

A Christian Is...

Aaron Beard
Trussville
Feb 26, 2006

INTRODUCTION:

- A. If someone was to ask, “What does it mean to be a Christian?” how would you respond?**
1. **Illustration:** Child asking father, “What’s a Christian?” and then “Have I ever seen one?”
 2. Many in our society claim to be Christians; however, the same question could be asked!
 - a. Some say they are Christians when they shouldn’t, some say they aren’t when they should say they are, some say they are Christians, mean it, & rightfully say it!
 - b. Hopefully we all want to be a Christian, to say we are, mean it, and be right when we say it; however, what exactly does this mean!
- B. I don’t know where better to begin with discussing what a Christian is than the occasion where that name first appears!**
1. It was in Antioch where followers of Jesus Christ were first called Christians! **(Acts 11:26)**
 - a. It is a wonderful occasion when anyone decides that they will become a Christian... it’s a life changing decision and an event that is full of meaning!
 - b. Some suggest this is a derogatory term given by others, but that doesn’t seem right
 - c. God spoke many years before that a new name would be given! **(Is 62:1-2)**
 2. As we consider what a Christian is... simply put, a Christian is a Christian! But what does it mean when we say a person is a Christian?

I. FIRST OF ALL, A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO OBEYS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST:

- A. We can see this aspect of what a Christian is by looking at those Christians in Antioch:**
1. Consider what took place as these people became Christians **(Acts 11:19-24)**
 - a. They heard men from Cyprus & Cyrene preach about the Lord Jesus
 - b. Having heard the preaching of the Lord Jesus they believed what they heard
 - c. Those who believed in Jesus Christ then turned to Him and were added to the Lord
 - d. These people did more than just believe the message – So what took place?
 2. They would not have turned to the Lord and been added to the Lord any different than those on the day of Pentecost! **(Acts 2:36-41, 47)**
 - a. Notice what took place: They heard Jesus preached, believed in Him, were cut to the heart, they were baptized, and they were added to the Lord
 - b. The same thing took place as in Antioch – there’s just a difference in the wording!
 - c. So how does one turn to the Lord? By believing, repenting & being baptized!
 3. This turning involved a change of purpose in their lives: **(Acts 26:18-20)**
 - a. Turning TO the Lord necessarily implies they turned away from something else!
 - b. Regardless of how moral their lives may have been, before actually turning to the Lord they would have been under the power of Satan and in were darkness!
 - c. These in Antioch were Jews... they would have had to turn away from Judaism, trying to be justified by law keeping, & maybe even personal sins in their lives
 4. When these individuals believed & obeyed the gospel of Christ, they became Christians!
- B. It is impossible to be a Christian without first obeying the gospel of Christ!**
1. It is impossible to be pleasing to the Lord without obeying His word! **(Luke 6:46-49)**
 - a. How can I say, “I am a Christian” if I am refusing to follow what Christ says?
 - b. It may be that this foolish man is a regular churchgoer! It wouldn’t be the only time Jesus spoke of the seemingly religious this way! They cry out, “Lord! Lord!”
 - c. The problem is trying to build a life without having at the foundation a determination to follow Jesus Christ completely! That life will GO SPLAT!
 2. There are some things the gospel of Christ tells a person to do in order to be saved:
 - a. First one is going to have to hear the gospel preached: **(Rom 10:17)**
 - b. Secondly, he is certainly going to have to believe the message: **(Mark 16:15-16)**
 - c. Thirdly, he will need to repent of his sins: **(Acts 2:38)**

- d. Fourth, he will have to confess Jesus as Christ and Lord: **(Rom 10:9-10)**
- e. Fifth, he must be baptized for the remission of his sins: **(Acts 22:16)**
- f. Finally, he must strive to live faithfully to the Lord until death: **(Rev 2:10)**
- 3. Until one is baptized for the remission of their sins, they don't have Christ! **(Gal. 3:26-27)**
 - a. As one put it, take Christ out of Christian and you have "IAN... I am nothing!"
 - b. According to this verse, at what point in time does a person put on Christ? What response is it that unites us with Christ? It's at one's baptism!
 - c. If you haven't done this, you can't be a Christian since you haven't put on Christ!
- 4. It was disciples who were called Christians! How do you make a disciple? **(Mt. 28:18)**
 - a. As we will see in a moment is a disciple is one who follows Jesus Christ!
 - b. Isn't that exactly what happens – Crucified, buried with Him, raised together?
- 5. Being a Christian means turning away from some things and to the Lord! **(Eph 2:1-6)**
 - a. Don't get me wrong, baptism is absolutely essential to our salvation; however, if that's the END of our obedience to the gospel, we've merely gotten wet!
 - b. Notice the emphasis on "once" & the past tense description – Their relationship to sin, the devil, & those who practiced sin changed when they turned to Christ!
 - c. When you obey the gospel of Christ you cannot continue in sin and think, "I must be okay... I've been baptized!" – Determine to make those things your past!
 - d. Remember what baptism was all about! (Note Paul's response in Romans 6)

II. SECONDLY, A CHRISTIAN IS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST:

A. Consider what we else learn about this name the Christians at Antioch:

- 1. What were those people who were called Christians? Disciples! **(Acts 11:25-26)**
 - a. Up until this point in time Christians were referred to simply as disciples
 - b. A disciple is a learner or a pupil; one who follows another's teaching – A disciple was not only a pupil but an adherent, so they often imitated their teacher
 - c. So its not surprise that a Christian is "A follower of Christ" or "An adherent to Christ"
- 2. Consider some things that this name "Christian" would have meant to them:
 - a. By wearing His name they recognized Him as their master and teacher, the One to whom they pledged their allegiance & devotion – A "Christ-ian"
 - b. It spoke of their dependence on Jesus for their salvation from sin
 - c. By wearing His name they were saying that they wanted to become like Him!
- 3. Their discipleship is also seen in their response after their baptism **(Acts 11:23)**
 - a. The KJV says, "...with purpose of heart the would cleave unto the Lord."
 - b. Greek word used here means "adhere" → It's like saying, "Stick to Him like glue!"
 - c. It's the same word used to describe a husband and wife's relationship as being joined together as "one flesh" **(Matthew 19:5)**
 - d. There was a great determination on their part to stay faithful to Jesus Christ!
- 4. It's important to notice that these disciples were called Christians... just Christians!
 - a. Christians in the first century did not see a need to be a certain type of Christian... they just wore the name Christian, nothing more and nothing less!
 - b. The only time people did more than this, they were condemned! **(I Cor 1:11-13)**
 - c. There is no such thing as a "baptist-Christian" or "methodist-Christian" nor is there a "church of Christ-Christian" → Simply Christians nothing more or less!

B. A Christian is one who gives himself to being a disciple of Jesus Christ!

- 1. The name Christian denotes allegiance, commitment, & discipleship! **(Luke 14:26-33)**
 - a. We read these words and feel Jesus is being harsh – He's making the point that NOTHING can come before Him in our lives... Not family, & certainly not self!
 - b. Disciple and discipline come from the same word – It takes self-discipline!
 - c. It means having that same determination, steadfast purpose, to be faithful to Him!
 - d. Being a disciple means more than being a casual church member! That type quit following Jesus when His teaching got hard & the cost of following was clear!
- 2. The point of our discipleship, is to produce Christ in us! **(Luke 6:40; Col. 1:27)**
 - a. The goal of discipleship is for every student to become like his Teacher – As

- Christians we should all be striving to become more and more like Jesus!
- b. His view of & response to others, response to temptation & sin, desire to do his Father's will, prayer life, eternal perspective, stand for truth & righteousness
 - c. What glory is this the only hope of? **(Rom 8:17)** → If we want to be glorified, made like Jesus Christ then, then we have to work to become like Him now!
3. Our purpose is to let the glory of Christ shine through our lives! **(2 Cor 4:5-11)**
 - a. This directly speaks of preaching the gospel, but the principle certainly applies
 - b. We have this treasure kept within our hearts, the knowledge of Christ! As we live, its light should beam through our lives so others can see the face of Christ!
 - c. Do we carry in our bodies the life and death of Jesus? Do others really see Him?
 4. When we decide to wear the name of Christ, it involves responsibility! **(2 Thess 1:12)**
 - a. **Illustration:** Man in Alexander the Great's army by the name of Alexander
 - b. This is really a life-changing perspective... The realization that my actions have a direct impact on the name of Christ since I wear it! Is He honored or shamed?
 - c. Let us all be sure that if people speak evil about the name of Christ, it is not because of the way we've acted or the things we have said! **(Rom 2:24)**

CONCLUSION: Would others see you and know what a Christian is? (2 Cor 3:1-3)