

## **RECEIVE CHRIST, RECEIVE FROM CHRIST, BE RECEIVED BY CHRIST**

**By Bob Young**

When Paul appeared before Agrippa, he described his calling in these words.

*The Lord promised to deliver me from my people and from the Gentiles, even as he sent me “to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts 26:17-18)*

Oswald Chambers called this verse, verse 18, the grandest condensed description of a disciple of Jesus in the entire New Testament. Three things catch my attention.

### **HELPING PEOPLE WANT TO RECEIVE CHRIST**

God’s workers open eyes so that people clearly see the best choice, preferring light to darkness, God’s power over Satan’s power. The desire to receive Christ is a marvelous thing to behold, partly because the world is still filled with people who have no desire to receive Christ and those who openly, even adamantly, reject Christ. Chambers writes that this decision of the aroused human spirit to receive Christ is properly a conversion, but is not to be identified with salvation. He suggests that a majority of nominal Christians fit in this category, desiring to receive Christ, converted, but not saved. How many people have turned to Christ, and stopped right there!

### **PEOPLE RECEIVING FROM CHRIST**

The decision of the human mind does not bring regeneration. Having my eyes opened does not automatically bring salvation to my life. Only Christ gives new life. Salvation is a gift received (grace) and is not based on a human decision, or a certain understanding (belief). Remember that James describes the demons as believing and trembling. The teaching that receiving Christ is equal to salvation is works-oriented through and through—the human meritorious work is making a decision, or believing a certain thing. Chambers again, “People register their vows, sign their pledges, intend to follow through, but this is not salvation.” Salvation means receiving forgiveness of sins, in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus. The decision to receive Christ can never stand in the place of and annul the need to receive forgiveness from Christ, carefully following his teachings. How does Jesus say disciples are made? (Matt. 28:18-20)

### **PEOPLE BEING RECEIVED BY CHRIST**

By the grace of God we receive in Jesus’ name the remission of sins. That we also have an inheritance among the sanctified means that we are accepted as part of God’s holy people. We are received by Christ.

The big question in Christianity is not whether you have accepted Christ, but whether Christ has accepted you! Dear friend, the text of Acts 26:18 deserves your careful attention. Paul mentions three separate results of the gospel ministry to which the Lord called him: that people receive Christ, receive from Christ, and are received by Christ. Don’t stop short!