

# What Is a Christian 01 Who Is a Christian ?

by James K. Boswell

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*A Christian is a child of God, one who has received the Lord Jesus by faith into their heart, and life begins when you receive Christ into your heart.*

**Duration:** 39:51

**Scripture:** John 1:11, Acts 11:22, Acts 11:24, 1 Peter 4:12, 1 Peter 4:14-16

**Topics:** "Christian Suffering", "Faith Trials"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the topic of trials and suffering for the name of Christ. He encourages the believers not to be surprised or discouraged by the trials they face, but rather to rejoice because they are partakers of Christ's suffering. The preacher emphasizes that if anyone suffers for being a Christian, they should not be ashamed but instead glorify God. He also shares a personal story about two Jewish children who lived with his family during the war, highlighting the importance of trust and confidence in relationships.

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## Transcript

It's a real joy being with you this morning and together we're looking forward to a time of definite blessing and encouragement. We look back with real joy to being here two years ago. I'm going to lay a foundation this morning we hope to build on during the next two weeks.

We want to try and talk on what is a Christian or who is a Christian. How do you become a child of God and then the privileges of being a child of God and also our responsibilities in the days in which we are now living. How is the Christian life relevant to the present day and generation? I was speaking at a women's rally some time ago.

I had never seen so many women all my life at the same time. I thought a lady came up afterwards and said introducing herself with a personal screen of Lady Churchill. So Mr. Boswell I've always prided myself by being able to tell people from their accent where they came from.

But with you I'm completely baffled. So sometimes I thought I heard the Scottish bird. Sometimes I thought I heard the Irish brogue.

Sometimes I thought I heard the sweet music of the English dales. Sometimes I thought I heard the roar of the Welsh valley. But when you refer to the Dutch version I'm quite sure you come from Holland.

I was born in Stafford England. At the age of 18 months my mother took me back to Scotland and from then I was brought up in Scotland. My parents are both Scottish.

I believe that both the law today and yonder glory. But from the age of 22 I've been very seldom back in Scotland. I've been moving around different parts of the world.

I taught as I taught school years ago. I can't quite always understand God's master's grace. But it's when I have how many people hear the gospel and trust Jesus Christ for salvation.

I can't quite understand how so many believers in the law of Jesus enter into the life of victory and recognize that Jesus I'm so glad he's not depending upon my twang or my dialect. He's depending upon the word during this particular day. Forget all about it.

And just now with all that Acts chapter 11. Acts chapter 11 and we're going to read together today from verse number 22. Acts 11 verse number 22.

Now it's real sweet music we do like here in the rustling among the leaves. And as we get going during these days I want to hear a great group singing to you who believe he is precious in the only way part of the palms congregation can sing it. I've taught it all over the place.

I never heard anyone sing it like the people down here. And we're not going to sing it this morning. We'll sing it probably later on in the day.

But number 22 Acts chapter 11. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem. And the saints forebarn of this that he should go as far as Antioch who when he came and had seen the grace of God was glad and exalted them all.

They would plead unto the Lord for he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. And much people was added unto the Lord. Then he departed bound of us to Tarsus for to seek Saul.

And when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass the whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Now go forth to chapter 26.

The same book 26 chapter reading verses 27 and 28. Acts 26 verse 27. Paul standing before King Agrippa and he says King Agrippa believeth thou the prophets? I know that thou believeth.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul all thou has persuaded me as to be a Christian. 1 Peter chapter 4. 1 Peter and the 4th chapter 3 reading at verse number 12. Verse 12 of the 4th chapter of 1st Peter.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the Father's trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth you.

He is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 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. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Lord, add his blessing to the reading from his word to our hearts this morning. A Bible class teacher back in Bristol, England answered class one day, wanting a Christian. One bright girl put her hand up and said, Please sir, a Christian is one who goes home for tea.

Now, that was her definition of a Christian. One little fellow thought, and had been told, and he realized, all Christians were people with long faces. You know, like a coffee pot.

He'd never been to the park of a pot. But you know, he thought, all Christians have long faces. And you know something? Going down the lane one day, he noticed a donkey over in the field.

And you know what he did? He went and put his arm around the donkey and said, Poor old Nelly, aren't you a Christian too? Nelly's got a long face. But another girl in that very same class answered the question like this, Please sir, a Christian is one who has Christ in. Now, don't you think that's the right answer? A Christian is one who has Christ in.

There was a great theologian one day. He said, Christianity is not something put on from without. Christianity is the outliving of the in-living Christ.

Now, isn't that clear? May I repeat it? Christianity is the outliving of the in-living Christ. In. For a few scriptures we read together this morning, we find a Christian is one who belongs to Christ.

Then the next chapter, a Christian is one who he witnesses for Christ. And then in 1 Peter 4, a Christian is one who suffers with Christ. He belongs to Christ, he witnesses for Christ, and he suffers with Christ.

Now, with all that before you, do you sometimes say to someone, Are you a Christian? Oh yes, I'm a Christian, all right, because I've been christened, I've been confirmed, probably vaccinated too, or I've been baptized by immersion, I'm a communicant, I'm a church member. Well, these are the answers we get when we ask, Are you a Christian? To somebody else, Are you a Christian? Oh yes, I'm a Christian. Then surely I am a Christian.

I've got a good name, surely I am a Christian. These and many others are the answers you get when you ask, Are you going to break this beautiful name Christian up into that? We want to take the first measure, the letter C. We're going to work on it all during the two weeks we are together. The first word this morning then, a Christian is a child of God, and who is a child of God on the inside.

One who has received the Lord Jesus by faith into his own. I'm thinking this wonderful expression now, a child of God. Isn't that wonderful? Aren't you glad you're a child of God in Christ? Isn't God the father? No beloved, he's John 1 12.

To become even to them we are the creator. Seize him as a dear father. Galatians chapter 4 verse number 6 said, Because ye are sons, God hath sent for the spirit of his son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father.

Notice now, it's the spirit of Christ in you and in me that looks up and says, Abba, my own dear father. Romans 8 verse number 9 said, If we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his. Now is that crystal clear? If I have never received the spirit of Christ, then I am not.

Tenderly and with all sincerity, are you a Christian? Are you a child of God? If not, there's no better opportunity than right now of you opening your heart to the son of God's love and receiving him as your

Lord and as your Savior. A young fellow came up to me some years ago in Alberta, young university boy, and he says, Mr. Boswell, what don't you believe with my mind and believe with my heart? Looking at him I said, Do you believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus? He said, I've never doubted it. Do you believe in the virtuous life of Christ? He did not sin and he could not sin.

He said, Had he been able to sin, he couldn't have been my Savior. Then I went further. He said, Do you believe in the vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ? That when he died upon that cross he died for you personally? He said, Yes, I do.

He said, Good friend, he tells me Christ died. Looking at him I said, Do you believe in the victorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus? And he smiles, of course I do. So I've got the date on the paper, a calendar, I'll put the date on the top of my notepaper, that Christ was born of the virgin.

He died upon the cross. He rose from the dead. I believe that.

So I said, Now, do you believe Christ as a living man, as ascended back into heaven, and be a good antichrist instead? Of course I do. Ascension suddenly tells me Christ went back to heaven. Looking still at that young man I said, Gordon, you believe all that with your mind.

You give your mental assent to these historical facts concerning Jesus Christ, and you leave Christ standing at your heart's door. Now you may give a mental assent, a mere acquiescence to these historical facts, and yet not be a Christian. What does the Bible say? To as many as receive him, not merely facts concerning Jesus Christ, not theories or philosophies concerning Jesus Christ, but to as many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the son of God, even to them that believe on his name.

I said, Gordon, you must with your mind believe these facts. For believing these facts, the Lord will never bring about the miracle of a new birth. The Bible says, He that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Now life begins when I receive Christ into my heart. Because remember, this life, this spiritual life, is in the Son, the Son of God.

And that young man looked at me, and I told him, Revelation 3.20, Do you hear? And I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, he is saying, I'll do it now. And clasping my hand, and he has a hand about twice the size of mine, he said, I receive thee, Lord Jesus, as my Lord and Savior. Believing you died for me, shed your blood for me, and rose from the dead for me, Lord, would I believe with my mind all these years I now act upon, and receive thee come into my heart.

That moment that young man became a Christian. Julian Heming and Mark made a big marquee in Redcar, Yorkshire, in England some years ago. One night two young university grads from Cambridge came in and said, Mr. Barlow, do you believe in the creation story of Genesis chapter 1? I said, now being a Scotsman, I'm going to answer your question by asking another.

A Scotsman always does that. It gives them time to think about the question, you see. What is the question? It is this.

Have you received the Lord Jesus for eternal life? He said, oh, no. He said, well, we'll deal with this one first. And after about two hours, those two young people got up from the knees, having received the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Savior, I turned to the young man who again, his name was Gordon.

And I said, Gordon, what about Genesis chapter 1? Oh, he said, that's all clear to us now, we know the author. Did you get that? It's all clear to us now, we know the author, and today that young man is in Northern Rhodesia as a medical officer and doing a terrific work for God. Beloved, did you get the picture? 1 Corinthians chapter 2 says, the natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned.

I repeat, the natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned. Thank you, my brother. Our dear brother thinks it's going to be rather a dry sermon.

May I go back again to that verse? The natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned. When we were born into this world so many years ago, not quite so many for some of you, I thought, you know, we had a life given to us corresponding with the sphere into which we were coming. We were coming into a natural sphere, so God gave us a natural life that corresponded with this sphere.

Had we been born in a watery element, then today we've been swimming about with our little fins going, our tail behind us. We were not to live in such a watery element, but in a natural sphere, and God gave us a life that corresponded with the sphere. That's why I don't believe for one minute, but beloved, he's got there no doubt that it's a natural sphere.

A natural life for a natural sphere. Now listen, heaven is a heavenly sphere. It's a spiritual sphere, and the Bible says, flesh and blood my earth, if I'm going to be in that heavenly, that spiritual sphere, the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, that which is born of flesh is flesh, the earthy, that which is born of spirit is spirit, the spiritual.

And he turned to Nicodemus and said, Nicodemus, you must be born again. You've got a natural life, Nicodemus, and an exemplary life, Nicodemus. You're a religious, you're respectable, you're a fast, but Nicodemus, in fact he did that in verse four, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so he received it into my heart.

Have you? See, the word of God says in John chapter one, he came unto his own, verse eleven, his own received him not. You know that's the most tragic verse in the Bible? That's the most tragic verse in the Bible. He came unto his own, his own received him not.

Now, you may have position, you may have property, you may have possessions, you may have intellectual ability, you may have scholastic achievement, but if you've never received Christ, your life's a tragedy. You've never started to live. Life, as Dr. Theodore X said last night, life begins when you receive Christ into your heart, and there's no spiritual life apart from receiving Christ.

So what was verse number 13, but, and I like this, I know it's very poor English to use too many conjunctions, but here's one I never thought of using, but as many as received him, not ink, not a code, not a creed, not a catechism, not a church membership, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the son of God, even though they had to leave on his name. So the tragedy of verse number 11 becomes a glorious tragedy. By receiving the Lord Jesus by faith into my heart.

Verse 13 says, when you're born, you don't evolve into becoming a Christian, you don't grow up into becoming a Christian. Remember Toxie and Uncle Tom's cabin, somebody said one day, Toxie, where did you come from? Oh, she said, I specked, I growed. Well, you don't grow into becoming a Christian, you're

born into a family of God, and just as there is a union in the basal kingdom, a casting of seed, a germination, a springing forth into life, just as there is a union in the animal kingdom, and among the human beings, a union, a casting of seed, a germination, a springing forth into life, so it is in the spiritual beloved.

There's a union between his spirit and my spirit, there's a casting of seed, the incorruptible seed, which is the word of God, and the moment I receive God at his word, and accept his son by faith into my heart, life begins. Life begins. What kind of life? This heavenly life.

In a word, I become a Christian, cried by his spirit. May I pause here? I quoted a verse just now, which was born not of blood. It is not hereditary.

Because our parents are Christian, that does not mean I'm automatically going to become a Christian. Oh, no. I remember the night when I trusted Christ for salvation, the boys thirteen years of age, we had grandchildren in Scotland.

The other members in the family were all saved, I was the only one out. I was very concerned about the Lord's coming, the others going, and I was left behind. But this Friday night, I appointed other boys to school, and to Christ's school, I knew the way of salvation, and I had been taught it from my mother's knees.

And I could tell others the way of salvation, and some of my friends at school, I didn't enter that way, but I had no joy. No joy. I was rather condemned.

But that Friday night, my daughter was going upstairs to his bed, and I called them and said, I want to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. They came out with John 3, 16. For God's will love the world, beginneth only with God and Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish.

I placed my name unto that whosoever, I repeated the verse over and over again during my boyhood, that now for the first time I place my name unto that whosoever, that Jesus is the Son of God, that I receive him by faith. My brother was included in the kitchen, and there was on the old kitchen table was my little mother. What was she doing? At 11.30 at night, she was praying for my salvation.

It's good to have a praying mother. I thank God for the memory of that little lady. I believe I'm here today just because she prayed.

Are you a praying mother? Probably some mother prayed for you, and you thank God for that praying mother today. My brother touched her and said, Jimmy's been saved. Getting up from her knees, she came through to my bedroom, put her arms around my neck, and I could almost feel that hug now.

Oh, not only my laddie, but now a Son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Did you get the expression? Not only my laddie, but now a Son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. That's how you become a Son of God.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. There are two factors in faith. There is a divine factor.

There is a human factor. The divine factor is the word of God. The human factor is the hearing of the ear.

You hear the annunciation of the gospel, that Christ died for your sins according to the scripture, that he was buried. On the third day, he was again from the dead. Do you believe the record God gave concerning his Son? Very, very I see unto you, he that heareth mine, and believeth on him that saith me, hath present possession, hath everlasting life, shall not come into condemnation, but is spared from death unto life.

How do you receive this life? 1 John 5 gives you the answer, and this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Then says the scripture, these things have I written unto you, that believeth on the name of the Son of God, that you may know, not you may feel, or you may think you have, or you may be have, but you know. You don't hope so, you know so. And you know you have it.

How do I know? Because God says it in his word. We had two Jewish children living with us for seven years back in Britain. They came just from Berlin, just one week before the last war started.

They could only speak five words of English, yes, no, thank you, please. They could speak German fluently, and Hebrew fluently, but they could only speak five. They were doctors' children.

The father was a doctor of medicine, the mother a doctor of philosophy. But they came to live with us there, and back in Britain. As time went on, they just came along with us to the services.

One day, after some years, William then just come to our assembly. He spoke to his son in school, and he did something I never do with boys and girls. I often do it with grown-ups, but never with boys and girls.

He asked all those who want to trust Jesus Christ with salvation to raise their right hand, and some 14 have indicated they want to trust Jesus Christ with salvation. On the way home, Robert said to my wife, Andy, isn't it wonderful to know all these girls and boys, they have trusted Jesus Christ with salvation. I said, is Robert? What about you? Oh, he said, Andy, I am saved.

I said, when were you saved, Robert? He said, three weeks ago. We rejoiced with the boy, at least he did, and then when Vance and I got home, he was staying with us, and it was crystal to me that Robert had trusted Jesus Christ with salvation. I had never said a word that day.

The next morning, after a family worship, and just before we rushed off to school, I said, Robert, tell me you are a Christian, now is this true? He said, yes, uncle, it is true. Tell me how did it happen? So the other night I was upstairs in my bed, and I was reading my German New Testament, and as soon as I came to Revelation 3.20, I read, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in.

What did you do, Robert? I got out of my bed, and I got down by my bedside. Now you think of a little Jewish boy praying like this, who stopped to spit at the name of Jesus, but he prayed, Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for dying for me, for bearing the penalty against my sin. I thank Thee for rising from the dead for me, and Lord, You said if I open my heart, You will come in.

Lord, I do it now. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. So wonderful, Robert, half his name.

So I just thanked Him for coming into my heart, I got back in the bed and went to sleep. So wonderful. But tell me, how do you know Jesus came into your heart? I feel different.

Something happened inside me, I feel different. So that may be so, Robert, but you have never yet told me how you know Jesus came into your heart. Looking straight at me, I think I see Him now.

Says, Uncle, do you think Jesus would tell a lie? Got it? I say, certainly not, my boy. If I just said, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, I just take it. Now, Katie, the girl, she's married to one of the elders in Granville Chapel in Vancouver.

Now, this all happened back in Britain years ago. Robert is in Vancouver, married to a very fine girl, and I saw them both there quite recently. I asked a question, Robert, about when did you receive the Lord Jesus? Forget that.

Lord, the expression on your face when I said, Uncle, do you think Jesus would tell a lie? Friends, He never tells a lie. As I am about to close, you know something? He's waiting at your heart's door now, and He wants to come into your heart. He wants you to receive Him as your very own Lord and Savior.

It's nothing not to believe about Him. No, even to believe in Him, you believe on Him. Is there a difference? Can I illustrate it? A young couple going round together.

She believes He loves her. She believes He cares. She believes He's strong, and He will look after her and support her.

She believes all that about Him, but still they don't belong to one another. Now, one little evening takes place, that lovely balmy kind of a night. A nice breezy blowing through the trees, little birds are all twittering up there, and a little river is just rippling away there, and moonshine, all strength and beauty.

I don't know much about these kind of nights, but they do tell me a lot about them. And what happens? And that very night, you know, everything's just leaning and leaning itself toward the man, and he just presses a diamond across her finger and says, Darling, she's got enough confidence in Him now to say, I will marry you. She believed about Him.

She now believes in Him, but still they don't belong to one another. And still that day, they stand before the fish-eating pastor. They say to the man, Will thou have this woman thy lawful wedded wife? He says, I will.

She turns, he turns to the woman and says, Will thou have this man thy lawful wedded husband? She says, I will. And the pastor puts his hand upon the clasped hand. I did just the other day, and we pray, Whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

And then their bowels did pray, Until death do us part. Now get the picture. They believed about each other.

They had confidence in each other. But now they believe on. What does the word on mean? It means a committal.

Can I give you an illustration? John 1, 12. So as many as receive Him, for them give ye power to become asunder God, even though they not believe on His name. To believe on Him is to receive Him.

She committed herself to Him, and he to her. And each one became one, until death do them part. Friends, the same thing happens regarding salvation.

You believe all the historical facts concerning Jesus Christ. You have confidence in Jesus Christ. But until you commit your life to Him, and you by faith receive Him into your heart, there is no salvation.

Mine begins when Jesus comes in. You commit yourself to Him, and what do you say? Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast off. And He receives you, and there is an indissoluble union.

You are neither death nor life can separate. Isn't that wonderful? I found a friend who was such a friend. He loved me ere I knew him.

He drew me with a cord of love, and thus he bound me to him. And round my heart still closely twine those ties which not confeder, for I am his, and he is mine. And you know something? It's forever.

And aren't you glad you're a Christian? Amen? The joy of being a child of God will go on from there this evening, God willing. A Christian is one who is a child of God, one who's got Christ living on the inside. Now let me ask you tenderly, have you? If not, why not this morning? Shall we pray? We're one minute in silence, and in that minute let's have a quiet word with the Lord for ourselves.

I ask you again, are you a child of God? Now, this is something you can know with crystal clarity, that you've been born of the Spirit into the family of God. We thank thee, blessed Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the privilege of being gathered together just like this. We thank thee for this very fine assembly.

We ask thy blessing upon each one, from the youngest to the eldest, and grant that not one may leave this morning without really knowing that they are in the family, they belong to thee, by having received the Lord Jesus by his Spirit into their spirit life. They may know the joy of this new life in Christ Jesus, and those about to do again know him, may they go forth day by day, and throughout the hours of this day in particular, that our lives may be an outshining of the indwelling Christ, that none of them may lose sight of us altogether, and see only him, in all his glory and beauty. We ask this in his name, and for thy glory alone.

Amen.

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