

REASONS FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN

1 Pet. 4:12-19

Int.

1. Aim: To emphasize some of the reasons for becoming and being a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Many people are not Christians and they have many reasons for not being followers of Jesus
3. But this lesson is about those who are followers of Jesus and some of the reasons.
4. Name "CHRISTIAN" is used only 3 times in N.T.
 - a. Acts 11:26 "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - b. Acts 26:28 "Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."
 - c. I Pet.4:16 "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - d. The Word Christian is a noun in all 3 passages
 - i. "Christian" names a certain type of person - unique individual
 - ii. It implies a special relationship that one has with the Son of God
 - iii. It means a follower of Christ
5. But who is a Christian and how may we know whether we are the people of God?
 - a. We have reliable information to compare our lives with God's standard
 - b. This will show whether or not we should wear the name "Christian"
6. Who is a Christian? -- This also answers the reasons for being a Christian

Discussion

I. ONE WHO SUFFERS

A. I Pet. 4:16

1. In v. 14 ESV Peter said "If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."
2. It may seem strange to say a Christian is one who suffers but remember Paul said "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.."

II Tim. 3:12 NKJV

B. God's faithful people have always had to pay a price to serve him. The clash between saints and sinners today is inevitable (2 reasons)

1. The Christian life is a rebuke and condemnation of the life of one who rebels against the Lord and lives in sin.
2. A Christian is unafraid to expose and preach against "the unfruitful works of darkness" Eph. 5:11

C. Christians receive both verbal and physical abuse

1. Verbal abuse

- a. I Pet. 4:4 - these former friends threw verbal abuse at these people "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, **speaking evil of you.**" defame - blaspheme
- b. "Sticks and Stones may break my bones, but words never"
- c. This writer must have never felt the cutting sword of unjust criticism, or had his heart pierced by the sharp sword of ridicule.

- d. Jesus suffered much verbal abuse:
 - (1) Accused of gluttony - Matt. 11:19
 - (2) Condemned as a winebibber - Matt. 11:19
 - (3) Accused of having the prince of Demons in him - Matt. 12:24
- e. The followers of Jesus still suffer verbal abuse

2. Physical Abuse

- a. The early Christians suffered some physical abuse
- b. Stephen was stoned to death by a mob of angry religious people - Acts 7
- c. James was killed by a politician - Acts 12
- d. Paul was beaten, thrown in prison, and threatened with death -
II Cor. 11:23-27
- e. We may receive physical abuse as a Christian

D. Who is a Christian?

- 1. One who will pay any price to follow Jesus - verbal or physical abuse
- 2. Lk. 14:27 "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"
- 3. Any sacrifice and hardship I suffer for the cause of Christ is the cross I bear for him.
- 4. One of the reasons for being a Christian is to bear our cross for Jesus.

II. A MORAL STANDARD

- A. A Christian is one who has a standard for morality or a rule for life
1. I Pet. 4:15 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."
 2. Here he mentions several things that have to do with morality
- B. Murder
1. Murder is sin!
 2. Why? Because God says "thou shalt not kill". Rom. 13:9
 3. A Christian will not be a murderer
- C. Peter said not to suffer as a thief
1. Christians are honest people
 2. They will not steal your car - break into your house and steal your furniture and valuables
 3. You will not have to worry about a Christian stealing your wife or husband
 4. Some who profess to be Christians may do some of these things, but genuine Christians have a moral standard that states "thou shalt not steal" - Rm. 13:9
- D. Christians are not evil doers
1. They have a degree of faith that calls upon them to return good for evil
 2. Faithful Christians try to live peaceably with all men - Rom. 12:18 NKJV "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

3. They do not seek personal revenge - Rom. 12:19 NKJV "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."
 4. Christians will even do good to and for their enemies and thereby seek to "overcome evil with good." Rm. 12:21
- E. Christians have a moral standard that keep them from being "busy bodies in other men's matters." I Pet. 4:15
1. Christians do not try to control the lives of other people
 2. Sometimes in-laws cause troubles in marriages because of being a busybody
 3. Paul cautioned young widows about this problem - I Tim. 5:12-13 v. 13 "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."
 4. A busybody is one who will spread gossip and slander
 5. A Christian has a standard of morals that keeps him from acting as a busybody.
- F. A Christian has a moral standard
1. He is not left alone to decide
 2. God has provided the moral guidelines in the scriptures.
 3. A Christian is one who is trying to follow these guidelines.

III. IN GOD'S FAMILY, THE CHURCH

- A. A Christian is a part of God's house, God's family, the church
1. Peter discussed the possibility of the Christian suffering
 2. Then he said "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..." I Pet. 4:17
- B. God has a family
1. He has children - I Jn. 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."
 2. The right to call God, Father, is an honour
 3. God's children are God's heirs and they are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ - Rom. 8:16-17 "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together"
- C. The Bible states that God's house is the church
1. I Tim. 3:15 NKJV "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 2. This being true then you cannot be a Christian without being in the church
 3. The process that gets one into God's house is the same thing that gets us into the church.

4. Gal. 3:26,27 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
5. People who repent and are baptized are then added to the church - Acts 2:38, Acts 2:47

D. God's Children are expected to behave in a certain way

1. Expected to worship faithfully - Heb. 10:25 "Not to forsake the assembly"
2. Keep self unspotted from world - Jas. 1:27 - the world would be the evil things of the world - the sinful ways
3. Abounding in Lord's work of teaching the word and helping those in need
4. I Cor. 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

CONCLUSION

1. Who is a Christian?
 - a. One who has obeyed the gospel - B R C B
 - b. Those who refuse to obey will be lost eternally - II Thes. 1:7-9 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"

2. The one who has obeyed the gospel is saved from that eternal damnation
3. He is a Christian - And the reasons for being a Christian are..
 - a. They are willing to pay a price to follow Jesus- bear the cross of Christ
 - b. They follow his standards of morality - do good to all men
 - c. Then they live as faithful children in the church - worshiping and serving
4. This is the way we glorify God - I Pet. 4:16 "but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Sources

Good News for A Change by Tom Holland p. 117

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