

Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

May 31, 2020

Issue 22

God's Definition of a Christian

By: Franklin Camp

There are various definitions given of a Christian. The only one that is worthwhile is God's definition. The only kind of Christian worthwhile is the one as defined by God. The reason for saying this is God's definition of a Christian is because of the meaning of *chrematizo*, translated "called." It is not a nickname, as claimed by some. "And it was in Antioch that the disciples first received the name Christian" (Weymouth). The Greek word rendered called implies a divine source. It is "to be divinely instructed, to receive a warning or revelation from God" (Green's Greek English Lexicon). "To give a response to those consulting an oracle, to give a divine command or admonition, to teach from heaven; to be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed; to be the mouth-piece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands of God" (Thayer).

The word is found nine times in the New Testament (Mat. 2:12; 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25; Rom. 7:3; Acts 11:26). In all of these instances it has reference to divine revelation, unless Acts 11:26 is an exception. The meaning of the word fits Isaiah 62:2: "Which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." Compare Romans 7:3: "She shall be called an adulteress." Who calls her an adulteress? Compare "defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name" (Dan. 9:19). In Israel, we have the root of Elohim, the Hebrew name for God, which supplies an explanation for the statement, "Thy people are called by thy name." Amos 9:12 and Acts 15:17 are equivalents. Thus the subject: "God's Definition of a Christian."

Why was not this name given at Pentecost? I may not know, but I can think of a reason. Christian is the sum of Christianity. Christianity is not Jewish, not peculiar to Jews. This is implied in the very fact that the term that most describes Christianity was not given until Gentiles were brought in. Thus, those who think of Christianity offering something yet for Jews in a special way have not properly understood Christianity.

A Christian is one who heard the Gospel and believed it (Acts 11:19-21). Why were there no Christians in Antioch prior to this time? There were not any that had heard the Gospel and believed before this. Only those that believed the Gospel became Christians. There were no more Christians in Antioch than there were people that believed the Gospel. What was true in Antioch is true in any location.

A Christian is one that is indebted to others (Acts 11:20). Someone had to bring the Gospel to them. If those who came to Antioch had always stayed in Jerusalem, there would have been no church in Antioch. If those who came to Antioch had remained silent, there still would have been no church in Antioch. In every place where there is a congregation, the people that constitute that congregation are indebted to someone somewhere for bringing the Gospel to that community. The people in Antioch should have been, and no doubt were, grateful to those who brought the Gospel to them. We should never forget those who have made it possible for us to have the Gospel.

A Christian is one that wants to teach the Gospel to others (Acts 11:20). This is one of the characteristics of New Testament Christianity. Acts is not really just a book of conversions but a book on sharing redemption. Think who are the main characters. Though the principles of conversion are found in the book, this is because we see the church carrying the Gospel to the lost. We have seen what to do to be saved but not what it means to be saved. One that is not interested in teaching the Gospel to others is not a Christian as defined by God.

A Christian is one that talks the Bible (Acts 11:19). The word translated preaching in the KJV is translated speaking in the ASV. The idea is that they simply talked or their conversation was about the Word. We talk about each other, about politics, the weather, but how often do we talk about the Bible? Even Christians when together very seldom discuss the Bible.

A Christian is one that is not concerned about who gets credit for good that is done (Acts 11:19-20). The

only name mentioned in this verse is Stephen's, and he was not among those that started the church in Antioch. Who started the church in Antioch? We do not know. No name is given. Yet, this is an outstanding congregation in Acts. Is not the very silence of the Bible as to the names of those that started the church in Antioch a rebuke to preeminence-loving brethren today? What the church needs more today than perhaps anything else is people who will do the work and never care who gets the credit for it. Really, God got the credit for the beginning of the church in Antioch, and He is the only One we should be concerned about getting credit anyway. These men may never have written their names in the history books, but they wrote them in the Book of Life.

A Christian is one that is not a quitter (Acts 11:19). They knew the value of being a Christian. It was worth any price. Compare this with what little things will cause Christians to quit today. Then, you could not find anything that would cause them to quit; Now, just about anything will cause them to quit.

A Christian is one with a supreme purpose (Acts 11:23). "That with purpose of heart." That is the meaning of Matthew 6:33: not that one never does anything but attend service but rather everything that he does contributes toward this end. This is the meaning of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2. Everything is related to this overriding motive. "This one thing I do" (Phi. 3:13), not that Paul just did one thing, but everything he did was ruled by this principle.

A Christian is one where the grace of God in his life is visible (Acts 11:23). Was there a question in Barnabas' mind as to what effect Christianity had in the lives of the Gentiles? If so when he saw their lives he was convinced Paul could see the effect of God's grace in the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1).

A Christian is a good person (Acts 11:24). Barnabas was among those named Christians at Antioch. A mean Christian is a contradiction of terms— there is no such thing. One cannot be a mean father, mother, son, or daughter and be a Christian. One cannot be mean to his brethren and be a Christian. Think of the spirit of the elder brother (Luke 15). Yet how many treat their brethren about like the elder brother treated his brother, and still claim to be Christians.

A Christian is one that assembles (Acts 11:26; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42). The Christians at Antioch assembled. The Christians in every place assemble.

A Christian is one that accepts responsibility (Acts 11:29). Note the words—every man—determined— according to his ability. They did not seek to do as little as they could but as much as they could. Many seem to think today that a Christian is

one who does as little as he can. A Christian does not shirk responsibility.

A Christian is one in the Lord's church (Acts 11:26). There were no Christians in Antioch that were not members of the church. There were no Christians in Antioch that were members of any other church. "I give in mine house and within my walls...a name" (Isa. 56:5). The church is God's house (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:42; Gal. 3:26-27). Are you a Christian defined by God?

From: *THE FOREST HILL NEWS*; bulletin of the Forest Hill Church of Christ



CONGRATULATIONS TO
OUR 2020 SENIORS!

Manny Flonnory

Parker DeDear

Kirk FitzSimmons

There will be a "Drive-thru" celebration on June 6th, 2020. More details to follow.

MidTown's Sunday Morning-Worship service at 10am can be viewed livestream on YouTube. Search MidTown church of Christ Victoria.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of May 31, 2020

subject to change

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Pat Gooch
Offering: Bryce Dolan
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Scott DeDear

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Larry Nuckels
A.M. Closing: Kirk FitzSimmons

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Larry Nuckels
Ushers: Allen Clifton

Open/Close Building:

Sound System: Will Burleson

****Per the Men's meeting held Sunday, May 24th, 2020, it was decided to start having Bible class at 9am in the big auditorium only and 10am for worship service as of May 31, 2020. Please note there will be no Sunday morning children's classes or Sunday evening worship at this time.**

Also, we will resume meeting for Wednesday night Bible class starting Wednesday, May 27th at 7pm. Mark FitzSimmons will be teaching a class for teens in the old auditorium and Ronnie Scherffius will be teaching a class for all other ages in the main auditorium.

The men voted to discontinue the use of assigned seating, therefore no RSVPs are required. According to Governor Abbott's updated recommendations for congregations, we are still encouraged to "keep at least two empty seats (or six feet separation) between parties in any row..."

Our worship services will continue to be streamed live on Sunday mornings through YouTube if you are an older member who feels uncomfortable attending at this stage. The men understand and support your decision.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Please pray for the country during this time of the Corona Virus Pandemic.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Myra FitzSimmons, Charlie Mabe (June 1); Abigail Pawlik, Valerie Ramsey (2); Janice FitzSimmons (3)

As an aid to families with children, there are current Bible Class materials available on our church website www.midtowncoc.org under Resources.

Sermons are available on our website www.midtowncoc.org under Resources.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Janice FitzSimmons
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES (TEMPORARILY)

Sunday Morning Bible Class— 9:00 AM
(Auditorium only)
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Wednesday Bible Class— 7:00 PM
(Jr. High/High School & Auditorium only)

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of May 24, 2020

A.M. Worship.....62
Online views during worship.....23

Offering week of May 24, 2020.....\$2,073

Reading for this week:

"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law--to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live."

Esther 4:11

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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MidTown Church of Christ

5901 N. Main

Victoria, TX 77904

(361) 573-0030

midtowncoc2017@gmail.com

