

Deceived?

By Torben Søndergaard:

"I wish that this message will uncover a deceive in our world. A deceive that was brought to the world by religious traditions of God's word and make a false picture of who God is and what it will say to be a Christian. The truth is no church membership, baptism, confirmation, speaking in tongues will save you if you still live in disobedience and sin."

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By Torben Søndergaard:

(Believing wholeheartedly that something is true, when it's not = beguiled, fooled, etc.)

I've decided to make this teaching about what characterizes a true Christian, and also what the Christian life is all about. I've chosen to do that because so many Danes call themselves Christians, when in fact they're deceived. They call themselves Christians because their idea of being a Christian is false, and this is because we live in a highly religious society. We are a nation where true Christianity has been replaced by religiosity. We live in a country where so many pastors don't even know God. What they know is the "Christian" religion, and not the person of Christ. Therefore, when they choose to preach Sunday after Sunday, or when they express themselves in the media on behalf of Christianity, they usually present a distorted idea of what true Christianity is all about. They are blind leading the blind, as Jesus himself puts it.

Matthew 15:14

Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

A Christian?

Let me start by saying that if you read this lecture to find out whether you're a Christian or not because you're in doubt - then you're NOT a Christian! If you have indeed received the forgiveness of Jesus and have been "born again", as the Bible says (in other words, that you've become a new creation and have been baptized in the Holy Spirit), then something happens inside of you. Then you cannot doubt any longer because the Holy Spirit opens our eyes so that we can know God, and he confirms to us that we are indeed God's children.

Romans 8:15-16

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

When you're born again, which means that you repent from your sins and receive forgiveness from Jesus, you really become a new creation, which helps you to see things in a totally different way. You start to realize who God is and to see the Kingdom of God, like it says in the Bible.

John 3:3

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Therefore, becoming a Christian doesn't just happen by calling yourself one, or by being a member of a religion or church, but through becoming a new creation. It isn't just something superficial, where you change your behaviour on the surface, but you become a new creation on the inside. You become a different person and start a whole new life, which will automatically be noticed on the outside as well.

2. Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

If you've become a new creation, you know it! I'm not in doubt whether I'm married or not because I got married on the 19th of October, 1996. I remember it clearly, and I still know that I'm married to my wife. We

live together, eat together, sleep together, and 'even have three children together. In the same way I'm not in doubt whether I'm a Christian or not because I live with God and get to know him better day by day, just like I do it with my wife. I have fellowship with him, talk to him, and he talks to me etc.

Let me say it again - if you doubt whether you're a Christian or not, whether you know God and live with him - then you're probably not a Christian.

If somebody asked you whether you're a Christian or believe in Jesus and God, and you would wonder for a while or reply "I think so, or it depends", then the answer is NO. NO, you're not a new creation/Christian. However, you can become one today, and afterwards you can be totally sure.

Many believe, but are deceived

Let's move on to those who really think they are Christians and who won't hesitate to say "yes", but if you talk to them a little bit, it turns out that they have also got a totally wrong image of who God is, what it means to be a Christian and to live with God.

Not so long ago I was downtown and had a conversation with a lady in her fifties. She was "definitely" sure that she was a Christian. According to her own words, she had made a deal with God that he would be there when she needed him, and when she died he would receive her because she was both baptized and confirmed, and even went to church once in a while.

It didn't take me very long to realize that she had invented her own god - a god that she thought was right for her, and not the one and true God revealed in the Bible, the One who has created us all.

I asked her if she knew Jesus, and told her the Bible says that if you say you know him, you have to keep his commandments. I asked her if she actually knew what his commandments were.

1. John 2:4

The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

She was willing to admit that she didn't know anything about Jesus or his commandments. However, she believed in God and thought she was living with him because she considered herself to be a good person.

Then I told her, as I could unfortunately tell many other so-called "Christians" in this country, that she did NOT know God. I said that the god she believed in was not the God who had created her and who can save her, but her own little invented "idol" that fitted in with her own needs. She had created a god/idol that in no way can save her on judgement day, although that's what she hopes deep down inside.

I told her that if she did not repent and turn to the One and only God, the God of the Bible, who has created the universe - and if she did not live by his commandments and follow him every day, she would be lost in all eternity.

We Danes are so blinded when it comes to what being a Christian is all about, and how to become a Christian. We think that being a Christian means attending a church, living in a Christian country, or "believing" in God deep down inside, but apart from that you can live your life the way you want to. If you ask many people in our country if they are Christians and believe in God, they will say, "Yes, I believe and I am a good person". However, "believing" in God or "trying" to live as a good person doesn't make you a Christian.

We're unable to live by God's standard in our own power, and that's what we'll take a closer look at because it is God who sets the criteria and not us. Therefore, we should not compare ourselves to a drug addict or a mass murderer and through that believe that we're living right with God. Instead, we need to compare ourselves to God's way of life, and without Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord you cannot be good enough.

Even though you really try to live a good life, it's not enough. Good deeds won't save anyone, but repentance and faith in Jesus will.

So what is faith?

Faith is not what most people know today. Faith is active and you can't define it and see it, as many believe. On many occasions I've experienced that when somebody dies, and you talk to their relatives about God, heaven and hell, then the family and friends usually say that they think that the deceased believed in God. He or she just never really talked about it, or was in no way fanatical about it, but deep down inside he or she believed in God.

Many people have faith in God, or a higher power, without ever seeing themselves as sinners who need

forgiveness from Christ, who died for them. Such faith is worth nothing, since there is only salvation through Jesus.

Faith without repentance or deeds is DEAD. Faith that cannot be seen or expressed in deeds is dead. True FAITH can be both seen and felt, and is not what we've made it to be - only personal, unseen to others, no one else's business - something undefineable.

The Bible clearly states that if your faith isn't active through deeds, it's a dead faith. And if you still live in sin consciously, your faith is worth nothing. It cannot save anyone because faith and conversion are interconnected.

James 2:18-26

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.

You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"[e] and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

The Bible clearly states that faith without deeds and repentance is equal to death. It means that the "faith" most Danes claim to have is worth nothing. What they have isn't faith, but a small HOPE. "I hope that everything will be all right. I hope to get to heaven if such a place exists..." HOWEVER, TO HOPE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH. The faith that saves is faith that you are willing to offer your life for. It's faith that is visible in the way you live.

Let's use an example of bungee-jumping, which I tried some years ago. I stood at the height of 55 meters and I had to jump, BELIEVING that the elastic band would hold, and that it wasn't too long. As I got ready to jump, I had both faith and a firm trust that everything would be all right because if not, I would surely be dead. I believed that everything would be fine so I jumped. If the faith that "everything would be fine" hadn't been there, then surely I wouldn't have jumped because that would have been stupid.

If the elastic rope was replaced by faith in Jesus, would you jump? Are you willing to risk your life for what you believe, even though it will cost you and even though it means that you will be persecuted, mobbed and maybe you will even lose your life?

When the Bible says that salvation is only possible through faith in Jesus, it's NOT enough to believe in Jesus as a historical figure because all reasonable people believe that Jesus once lived. When the Bible states that faith in Jesus saves, it means BELIEVING in him and in what he SAYS, just like believing in other people, and believing that what they say is true.

In John chapter 8, verse 30, it says: *"Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him".*

What did they put their faith in? Did they put their faith in the fact that he was a real person, in flesh and blood, or what? No, they put their faith in his words; they believed that he spoke the truth. It says "Even as he SPOKE, many put their faith in him". It was therefore his words that they put their faith in. In the next verse it says what it takes to become a Christian/disciple, and what it means to put your faith in Jesus:

John chapter 8, verse 31

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"".

You can see that to put your faith in Jesus means to believe his words and obey them. He says that they must hold to his teaching, which means to do what he says. At the same time he is also saying that if we do not live according to that, or if we do not hold to his words, we are not his disciples. Therefore, being a Christian is not "just" believing that Jesus once lived, but we must believe that what he says is true, and then live by it.

What does the word "Christian" mean?

The word "Christian" was first used to call the disciples of Jesus about 13 years after his resurrection from the dead. Believers were called Christians because they resembled Christ in the way they lived, by what they said and did. The word "Christian" ("kroesden") means a follower of Christ. Therefore, they were called Christians because they imitated Jesus (Christ), and not because they lived in a "Christian" country, or went to church. Notice that they were called Christians by others - not themselves. They did not take on this wonderful title by themselves, but received it because it was visible to others that they lived with Jesus.

Acts 11:26

and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

So a Christian is the same as a disciple - but what is a disciple?

Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Just before he ascended into the heavens, Jesus commanded his disciples to go out into the world and make all people his disciples by teaching them to keep his commandments and do everything he had told them. His command was NOT to make them into religious Christians who know nothing about him, who don't keep his commandments, and don't do what he tells them to.

The word "disciple" used here is put as "matheteuo" in the basic text, which means: "To be a disciple of a person whose writings, rules, teaching and commands one follows; to be someone's student, apprentice".

Therefore, if we put it this way, and instead of calling ourselves "Christians" with today's meaning, used the word with the meaning it really has, many wouldn't be so quick to claim to be Christians. In the true sense of the word, it requires "a little" more from you than merely going to church and leading quite a good life. It means that you must live with Christ and do EVERYTHING he tells you to do.

However, no matter what we call ourselves - Christians or disciples - but don't do EVERYTHING he tells us to do, then it makes no difference to God. I could start calling my son "my daughter", but that wouldn't change the fact that he is still my son. It makes just as little difference if you call yourself a Christian, but in fact are on the road to eternal damnation because you haven't repented from your sin and chosen to live a life true to the commandments of Christ.

A small amount of water on your head (baptism) makes NO difference in itself. Neither does it make a difference that you go to church and live in a "Christian" country. There's no salvation in that either. It is a matter of repentance and faith, being a 100% follower of JESUS CHRIST and keeping his commandments - or not.

Therefore, as you can see, not all of the 87% of the Danish population who are members of the state (Lutheran) church are Christians on their way to heaven. However, as it seems now in this dying country of ours, only 1-2% of the population or perhaps less are disciples of Jesus. Denmark is one of the most dead countries in the world when it comes to true Christianity. In many countries, where Christianity isn't the state religion, they still have far more followers of Christ than we do. One of the reasons for this is the fact that we have a religious way of practising "Christianity" in our country. This religious practice has given us the wrong image of what it means to be a true Christian. Danes often use the argument that "they're baptized and confirmed so there's nothing to worry about" as a sleeping pill. Another thing is that due to some so-called "Christians" and their lifestyles they've got the idea that the Bible isn't true.

However, the question to you is: are YOU among the 1-2% today (there will be more) in our country that live as disciples/ followers of Jesus? If not, what are you going to do about it? Excuses like having seen too much ridicule and double-standards in church, or living the way your pastor said you should, are not good enough.

So what does it take to be a disciple of Jesus?

It's a question of being willing to give everything to Jesus, and obedient to everything he says. If we do so, we will experience many exciting new things. The more obedient we are, the more he will reveal himself to us and give us his power. Jesus said something about being his follower or disciple, and we'll take a look at it now.

In Matthew 10: 37-39, Jesus says:

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it".

Jesus wants us to give him priority in all aspects of our lives and put nothing above him, but stay obedient. He wants us to act on his words when he speaks - even though it doesn't always seem to benefit ourselves. God would never have us do something that doesn't benefit us in the end. Sometimes it seems to be a disadvantage for us because we can see only what is here and now, but God is much bigger and he knows what is ultimately best for us.

What we have just read about not loving your father, mother, son, etc. more than Jesus, means that he should come first in all things in our lives. He wants our love for him to be so great that it's second to no other love. Jesus wants to have the highest priority in our lives and first place in all things. When he has first place, everything else will function well, also in the family and among friends. If we follow Jesus, he'll be with us, and we'll have the surplus to think about our neighbour, our family/ friends, etc.

Unfortunately, many give up being disciples of Jesus because of family and friends. That is why it is very important that Jesus has first place in our lives, even though this means that we'll have to defy the opinions and views of others. As long as you're not born again, you're "blind", and if you listen to someone else who is also blind and follow him, everything will go wrong. Instead, we must live with God, so that he may bring "vision" to our family and friends and they may see as well. They will eventually be highly grateful for this.

Therefore, being a Christian/ disciple means to keep his commandments and follow him 100% - and to do everything he says. Salvation is only in Jesus - and not in some small demigod. Only God can save, and that only happens when you live with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

Unfortunately, the example I gave earlier, where a lady believed in her own god, is the true condition of our country today. So many Danes live in deception and think that everything is all right and that they're on their way to heaven because they were baptized as children, confirmed and are listed as members of a church. Others believe that everything is fine because they live a fairly good and reasonable life like most others. But no, my dear friend. As you can see, being baptized as a child and confirmed, cannot save you or make you a Christian. And the fact that you try to live a fairly reasonable life does not mean that you're on your way to heaven. The truth is that we have all sinned, and if we do not repent, ask for forgiveness, and live with God every day, we will be lost.

What I've written might sound different from what is usually heard in churches today. That's because we live in a time when people choose not to listen to the truth, but to whatever tickles their ears. They prefer to hear that baptism is enough so that they have an excuse to live the way they do. Many believe in this, but the truth is different, even if you don't want to hear it. Therefore it does not help you to act like deaf, hoping that you won't be judged according to the truth. Whether you want to hear it or not, the truth remains the same. It is according to the truth (and not your own theory), that one day you will be held accountable by God.

2. Timothy 4: 3-4

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

The Holy Spirit

A very important part of being a Christian is the Holy Spirit, or being filled/baptized in the Holy Spirit, or whatever you want to call it. Without the Holy Spirit, you CANNOT live the life God wants for you. When you become baptized in the Holy Spirit, something happens in your life which makes you see things in a totally new perspective. One thing is that you start to understand the word of God better. I know many "Christians" who have believed in God for many years, faithfully went to church, called themselves Christians and lived by what they knew. However, when after many years of going to church they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, something happened, and they were transformed. Their fellowship with God suddenly became much more alive, and they experienced a completely new light over everything. Then they saw things they had never done before.

When I talk about baptism in the Holy Spirit, I'm NOT talking about baptism in water you get on your head as a child, when you are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is an entirely different kind of baptism.

In the Bible many are baptized in water by John the Baptist. This was a kind of repentance baptism, equal to baptism with water. As I have stated before, unfortunately many choose to quit here and believe that this is enough. However, John the Baptist himself said that he baptized in water, but the one who would come after him, Jesus, would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. That's baptism with the Holy Spirit, and it is vital for living the Christian life.

Matthew 3:11

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

When Jesus walked the earth, he spent every day with his disciples for three years. He taught them, answered all their questions and encouraged them when times were hard, etc. Think about it. They were with Jesus every single day for three years. They heard him teach. They saw him healing people. They saw him doing great signs and wonders. It must have been wonderful to be with Jesus personally. Just think - if we were able to walk with Jesus today, it would be quite powerful, wouldn't it? Still, Jesus said to the disciples (and to us), that it was best for them that he went away, because if he didn't, he wouldn't be able to send the Holy Spirit to them.

John 16:7

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

"But nothing could be better than living with Jesus personally, could it?" Yes, that's true, but that's also why we got the Holy Spirit. When you get baptized with the Holy Spirit, he will help us to live a life that pleases God. He will remind us of everything that Jesus has said and empower us to testify about Jesus. By living in the same way as Jesus, we can experience the same things he was doing - signs, wonders and miracles. We can pray for the sick in the name of Jesus, and see them healed.

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

Therefore, when you turn to God and get baptised with the Holy Spirit, you will experience a close relationship with God/ Jesus through the Holy Spirit that can become as close as the relationship the disciples experienced with Jesus. When it says that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on us, it does not only mean power to preach the word of God, but also to heal the sick, set people free from demons, prophesy over people's lives, etc.

So how do you receive the Holy Spirit?

You can ask for it yourself, or ask a person who already has the Holy Spirit to pray for you. It wasn't long ago that four people were baptized with the Holy Spirit in our living-room, and started speaking in tongues. That happened as we were praying together. We (who had the Holy Spirit) put our hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them. Then, as it is stated in the Bible, they started speaking in tongues themselves. (Speaking in tongues is a divine language that those who know God can receive. It is a language that oneself cannot comprehend, where your spirit prays to God and through this intercedes and builds you up, worships God etc.).

Acts 19: 3-6

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Here we read about some Christians who have never even heard of the Holy Spirit. It's the same today, but it's not too late - you can be baptized with the Holy Spirit as well.

Forgiveness

Well, now you've received some teaching on what a being a Christian is about. If this has made you realize that you want to know God and need his forgiveness - it can happen. It's very simple.

Let's read Romans 10: 9-10 *"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

It says clearly here what you need to do. You must confess that Jesus is Lord in your life, and believe that God raised him from the dead. Confessing that Jesus is Lord means keeping all of his commandments and doing EVERYTHING he tells you to do. Therefore, it's NOT enough to say that you believe in him, and then live the way you want to. NO, you have to live in 100% obedience to him.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

In another place Jesus also asks us why we call him Lord, but don't do what he says. He does not just want us to call him Lord and live our own lives. He wants our obedience, and if we don't keep his commandments, he will ask us: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46. When the Bible says that you get saved if Jesus is Lord in your life, the word "Lord" must have the right meaning - one who rules over you, someone you serve - which means that you do what the person tells you to do, and surrender yourself in everything, or show 100% obedience.

You might think that it's impossible to show 100% obedience. What if you are not completely sure what God's will is, do something wrong and by this show disobedience to God? However, God does not hold us accountable for what we don't understand, but only for what we know.

James 4:17:

"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."

It's the same with sin. We can all do something wrong by accident, and there is forgiveness. However, if you sin on purpose, you're NOT a Christian, and need to repent. For example, everyone knows that it's a sin to watch pornography. If you anyway go online, and "accidentally" watch pornography, and therefore desire something you must not desire, you sin purposefully. If this is you, you're in a dangerous place, and will be convicted as a sinner and lost for all eternity, if you don't repent right away.

The Bible says that we must give up all sin to be saved, and when it says EVERYTHING, it means all that we consciously know is wrong. However, our conscience can be so destroyed by sin that we almost have no conscience left, but God's word is still valid. The Bible clearly states what sin is, and that it separates you from God (the 10 commandments, etc.). However, when you repent and give your life to God, you get born again, and so does your conscience. It becomes razor sharp again. Therefore, you will quickly experience some things that you must put in order. You have to live the new life, and learn to distinguish what is right from wrong.

Romans 12:2:

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will."

However, if you try to hide your sin by ignoring it, defying your conscience or thinking that God is merciful and everything will be all right - you're completely wrong and have to repent before it's too late.

Proverbs 28:13

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

It is important that we always live in the light and never have conscious or unrepented sin in our life because we must always be prepared to stand before God. This might happen an hour from now, but it could just as well take 10 years. Therefore, the only question is: are you ready for judgment? Is there something that you haven't confessed and repented for? If you knew that you would stand before the judge within one hour, would there be something that you needed to confess or forgive? That's how we need to think. If there's anything like this, deal with it IMMEDIATELY!

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

How - you may ask - can I know God's will, so I'll always know what's right? Firstly, you must turn away from your sin and repent for having lived in disobedience to your God and creator. To turn away means to change direction. That's what you need to do. However, first you must ask God to forgive you your sin and disobedience against him - in the name of Jesus. Then you must tell him that from now on you'll live in obedience to him and his word. This is the first thing you must do because if you don't, you cannot be accepted by God, whether you read your Bible or go to church etc. As long as you haven't repented and chosen to follow him and do all that he says/demands, you're living in rebellion. Therefore, if you don't do what's necessary, with every breath you take you are going to rebel against your God and creator.

After this you must fill yourself with the word of God (the Bible). You will get to know God through reading it and having fellowship with him (prayer). Last but not least, you must have fellowship with others who live with him. I DON'T mean people who claim to be Christians, but really live their own lives with themselves as lords. I am speaking of those who have given their lives to God and his word; those, who don't merely live as "Christians" every Sunday, but who live with God every day, 24 hours a day.

Therefore, start by repenting for ALL your sins and cry to God for mercy in your life by confessing your sins to him and asking his forgiveness so that you will not be convicted as a sinner. If you repent and ask for forgiveness in the name of Jesus for all the wrong you've done, God will forgive you and save you. You will experience a whole new and exciting life with God. Then contact some Christians, who can help you in your new life with God so you don't miss his plan for your life. Afterwards you must get baptized and receive the Holy Spirit because without him you cannot complete the race. If you don't know any Christians who can help you on your way, you're welcome to contact me. Then I can personally help you in your new life with God, or perhaps I know some Christians who live close to you (read the back of the pamphlet).

A little bit about how I became a Christian, and what it has done in my life

I was born in 1976, and grew up in the town of Brande in quite an ordinary family who were members of the state church, where I was also baptized and confirmed. However, like most people in Denmark, we never went to church. I believed that there was more between heaven and earth, but I didn't know what it was.

One day I paid a visit to a good friend of mine. He had just become a personal Christian and had started going to an evangelical church. I told him that he was either crazy or brainwashed, and that he should make sure that it wasn't Jehova's Witnesses or some other sect because you could hear so much about them. However, I got curious. One day I saw a program on television about a church where I could see some people really experiencing God, and I thought to myself: If they can experience God, I want it as well. To my friend's great surprise, I decided to go to church with him the following day.

We went there, and the people were singing their hearts out. They had raised hands and spoke in tongues. My initial thought was that I was the only sane person present. However, that evening I experienced something special. Therefore, when the speaker asked if there was anyone present who wanted to receive Jesus as their personal Saviour, I knew that he was speaking to me. I went forward, and said a prayer where I asked Jesus to forgive my sins and become my Saviour. I didn't know much about that, but something happened. Later that evening someone prayed for me. Then I experienced a mighty fire go through my whole body. It's hard to describe. It was so real and great.

Since that day, the 5th of April 1995, many things have happened. The fear of dying was gone at once, I received great joy, peace and experienced enormous freedom. Before that experience I used to feel that God was far away from me when I prayed, but afterwards I knew that he was close, and that it was easy to pray to him. I suddenly understood many new things and experienced God speaking to me.

About five months later when I was at a Christian concert in Aalborg, God said to me that the girl standing further away would become my wife. I turned around and looked at her. After the concert, I drove home with a friend of mine and told him that I had just met my future wife. I didn't know who she was, what was her name, where she was from etc. However, God had said that she would become my wife. When I came home, I asked God that he would bring us together because I didn't know who she was. About three months later we met, and today we're married with three kids.

Many times I have experienced God speaking directly to me, for instance through the Bible. This book has now become alive and real for me. I've often experienced while reading that the Bible does not consist of empty words, but it's God talking to me. I love reading the Bible because it's unlike any other book. I've also had the chance to pray for many people who got healed. They have been set free from asthma, tinnitus, backpains, headaches, arthritis, etc. I've seen people throw away their crutches in town and getting healed I told them that I was a Christian and asked if I could pray for them. I've experienced how demons were cast out of people, and how they were totally transformed afterwards. They used to be bound by fear, depression, nightmares etc. but when they were set free, those things disappeared. I've had a privilege to lead others to God, and see their lives transformed within seconds.

God helps me to live the life that we are supposed to live according to the Bible - a life of signs and wonders, a life where we become closer to God and get to know him better every day. It's a really exciting life. I can't imagine living even one day without God. Salvation and my life with God are the best things that have ever happened to me. Life is no longer empty, but full of meaning. I've been given an assignment and a purpose to live for, and it's exciting. It's also hard from time to time, but the Bible speaks of these things as well. Personally, I've experienced much resistance in my life, both from family and others, but fellowship with God is much bigger than all that. And no matter what happens, he's ALWAYS there.

Today, when I pray to God, it's no longer religious prayers, like I used to pray when I was in a difficult situation and in need of help. Now it's personal. It's fellowship with him. It's not a machine that you try to use when it's necessary. For example, today I love going for a walk, and just being with God by myself. I long for being with him. I can easily close a door, shout and talk to him for an hour and listen to what he has to say. No matter what I do, he's on my mind. When I drive my car, I talk to him. When I work, he's also there. He's part of my life, and I can't imagine living a single second without him. A life without him is empty. If you've already got to know God, you'll never be the same again.

That was just a few words about my life and how God has transformed it. I could go on telling you about my experiences, and about what God has done for me. And that's only the beginning because God has so much more for me, and I'm going to get to know him much more than I already do. The more time we spend with him, the better we'll get to know him.

Today I know that God is real, and that this isn't empty faith. I've met him and I live with him daily. Jesus died for you and me, but we must give our lives to God ourselves. I lived without him for 18 years, and had I died back then, I would have surely been lost. I don't want that to happen to you. It was on the 5th of April 1995 that I experienced salvation. You can experience it today. It's up to YOU. This ISN'T about church membership, but about a personal relationship between the living GOD and YOU. Jesus has given me so much. He is LIFE.

To finish this teaching, I'll mention some scriptural passages on what characterizes a Christian.

What characterizes a true Christian

Mark 16: 17-18

"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

It says that these signs will follow those who believe. The word "sign" means the same as a sign you would put up in front of a store. Such a sign might show you what the store is selling. For instance, if you see a sign with a pretzel, you know that it's a bakery and that you can buy bread in the store. In the same way, speaking in tongues, casting out demons and laying your hands on the sick so that they become well, is a sign that you're Christian.

1. John 3:9

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

The characteristic of a person who is born of God, or who is a Christian, is that he doesn't sin. You can interpret this passage by saying:

Anyone who is born of God doesn't continue to sin; for the seed of God is in him, and he cannot continue to sin because he's born of God.

Therefore, if you say that you're born again, or that you're a Christian, but still live as a sinner, is deceiving

yourself. If you watch pornography, lie, steal, or if you haven't forgiven someone in your life, you're not a Christian. In this case, you need to repent immediately before you are convicted as a sinner and lost forever. It's a question of the renewal of your mind, as mentioned in the Bible, so that you know what God's will is. It's a process where you constantly get closer to God and learn to distinguish right from wrong. Therefore, someone who has been a Christian for a number of years will not make as many mistakes as someone who is a newly-born Christian. If you DON'T intend to live without sin, you HAVEN'T started your spiritual journey yet.

Mark 16:20

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

What confirms that we speak the word of God, and not just our own words, are the signs and wonders that are verified by God. If these things don't follow when we speak, it isn't certain that we speak the words of God - but merely our own words... So many different things are preached in our churches today. Some pastors will say this and that, and throw in a scriptural passage from time to time, and it might sound like the word of God, but in fact it's their own words. Many people are deceived by this. Therefore we have to see if God verifies and confirms what is spoken. This is where it gets dangerous. I could easily tell you that everything's all right, and that it's okay for you to live the life you live, and you might even believe it. However, if it's not the words of God, but just my own opinion, it makes no difference, no matter how many times I tell you that it's okay. If you don't live a righteous life, you are still on your way to hell because I can't save anyone - but God can.

Conclusion

Radical, isn't it? Yes, God's word is radical. You might think "no one can live that way!" Yes, you can. If you have first truly repented, met the living God, and come into a close fellowship with him, it's no longer a problem to live the life God wants for us. Then he's with us all the way and leads us.

And to you who "know" God, but don't live this way, I'll say: start getting closer to him. Pray and shout to him that he may show you who he truly is. Pray that he may reveal the deceit of Satan in your life so that all religiosity and lukewarmness may be revealed, so that you'll start reading God's word without the religious spectacles on. Stop saying: "but I'm protected by the grace of God" and using that as an excuse for your lukewarm way of living as a Christian. It won't hold. Seek God like never before. Get to know him as he truly is - a holy, righteous and loving God, who loved us so much, that he gave/sacrificed his son Jesus so that through him we might be free from sin and have fellowship with our God and creator. He loves us tremendously, but as much as he loves us, he hates sin and he cannot simply look at sin and disobedience through the fingers. He'll convict sin/disobedience, wherever it is found.

For more information:

This pamphlet was written with the intention that many will open their eyes and see the truth, and so that the deception of Satan will be revealed in our country. We must turn to the living and true God, confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and get to know him as he truly is, for he is LIFE!

And now a final remark for you who don't know God and think you're fine the way you're doing now, and you don't think that you need to turn to God. It's not about how you feel, but about your need of forgiveness for your sins and peace with God. If you have broken God's law (the ten commandments) just one time, you're guilty. Therefore, if you have for instance lied, stolen or taken God's name in vain, you have broken the law and will be convicted as a sinner. And those were just three of the ten commandments. It's about more than "feeling all right", it's about forgiveness and peace with God. The truth is that you're guilty before him because you have broken his law. We have all done that and so we all need to repent and receive the forgiveness of God. However, this isn't about everyone else. This is about YOU! It's not about whether you "feel" that you need forgiveness or not. It's about forgiveness or punishment. It's about the fact that there's only one way to avoid your well-deserved punishment as a lawbreaker - that you repent for your sins and receive forgiveness through Jesus, whom this pamphlet is really all about. God loves us and doesn't want us to be lost. Therefore he sent his beloved son Jesus to die in our place so that through him we might receive forgiveness for our transgressions. If you refuse to repent and receive this forgiveness, you will be convicted for your transgressions, in the same way that you would get convicted if you broke the laws and statutes of Denmark. This is valid for you, as well as myself, for one day we will ALL be held accountable for our lives.

So repent today, and receive forgiveness.

Acts 4:12

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

The name is JESUS...

If you need help to come to God, or if you have questions or something else, then don't hold back, but contact those who gave you this pamphlet:

If you want to contact Torben Søndergaard, write to him at:

mail@opleveljesus.dk