianity has evidence and fruit.

And we do know from our experiences, and from our own testimony in our own lives, we can do a check to see whether we are really truly in him. Not only born of him, but also found of him on a day-to-day basis. Christianity, as Jesus said here, he puts it very simple.

He puts, he says, tree is known by its fruits. Evidence. Jesus is talking about evidence.

We can take a tree, look at its fruits. We can also use a more familiar illustration, down to earth. We can look at something that we've made, or that man has made, such as a car, or a truck, or a computer.

We may see a vehicle. We may walk around it. We may kick the tires, look at its paint job, see all the appearance.

It's a genuine car, but you don't know if it's a genuine car till you actually take it for a test run. You don't know if that car has a motor in it, or if its motor is busted, or if there's something wrong with the powertrain, or some other computer, as it goes these days, it just takes a little computer glitch, and the car goes down. We don't know until we actually put it to the test, if a car is really a car.

We cannot look at the appearance. The same with a Christian. We don't know, by someone's testimony, that they're a Christian.

We don't know, just by some appearances, a Christian needs to be put to the test run, to prove to himself and to others, if we really are in him. If we're taking our fruit, our juice, our sap, from the vine of Jesus Christ. And as we said yesterday at our prayer meeting, that tree can't help but bear fruit, if he's attached to the vine.

That tree can't help but produce good fruit for others, because it's getting its life from the source. And that's the way it is with us, brothers and sisters. We can't help but bear fruit, if we are truly in the vine.

So evidently all we're going to need to judge here today, is whether this is the truth. And if it is, nothing else matters. We were not going to need to judge if somebody is pointing fingers at me, or whatever.

We don't need to judge any of that. All we need to know is, is this really God's Word? Is this what it's saying? Then nothing else matters. Christianity, as we have heard much about it, seen much, we certainly know, one of the evidence, the evidences for genuine conversions are not tongues, neither is it baptism, neither is it joining a church, neither is it repentance.

That you know repentance and godly sorrow for sin precedes all of that, precedes conversion. I don't mean tongues and baptizing her. Repentance and godly sorrow for sin is not evidence of conversion.

That has to precede genuine conversion. And in pondering this, of course, a person goes back into his own life and sees, looks back and sees how it was with myself. And looking back, as I studied these points, or searched them up in scripture, looking back, and I'm not saying this to boast or to anything, it's just a personal testimony, I found that on each one of those points that we'll discuss today, it was real for me.

Each one of them. It was real at that time. So real.

Things as you grow in Christianity fade and get, you know, we go up and down, we go to hills and valleys, we sometimes backslide, but looking back, we know it was true. I know for myself. Even though we didn't live a victorious life, we're ignorant of many things yet, but them evidences were there.

And I'm just speaking this so to cause each one of us to truly search our hearts and see where we stand in the faith. Evidence number one is a self-check. Evidence number one for a genuine conversion, what happens afterwards, is a deep love for God's Word.

Anyone who has been born of the Spirit of the Living God is like a baby hungry for its mother's milk. Anybody born truly of the Spirit has this Word as his daily food and he absolutely absorbs and lavishes that food. This is a self-check.

Nobody else can check that for us. This is something that each one of us has to ask ourselves. This is an evidence.

In 1st Peter 2.2, he says it clearly. 1st Peter 2.2, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, and a love for His Word is not something we need to force ourselves to do. Just like a baby comes to realize, well he doesn't realize it, but just instinctively that its mother's milk is its lifeline.

And with it, it gets the nourishment to fight all diseases. With it, it gets the nourishment and antibodies to withstand infections. They've proven it over and over in tests that a baby that starts out on its pure mother's milk has a far better immune system, has a far greater chance at surviving the onslaughts of life through, physically speaking only, health-wise, because it has nourished from its mother's milk.

And that is one, number one evidence that we have truly been born of God. And we say this to the young people, as well as to their brothers and sisters. Let us check ourselves.

Is this Word our daily food? What would we rather do in our spare time? I don't mean we go and read God's Word all day. We only eat 15-20 minutes at a meal time. The rest of the time, our body absorbs and digests the food, as it is so it is with a Christian.

You may only read for 10 minutes, but then you meditate and pray and ask God to continue. But I believe for a newborn Christian, as it was with myself, it was the whole book, the New Testament, over and over and over, wanting to know what God says to me. Wanting to know what his heart is.

Wanting to understand what I didn't understand. And we still don't understand it today. Understand everything at least.

And as a child of God, as a genuine child of God, you just know this is your lifeline. You just know this is going to protect me from many an infection, many disease, many, you know, all kinds of bugs affect us these days, physically speaking, through life. And when we have a true ground and foundation in that Word, we are well protected.

Then we are well on our way. If we as children of God, I want to add this in here as well, as newborn babes only look at, search for, let's say, other messages. If that's all our own nourishment, we're going to get sidetracked.

You need to go to the source. Because there has been no preacher, there has been no evangelist that walked the face of this earth who was perfectly balanced in all things. There hasn't been one walked yet.

And so the onus is on the individual. Turn to the Word yourself. And that's not supposed to be something we force.

This is a result of a genuine new birth experience. Evidence number two, we can find it in 1st John 3, 14. This one is not for yourself.

This one is for yourself too and those around us. 1st John chapter 3, 14. Evidence number two, a love for the people of God.

Verse 14, we know, John said here, that we have passed from death unto life because we love the Brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1st John 4, 7, same page.

Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God. Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He says, John says, he knows God and God knows him.

This one is a test and as a Christian many years I have seen far and wide with Christians, especially often with young Christians. I've had lots to do with people here and abroad, especially from our own group. And one thing that has always struck me and I've always found incredulous is that Christians suddenly become enlightened.

Someone just suddenly turns to the Lord and says he's turned to the Lord and become a child of God, suddenly looks down on other people. Suddenly there is this snob, even their parents or their elders or even those who may not have as much enlightenment. I've got a big question mark when someone who's truly met Jesus Christ does that.

The exact opposite should happen if we have been truly converted to Jesus Christ. If it's genuine, what happens? We suddenly feel a love for people just like Christ loved us and gave himself for us. John simply says here, he abides in death.

And in verse 4 he says, this is how we know that we love God. If in our hearts some kind of revelation or opening up of scripture may be full and true that God did reveal something to us and not to another person. If a revelation or some kind of whatever relationship causes us to distance, be churlish, snob at others, we need to check if the revelation actually came from Jesus Christ.

Maybe it came from the enemy. It says in Hebrews 10, he says, those that are seeking God, they don't neglect to often meet with each other, talk with each other, to challenge each other and lift each other up and urge each other on to a higher, to a deeper walk, to the deeper life with Jesus Christ. And we as God's

people, and I say that as well with a loving heart, we need to realize and check ourselves.

Has Jesus Christ produced this in me or hasn't he? If he hasn't, I don't mean to be rude, we need to go back to the cross. We need to go back to the beginning and ask, Lord, what happened? Was this real that happened to me? If not, then deal with it today. Deal with my heart today, that I may love as you have loved me.

Evidence number three. Evidence number three is the writing, not what I mean by writing, not writing with a pen, the writing of wrongs. The making right of past wrongs.

You know, the coming out, especially from the more conservative Anabaptist religious order, the coming out of one ditch where you had to, where he was confessing all your sins and whatever you did and thinking that's going to clear you, has caused many a Christian to jump right out of that ditch and go into the other ones where he confesses nothing. And that's not according to Christ's teaching. Where he does not bring out matters that can be between us and God, that are personal, are settled by the individual, with us and God.

But matters that involve another human being, whether it's a friend or an enemy, need to be righted before any Christian can go on in his Christian life. It involves meeting up and facing up to what we have done in the past, where other people were concerned. In the story of Luke 19 verse 8, Jesus went home to Zacchaeus' house.

And Zacchaeus, there's no question in my mind that the Holy Spirit had been working in Zacchaeus' heart for a while already, because the extent to which he went to see Jesus is the evidence. He knew he was who he was. And Jesus came into his house and he just said, Lord behold, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have ever cheated someone, I restore him fourfold.

In other words, if I have ever hurt someone, if I know if the other person, if I did something, a deliberate act to hurt or harm another person, I need to make it right. That is the evidence because God has done so much for me. And I'm saying this now as after conversion, after repentance and turning to Christ.

This will the Holy Spirit lay on our hearts and convict us of to make that part right. The prodigal son, when he turned back to his father, he said, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. He came back to his father.

He didn't just say against heaven. All our sins are against God. Every single one of them.

But some of our sins are also against human beings. And if they're against human beings, if they're against another person, they are also against God. And those are the ones that I'm talking about.

We need to forgive others and also to ask for forgiveness from others. Scriptures tell us that evidence of this, you know, this man that was forgiven those 10,000 talents, he had no concept of what happened to him. That's why he went out and couldn't forgive his brother a few dollars.

He had no concept of what happened to him. He had no conversion. It certainly wasn't genuine.

And that's why he lost. Everything was put to the tormentors. And from my own life and my own experience, I know that's a big reason for a defeated prayer life.

Because when we come before the throne of God, Jesus said in Matthew 7, I think it's where we come before him to pray. And that remembers that something is wrong with someone else. The prayer doesn't descend through the roof.

It needs to ascend to the throne of glory and to the throne of grace. And we realize that right away and we know that something needs to be done about it. We cannot truly access God and God cannot truly access us if in our hearts there is this blockage concerning someone else.

And it's not only just for the sake of confession, confessing a sin. It's for the testimony of Jesus. You may walk up to an unbeliever that you hurt and he will be shocked that you actually come back to him and ask for forgiveness.

And that might bring him to Jesus. That might open up his heart or her heart to receive the news of the gospel. And if we need to go to them, how much more certainly do we need to do it with each other or with the family of God? Reconciliation with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ also means reconciliation with those who belong to him.

It means being restored into fellowship with those which we were not in fellowship with. And going back to that prodigal son, when he in his heart recognized, here's what I've done. When he in his heart recognized, when he came to the end of his ropes, he realized that the extent of what he had done, while he was walking away, while he was in that state of self-life, he had no concept of how much his father was hurting because of what he was doing.

It was only after he hit the brick wall, came to his senses, where the words started sinking in, where the truths that maybe his father had taught him for many years started to sink in. And I say this to all of us, brothers and sisters. Some of us may not have as much revelation as others.

Some of us may not even want to see further revelation, at least for a time. That doesn't mean that we, as God's children, are to look down on him or are to esteem him any less. The reality of what Christ has done to me should be the fruit of the driving force to love the children of God regardless of their state.

Evidence number four. The word discipleship means a teachable, someone who is being taught. And so the evidence of a genuine conversion is a teachable spirit that desires to do what is right.

A teachable spirit that desires to do what is right. When Jesus left his disciples in John 16, 12, he said, I've got so much yet to teach you, you can't even bear it now. That's in John 16, 12.

And now little children abide in him when he shall appear. We have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

See, there's that strong desire to learn. There's that strong desire to know more about the will of God. There's that strong desire to, most likely, most cases, to look to those who have gone before us.

Maybe they have some experience. Even though some of us from the older school have not fully entered into some of the things of the Christian life, but I'll tell you one thing, time brings experience. An experienced Christian has a wealth of knowledge and wisdom under his belt.

And their experience can offer many, many securities for a new Christian, for someone who's starting out in his journey, for someone who's struggling with certain concepts. The disciples said also to Jesus, Lord, teach us to pray. Matthew 5, Jesus said at the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount, he said, Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

That is something that goes right along with it. Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Psalm 25, David said, Psalm 25, verse 5, he said, Teach me thy ways, O Lord, that I may know how to walk in them.

Psalm 43, verse 10 is a beautiful one. I'll read it. Psalm 143, Psalm 143, verse 10, Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.

Thy spirit is good. Lead me into the land of uprightness. Do you notice the difference when Jesus walked with his disciples and the Jews? There was many walking with him.

Those that were secure in their own righteousness or self-righteous, they were always looking for ways to catch Jesus in his words, or to find something wrong with him, or to find some false teaching coming out of his mouth, and they were also always looking for ways to accuse him. But his disciples, Peter, when everybody was offended, Jesus said, Will you also go? Peter said, Lord, where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Where shall we turn? I realize that I am nothing.

I realize that I still have a lot to learn. Teach me thy ways. This is a very strong evidence of a true, genuine child of God.

And so we ask ourselves, is this a reality for me? Is this really, has this really happened to me? Or am I still bent on my own ways? On my own thinking? Arguing my ways? Thinking I know everything? Thinking I have all the answers? Paul said, if we have that attitude, we don't even know what we should know yet. Especially young Christians, young believers. Those of you wanting, seeking to even enter into a covenant with God.

Is it a reality? Are we truly in that place? Is Jesus Lord? Do I love his word? Do I love the brethren? Do I love the people of God? Do I desire to make things right that I have done wrong? Am I teachable? And evidence number five. Most Christians point this one out and leave out all the others. But I put it in the end on purpose.

And it is a desire to tell others about Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is also an evidence. But we can't skip over the first four.

We can't skip over them and jump to this one. Desiring to tell others about what Christ has done for us. Jesus said in Luke chapter 12, verse 8. I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God.

But he that denies me shall be denied before the angels of God. When Christ truly is our life, we are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul said, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. Unto the Jew first and to the Gentile. No one is left out.

Conversion is an empowerment by the supernatural work of Jesus Christ in a vessel. It's the engine and the powertrain in a vehicle. It's the fruit on a tree that makes it work, that makes it go.

We hear a lot about Christians going and spreading the good news. It's been going on for centuries. We hear a lot about Christians who desire to start a mission work and go out in the mission field.

But we also see far and wide how ineffective that mission field has been. I'm not hiding my head in the sand. I know that work is going on all over the world.

A lot of people doing it and praise God for everyone who's doing it. I'm not trying to judge anybody. Praise God for every person who's doing it.

But what is lacking in Christianity is not the preaching of the good news. It is the evidence of transformed lives. That's what's missing in Christianity.

That's why Christianity doesn't have an effect on this society that we're living in today. Brothers and sisters, that's our self-check. Let's check ourselves.

Are we truly in Him or are we just thinking we're in Him? Knowing Christ means Christ knows us. That's the true knowledge of God. He intimately knows us.

And these points are what determine whether we are the city on a hill. These are the points that determine whether our light shines into this world. Yes, the desire to tell others about Jesus.

In Acts 4.33, you could see that the disciples after they had this true anointing. Acts chapter 4, verse 33. Powerful testimony there.

I'm challenged every time I read it here. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

Where does that power come from? We read it last night. It comes from abiding in the vine. It comes from being truly planted in the vine.

We can't go up to a person for four or five or six years and keep seeing no fruit on there. And keep saying, you're a Christian, you're a Christian, nice Christian, good man. If the fruit isn't growing, we have to say some hard words.

Come to the cross. Maybe you're living, maybe we've deluded ourselves. If there's a hate for God's people.

If there's a dislike for the things of God. If there's an aversion to His word. If the minds are mostly on worldly things and the things of the world.

Come back to the cross. Somewhere, somehow, someday, we've missed the mark. So let's take this word as the evidence that God is truly in us.

And that we are truly in Him. We all have intelligence. We can reason, we can think.

And we know a car and a combine and a computer. How good it is by how good it functions and how well it performs. That's us, brothers and sisters.

We can easily tell. And we can also tell in the garden which plants are to scrub and which plants aren't. And Jesus' words that we spoke at the beginning here, By their fruits you know the tree.

Let us focus on that.

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