



March 2013

Dear Friends,

Have you ever put something together that required instructions? Maybe it was a piece of furniture, or a bicycle for your children. It may have been overwhelming when you first started putting it together, but if the instructions are clear and all of the parts and pieces are there, it probably wasn't too difficult a task to complete. Have you ever tried to put things like those together without following any instructions? What was that process like? You likely put it together the wrong way a few times and had to undo a few screws and pegs. You likely had to guess whether you were putting the right parts in the right places a few times before you got it right.

As Christians we can know God loves us and cares for us deeply and gives us good, clear, and trustworthy instructions to follow in the Bible. And He sent Jesus to encourage us and to show us how to live here in these human bodies. A Christian is nothing more than a follower, and emulator of Jesus Christ.

*"And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." – Matthew 10:38*

"Follow" in this scripture is interpreted from the Greek word "akoloutheo" which means "to be in the same way with" (to walk in someone else's shoes). When we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we are saved. (Romans 10:9) And when we are saved, we are never the same. We trust in faith to follow Jesus with our lives. We realize the depth of God's love for us and we are compelled to follow Him. We want to look like Him, to be like Him, to imitate Him.

One of the most important ways we can follow and emulate Jesus is through Baptism. The Bible teaches us in Matthew 3:13, Mark 1:9 and Luke 3:21 that Jesus came to John the Baptist and was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. Wow, don't you wish you could have been there to see that? God sending the Holy Spirit while the people around were watching. How confused, amazed and awestruck they must have been realizing Jesus was not a normal man.

Why did Jesus, the Son of God need to be baptized? He tells us in John 8:28 "And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." So when we are obedient to be baptized, we know our decision and action is pleasing to God. We are following the example of Jesus, who was sent as a gift and example to us of how to live our lives. Baptism gives us a way to identify with Jesus. Baptism is a visual picture of old things passing away and all things becoming new through Christ. Baptism is an act of worship and an "announce it to the world" commitment to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

We should not want to be baptized out of pressure to please someone else, but rather a genuine desire to identify with Jesus and follow the example He sets for us. We want to follow Jesus because of His work in our lives, not some obligation to fulfill for family or friends. If baptism is not an act of worship and obedience, we need to wait until God leads. Baptism is also not salvation. Salvation inspires the practice of baptism. The act of baptism does not change anything inside you. Instead, it is symbolic of change that has already started because we have

decided to follow Jesus. It is simply the way that God gave us to show the world that we are choosing to follow Him.

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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." – Matthew 28:18-20*

*After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. – John 3:22*

We are overjoyed to be celebrating the baptism of some in our community next month. On Sunday afternoon, April 14<sup>th</sup> Grace Klein Community will be gathering together to worship through a baptism service and potluck dinner on the grounds. We'll gather at a lake home in Childersburg for the service. We would love for you to attend, as this will be a symbol to those who will be baptized, that their community will be there to support, encourage and challenge them along their journey to live a Christ-centered life. Jesus prays in John 17:23, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Please join us for a Baptism Service

Sunday, April 14

2:00 pm

Bring a dish to share

4683 McGowans Ferry Road

Childersburg, AL 35044

Directions to Baptism Service - From Hwy 280 E / Valleydale Rd Intersection (Inverness Corners):

- Follow Hwy 280 E toward Childersburg for 25.7 miles
- Turn Right onto Co Rd 008/Childersburg Fayetteville Hwy and go 3.5 mi
- Turn right onto Co Rd 34/McGowans Ferry Rd and go 5.6 mi
- 4683 McGowans Ferry Rd will be on the right

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**\*\*\*EASTER SUNDAY\*\*\* (March 31st) at 11:30AM - Please join Grace Klein Community for a POTLUCK LUNCH GATHERING at Veteran's Park in Hoover (Located on Valleydale Rd, next to Spain Park High School). Bring your family and a dish to share and let's celebrate Easter together in community.**

All for Jesus,