

Elementary Truths of Christianity – Laying on of Hands

Written and typed: 2/26/24

- We must learn the basics of Christianity before we can say that we are not infants
 - Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3
 - In our first lesson, we learned that the basics all revolve around Christ
 - Christ is the core
 - Christ is the perfect sacrificial lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7)
 - He was sacrificed for our sins (Isaiah 53:5)
 - It sure wasn't his sins that led Him to the cross – He didn't have any (Hebrews 4:15)
 - So it just makes sense that all of these things revolve around Christ
 - In our second lesson, we discussed repentance
 - How one must turn away from the things of this world and devote himself/herself to Christ (Romans 12:1)
 - As Peter did after he denied that he knew Christ in Luke 22
 - Our third lesson – we discussed the fact that we need to have faith in God
 - Just as Noah did
 - How was Noah saved from the floodwaters? He built an ark (Genesis 6)
 - Why did he build an ark? Because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8)
 - He had faith in God – he believed that if he followed God's instructions concerning the building of the ark, God would spare him from the flood waters
 - But he didn't stop there – he acted upon that faith (Genesis 6:22)
 - Our 4th lesson, our most recent lesson – we discussed baptism
 - Noah acted upon the faith that he had in God
 - If he'd have stopped at his faith in God and not built the ark, he and his family would have perished with the rest of the world
 - Why? Because he didn't do what God told him to do
 - 1 Peter 3:20-21 tells us that it was actually the water that saved Noah and his family – you may say what? The ark saved Noah
 - The water wiped out all the sin in the world – Noah and his family were saved from all the filth that was in the world by the water because he did what God told him and built an ark
 - God tells us that we need to be baptized – and it's the waters of baptism that washes away all of our sins (1 Peter 3:20-21)
 - Nothing special about the water itself – what makes it special is because God told us to do it
- This brings us to our 5th lesson – the laying on of hands
 - Consider what time this was written – sometime between Christ's death and 70AD

- We'll read the specifics shortly, but we have numerous examples of the apostles laying hands on individuals to receive the Holy Spirit and to receive the gift of miraculous signs
- This must be the laying on of hands that the Hebrews writer is referring to, but let's use this as an opportunity to tell you a little bit about God's hands first
- God's hands are powerful
 - **Exodus 15:6-12** – the enemy here being the Egyptians of course. God's hand shattered them
 - Egypt was a powerful nation at this time
 - But they were absolutely no match for the mighty hand of God
 - God wreaked havoc on the Egyptians in the form of the plagues and then he made the walls of the Red Sea collapse on the Egyptian army
 - God was on Israel's side here – and Egypt couldn't do a thing about it when God wanted His people to leave Israel
 - **Exodus 32:11** – again, we read that it was God's mighty hand that brought Israel out of Egypt
 - A fact that we can also read of in Exodus 13:9-16 (we won't read it)
- God uses His mighty hand to protect His people
 - **Exodus 33:22** – God tells Moses that when His glory passes him by on Mount Sinai, He will put Moses in a cleft in the rock and His hand will provide protection
 - Because Exodus 33:20 states that no one can see God's face and live
 - You ever wonder why we can't see God while on earth? 1 – if we physically saw Him in this earthly body, we would not live. But 2 – if even a portion of God's glory passed us as Moses experienced, we would have no choice but to fall and worship at the feet of God
 - Just as Moses did (Exodus 34:8)
 - I assure you that when you face God at judgment – you will either be happy that you served Him while on earth, or you will realize what a grave mistake you have made
 - Just the sight of the Lord is going to tell you that
 - Psalm 18:35 – God's hand sustains
 - Psalm 20:6 – God's hand saves
 - It is 100% because of God's saving power that we can be saved
 - Because even when we are completely obedient to the word of the Lord, we are still unworthy servants in need of God's grace (Luke 17:10)
 - In Matthew 14, it was the Lord's hands who caught Peter when he was walking on the water and he began to doubt
 - Protecting him from falling into the water
 - John 10:28-29 – nobody once in the hands of the Lord can be snatched out
- God's hands also bring wrath
 - We discussed how it was God's hand that delivered Israel from Egypt
 - But we also read that not only was God's hand for Israel, but it was against Egypt

- Exodus 7:4-5 – God’s hand was clearly against Egypt
 - And as we just discussed – there wasn’t a thing they could do about it once the Lord was against them
 - Exodus 9:3-15, Isaiah 31:3 also discuss how God’s hand was against Egypt
- God’s hand was also against other nations
 - Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:6-9)
 - Philistines (1 Samuel 6:3-9)
 - Generally speaking, God’s hand is against all those who are rebellious (1 Samuel 12:15)
 - Even Israel when they were rebellious (Judges 2:15, Lamentations 2:3-8)
- God’s hands can bring death (Exodus 16:3)
- And it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God if you are unprepared to meet Him (Hebrews 10:31)
- God’s hands can also bring great blessings
 - Ezra 7:6-10 – God’s hand was with Ezra as he returned to Jerusalem following the Babylonian Captivity
 - Why? Vs 10 – because Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*
 - Study and observe God’s word and you will be approved of God
 - We also read that God’s hand of blessing was upon Nehemiah and his efforts to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall following the return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity (Nehemiah 2:18)
 - God’s hand was also with the men in Antioch (Acts 11:21)
 - This is the quality of the hands of God that you want to fall into according to 1 Chronicles 21:13 – not His hand of wrath (Hebrews 10:31)
- Let’s shift gears and talk about miracles for a little bit
- Jesus obviously performed miracles while on earth and sometimes He used His hands in the process
 - Matthew 9:18-26
 - This ruler was a ruler of the synagogue named Jairus (Mark 5 and Luke 8)
 - His daughter had just died
 - And he knows that Jesus could raise her
 - So he approaches Christ and He goes with him
 - And a large crowd of people follow – Luke 8 says that the crowd almost crushed Him
 - Amongst this crowd was a woman – she had the faith to know that all she had to do was touch the cloak of Jesus and she’d be healed

- Sure enough, she was – interesting, both the Mark and Luke accounts say that Jesus could feel the power coming out of Him to heal this woman
 - She had the faith that forced her to take action to reach out and touch the cloak of Jesus and she was healed as a result
 - Jesus makes it to Jairus’ house and took the girl by the hand and raised her from the dead
 - Here, we can read of 2 people being healed at the hands of Jesus
 - We read of Jesus using His hands to heal a leper in Matthew 8:1-4
 - Matthew 8:14-15 – He healed Peter’s mother-in-law when she had a fever
 - Continuing in Matthew 8, we read in vs 16 that he healed the sick with His words, so He certainly didn’t need to use His hands, that’s just the method He chose in some instances
 - We read other instances of Jesus using His hands to heal in Mark 8:22-26, Luke 4:40, and Luke 13:13
 - **Mark 16:15-18**
 - Jesus says the following signs will accompany those who believe: they will drive out demons, speak in new tongues, pick up snakes and not effected by poison, and they will place their hands on the sick and heal them
 - 1 Corinthians 13 teaches us that miracles like this no longer exist today, so we shouldn’t take that to mean that you and I will have these abilities, but at the time – Jesus was saying that those who followed Him would have these abilities
 - We see the healing portion of this specifically play out in Acts 3:7 when Peter heals the crippled man in the name of Jesus of Nazareth (vs 6)
 - Acts 4:30 further proves that these were miracles done by God through the name of Jesus
 - So we can see that hands were used to heal in many instances
- But this isn’t the only reason that hands were laid on others
 - **Acts 8:9-25**
 - Here we read that the laying on of the apostles’ hands was for the receiving of the Holy Spirit (vs 17 & 18)
 - Philip was amongst the group in Acts 6:6 who received the laying on of hands from the apostles
 - So Philip was able to perform the miraculous signs that accompanied and confirmed the message of the gospel to the people of a city in Samaria (remember they did not have the completed NT at this time, so the miracles are what was used to confirm the message)
 - But when they believed and were baptized, Philip was unable to lay his hands on the people and have them receive the Holy Spirit
 - So Peter and John had to make the trip from Jerusalem and do that
 - A gift that Simon the Sorcerer wanted to buy and was rebuked for
 - But you can see that Philip was the recipient of the laying on of hands, he was able to perform the miraculous signs, but he could not give that gift to others

via the laying on of his hands – that’s why the apostles came to Samaria in this instance

- Similarly, we can read in Acts 19:6 that Paul laid his hands on baptized believers – they then received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and prophesied
 - Also, 2 Timothy 1:6 tells us that Paul laid hands on Timothy and he received the gift of God that way
 - So we can see here that the apostles were laying hands on baptized believers here for them to receive the Holy Spirit
 - We can even go back to the OT and see that Moses did the same thing to Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9)
- So we can see that hands were laid on others to receive the Holy Spirit and the ability to perform miraculous signs so that the baptized believer would have proof of the message he could then go and teach to others
- We touched on this briefly a minute ago, but let’s go to 1 Corinthians 13:8-12
 - Love does not fail
 - But prophecies will cease, tongues will be stilled, miraculous knowledge will pass away. Why?
 - Because when the perfect comes, the imperfect will disappear (vs 10)
 - What is the perfect and imperfect here?
 - James 1:25 – *“But the man who looks intently into the **perfect law that gives freedom**, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.”*
 - Psalm 19:7 – *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;”*
 - The perfect described in 1 Corinthians 13 is the completed word of God which we have today
 - 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 is telling us that when the word of God is completed as it is today, the imperfect (the time when miracles were needed) will cease
 - Miracles are no longer needed, therefore we don’t have them today
 - John 3:2 (Nicodemus to Jesus) – *“...For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”*
 - The only purpose of the miracles were to confirm the gospel of Christ that was being taught at this time – we see this in John 3 and we see this in the Acts 8 example of Philip in Samaria
 - They didn’t have the completed NT – they needed the miracles. We do not today
- Though Hebrews 6:2 lists the laying on of hands as an elementary truth of Christianity, it really isn’t in existence today
 - It is clearly important that we have a thorough understanding of this topic though – else God wouldn’t have deemed it necessary for the Hebrew writer to record this for us
 - It was certainly much more real then, but we must simply have a good understanding of it today
- Still speaking of hands, we have numerous Scriptures telling us where Jesus is today

- Matthew 22:44, Mark 14:62, Mark 16:19, Acts 5:31, Acts 7:55-56, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 8:1, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 12:2, and 1 Peter 3:22 all tell us that Jesus is at the right hand of God
- Matthew 25:31-46 describe how Jesus is going to separate the sheep from the goats
 - Sheep will be placed on His right
 - Goats on His left
 - Which side will He put you on?
- For those who acknowledge Christ while on this earth, Christ will acknowledge before our Father in heaven. For those who do not acknowledge Christ while on earth, neither will He acknowledge you before our Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33)
- If you haven't done so, you need to
- The plan of salvation defined by the Bible is simple
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
 - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
 - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
 - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
 - **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
 - Before you can be raised with Christ, you must die – I'm not speaking in a physical sense, but a spiritual sense
 - Your old self full of sin is crucified with Christ in the form of baptism according to Romans 6:4
 - Romans 6:4 also states that when we rise out of the waters of baptism, we arise into newness of life just as Christ was raised from the dead
 - **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*