

What Is a Christian

by Manley Beasley

A Christian is one that is saved by the grace of God, born of the Spirit of God, and inhabited by the person of Christ, living a life that is separated from the world.

Duration: 41:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 15:2, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Christian"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of bearing fruit and bringing souls to Jesus. They reference the 15th chapter of the book of John, explaining that it is not about personal character but about leading others to Christ. The speaker also discusses the responsibility of Christians to invite people to Jesus and be soul winners. They mention a verse from Revelation 22:17 that highlights this responsibility. Additionally, the speaker touches on the idea of being separate from unbelievers and the assurance of salvation for believers.

Transcript

One of the things that I'm having to do in my ministry is go back and deal with subjects on a different level than some of the deeper level. So this month what I have done is gone back and picked up a message that I used to bring years ago, a message that I think I hardly outlined from old Brother Vance Havner, but nevertheless I used to use this all the time and now I'm coming, I'm back to it in these church meetings. I'm having to share on this level because so many of the churches I'm getting into are not in position to receive some of the truth on the level that I presented.

And so I want you to listen carefully and it may be that for you personally this message, you know, you do not need this message individually, but it may be that some friend or someone somewhere may need this message and it may be that God's going to use it that way in you. And again it may be that you yourself need this message. We're going to be talking about what is a Christian.

And you know it, the word Christian is used so frequently today around us that we have an idea formulated immediately when we say, well what is a Christian as to what a Christian is. But I was shocked to find that the word Christian was not used many times in the Bible. In fact I've found that the word Christian is not used but three times, three times in the Bible.

And for my research on the word Christian I went through the books that I have here looking over the title, the word, and the matter of being a Christian. And the scarcity of the material was significant to me. So we're going to just look into the word Christian for just a moment.

There will be several scripture references, but let me just say this. What do you think about when you are asked is he or she a Christian? What do you think about? You know a great deal of our society is lost without Christ, and never been saved by the grace of God. And when they are asked this question, what is a Christian, they think about a priest, or a nun, or a preacher, or some religious person.

Or they think about somebody that's been baptized. They think about some kind of professionally involved worker of some sort. What do you think about? When you think about a Christian, what do you think about? What's your idea? It just pops in your mind.

When you think about a Christian, she is a Christian. He is a Christian. They're Christians.

What do you think? Well, it's an interesting note. Let's just look in the Bible and see the references. Look at Acts 11.

We'll have the first mentioning of the word Christian. And when he had found him, he brought him into Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. And of course these people are talking about they found Paul, and they brought him to Antioch, and they assembled themselves there together for the whole year at the church. Obviously being taught, praying, and so forth.

And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. So the first mentioning of the word Christian was in Antioch. And some indicate that it wasn't a complimentary type thing.

But they were kind of throwing a bad reputation upon the people. But nevertheless, regardless of what their motive was, they were identifying these people with Christ. They were identifying these people with Christ.

So it's obvious that these people must have resembled Christ in some way. Somehow, some way, they resembled Christ. And so they were first called Christians in Antioch.

That's the first time we have the word Christian mentioned. Now, then we go to Acts 26, 28. And we have the word Christian mentioned again.

And that's very interesting. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. That's interesting, isn't it? It's obvious that the Christians were known in those days in high places.

And Paul certainly was known as a Christian. Because what he was doing was dealing with Agrippa on this matter of bringing him to Christ, bringing him to Jesus, and making him a Christian. So let's go a little further.

Second Peter, excuse me, First Peter, we have a word Christian mentioned again. First Peter 4, 16. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Now he's talking about suffering here. 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.

In other words, if you suffer because you are Christian, you ought to praise God. You ought to magnify the Lord. You ought to glorify God.

You ought to really praise the Lord. Isn't that wonderful? Well, we have the word Christian mentioned those three times in the Bible. And I remember this one significant thing someone has said through the years as I've studied the Christian life.

The Christians did not call themselves Christians. The world named them Christians. Boy, what a compliment.

What a compliment. And I wonder, it's very important, you know, to what the world says about us. Do you think they are calling us Christians? Do you think they are saying he or she is a Christian? Boy, that's what the world calls those people Christians.

Isn't that wonderful? I wonder if the world is calling us Christians. Well, I'm going to give you my definition of what is a Christian. And there is several points in this message on what is a Christian.

And we're going to discuss it point by point and verse by verse and see what is a genuine Christian. Now, I know as a little boy, I grew up thinking that a Christian was someone different. Someone that was different.

I always believed that a Christian was someone that was absolutely different. And so, as we listen to this message, I believe you will see that this definition really makes sense. First, a Christian is one that is saved by the grace of God.

Nicodemus came to Jesus. And Nicodemus asked the Lord Jesus how he could get in to the kingdom of God. Yes, sir.

And so, Jesus said to Nicodemus that a man must be born of the Spirit if he's going to get into the kingdom of God. Now, Nicodemus did not understand all of this spiritual talk. And for your scripture references, I'm looking at John 3, 1 through just right on down through 16.

And Jesus did not stop to explain to Nicodemus the scriptures. He just continued to proclaim to Nicodemus that a man must be born of the Spirit of God. Now, to be born of the Spirit of God, to be born again, is the basis of being saved by the grace of God.

To be born again, which is the basis of being saved, the Holy Spirit deals with a lost sinner. The Word of God is presented to a lost sinner. Or I could say, in a simple way, the light of the truth is revealed to the lost sinner.

And that lost sinner responds to that light by simple faith. And that person is led into a simple faith as a sinner in Jesus Christ. And they're born of the Spirit of God.

And as they're born of the Spirit of God, then their spirit and God's spirit becomes one spirit. 1 Corinthians 6.17. And they're born of the Spirit of God. They're saved by the grace of God.

This is a mysterious explanation, you might say. Well, it may be. But I know that a person must be born again.

Must be born again. You might say, well, I don't understand what you mean by being born again. If you have been born again, you do understand what I mean.

If you haven't been born again, I'm sure that you do not understand what I mean. You need to turn to John 3, read those first 16 verses, or maybe through the 18th verse. And just simply say, oh God, what does it mean to be born again? Show me.

The truth. Show me the truth. And I believe that God will lead you to the truth about being born again.

So I trust that you will just let the Lord teach you what it means to be born again. I know this, the result of being born again is that you are inhabited by the person of Christ. You have his nature.

Oh, you have more than his nature, you have his person. You have more than his person, you have him. You have the completeness of Christ in you.

The Godhead bodily, all the fullness of the Godhead body in Christ Jesus is living in you as a believer. Now that's the mystery, that's the mystery that's been hid from all generations now, that's revealed unto us in our day. That Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Oh, my dear friend, we are not improved people. We are inhabited people. What a beautiful experience.

What a beautiful joy. What a beautiful ministry to know that we are inhabited by the person of Christ himself. Now, a Christian is one that is saved, born of the Spirit of God.

He is saved by grace through faith. That not of himself, it's a gift of God. There's no way you can work your way into this salvation.

It's by grace through faith. It's by grace through faith. There's just no way.

You can go to church and be the best person in the world and still not be saved. You can give your money to the church and still not be saved. You can join the church and still not be saved.

But you must be born of the Spirit. Now, if you're born of the Spirit of God, you have been made alive to God. Alive to God.

You and God's Spirit are one Spirit. Which brings us to the second characteristic of a Christian. In our definition of a Christian, a Christian is one that is sure they're saved.

They're sure that they're saved by the grace of God. Now, they're sure because their Spirit and God's Spirit is not only one Spirit, but bearing witness one to another. Now, if you've been in my ministry long, you've heard me go over this material.

Maybe these first two points, but you haven't heard me go over the rest of it. So, just hold on. But, there's so many new people in the ministry that they need to hear this.

Now, in the 16th verse of the 8th chapter of the book of Romans, we find these words. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now, I believe that when a person is saved, they are sure that they're saved.

Now, this is not to say that there are not suggested thoughts in their mind. To them, that they are not saved at different times. When they do something wrong, or when they fail to do something right, or when they just have a pure attack from Satan.

Satan will attack them, suggest to their mind that they are not saved by the grace of God. They're not washed in the blood of the Lamb. But, this is something that they have to face.

But, in their spirit, they will not have a great deal of understanding, but they will know. We put it this way, in their heart, they will know that they know Jesus. And, this Romans 8.16 just really tells it like it is.

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit. See, God's spirit bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God. Now, I believe this means that we simply know that we know the Lord.

We do not know how we know, we just simply know that we know. It's a very simple witness of the Spirit of God in a person's life. By the way, this knowing is deeper than understanding.

It's just a simple knowing that we know the Lord. So, a Christian is not only one that's saved, but one that's sure that he's saved. Let me just give another illustration.

Colossians 3 gives us a word that really helps us at this matter of knowing that we're saved. Let me show you your position when you're in Christ Jesus. 3.3, Colossians 3.3, you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Back years ago, I heard an illustration that illustrated the position of a person in Christ Jesus off of this verse. Uh, this preacher was kept having trouble with people thinking that they were falling from grace. Once they were saved, they were saved for a while and then they would not be saved anymore.

So, he preached to his people one night this illustration. He went and got him three small barrels. But all three of these barrels were different sizes.

And so, he took his big barrel. Let's say that barrel was about 36 inches across. And he took that big barrel and set it in front of the church.

He said, now I want this barrel, this big barrel to represent God. And he said, let's just talk about God. Is God all powerful? Yes, he's all powerful.

Can the devil defeat God? Can he destroy God? Can he literally overcome God? No, he can't do it. God is God. God is all powerful.

Okay, all right, this big barrel represents God. All right, this next size barrel, about 18 inch barrel, represents Jesus. Okay, let's take Jesus and set Jesus inside this barrel that is God.

Okay, okay, okay. Now, Jesus, is the devil more powerful than Jesus? Oh, no, no. Can the devil destroy Jesus? Oh, no, he cannot.

Okay, we got Jesus in here. Okay, let's take this small barrel, about 10 inch barrel. Okay, this barrel.

This barrel represents a believer in Christ Jesus. Someone that is saved by the grace of God. Okay, let's take this and set this barrel inside Jesus.

This barrel. Now, is Satan more powerful than a Christian? Yes, he can be more powerful than a Christian because he can deceive a Christian and defeat a Christian. Yes, yes.

But he's not more powerful than Jesus. He's not more powerful than God. That's right.

So, he said, let's put a lid on Jesus. So, he put a lid on Jesus. Totally covered up the little barrel that represented the Christian inside the barrel that represented Jesus.

Then you put a lid on God. Okay, now, where is the barrel that represents Jesus? Inside, or represents the believer, excuse me. He's inside the barrel that represents Jesus, inside the barrel that represents God.

Okay, he said, all right, the Bible says that we are hid in Christ, in God. We're hid in Christ, in God. Now, this, we're dead and your life is hid within Christ, in God.

Okay, let me see any of you in this audience who said, come get that little barrel that represents the believer out of that barrel without going through God and Jesus. Boy, they couldn't do it. He says, well, Satan cannot rob you of your salvation because you're hid within Christ, in God.

Now, beloved, let me tell you something. A person that is saved by the grace of God, it's hid in Christ, in God, and Satan cannot get to them. They're hid in that barrel.

Now, a person that is a Christian is not only saved, but they have the assurance of their salvation. Okay, not only is a Christian saved and sure that they're saved, but a Christian is one that is separated from the world. That's so beautiful.

So, what do you mean separated from the world? I'll tell you what. Back 30 years ago, when I first started in the ministry, you heard a great deal of preaching on separation. Now, I don't know why we have stopped preaching on separation, but in our day and time, you hear no longer any preaching on separation.

But a Christian is one that is separated. Now, listen to what Paul said to the believers at Corinth. Second Corinthians, the sixth chapter.

He says, the thirteenth verse, Now for a recompense in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged. He said to them, you need to have an enlargement in your Christian life. You need to be enlarged Christians.

You're not as great a Christian as you should be, and you should be an enlarged Christian. So he goes on, then he says in the fourteenth verse, Ye, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers? For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Baal? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? For what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Now, here's what I'm saying. The word of God instructs us to be a separated people.

In other words, we are to be separated from the things of the world. We are not to have fellowship with unrighteousness. We are not to have any kind of relationship with Baal or with infidels.

We are, as the temple of the living God, not to have any relationship with idols of any sort. No, sir, we're to be separated. I believe it was Vance Hamner who said this.

If I look out there, and I see something that looks like a duck, and it sounds like a duck, the only thing I can deduct is that it is a duck. Now, here's what I'm saying. If we look out here, and we see a person that looks like a sinner, smells like a sinner, talks like a sinner, walks like a sinner, the only thing we can deduct is that they are sinners.

Now, you might say, well, we that are saved by the grace of God are saved sinners. Yes, I know we are, but our lives are to be so separated from the things of the world that we look like, we talk like, we walk like, and I even believe smell like people that know Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. I believe we are to really walk in the glory of His presence.

I believe that we are to move in the power and the glory of His presence in such a way that people will literally, literally, literally see Jesus in us. I know that people can get legalistic about things like this, and I know they can start giving up things that are like the world, just like the world in the flesh, and just start giving them up on their own, and it does not make them more like Jesus. And I know that we can get ridiculous in this thing of not being like the world in the point that we do not even buy homes and cars and things that are necessary to function.

And I know we can become ridiculous about things like that, and that is awful. But I have watched this over 30 years. I have watched people get saved by the grace of God, and the closer they get to Jesus, the more they want to smell like the Lord.

And I have seen men and women just get victory over their cigarette smoking because they did not think that that looked like Jesus Christ or smelt like Jesus Christ. I have seen men and women drop off some of their clothing procedure, you know, the way they clothe, because the clothing they were in, wearing, did not look like Jesus Christ, so they just dropped it off. I have seen men and women stop going to places, places of business, because it was not becoming to a child of God.

And, you know, they become separated from the world, and that you can literally tell that there is something different in their life by the way they act. So they are separated from the world, and it is beautiful to see. So I believe that a Christian is one that is separated from the world, you know, separated somehow, somehow from the world, that the world can simply tell that they are really, genuinely children of God, because they are separated from the world now.

I do not know how separated you are, what is the level of your separation, but I feel like this should be the attitude of the child of God. How close can I get to heaven? How much can I look like Jesus? And still stay on this earth? Most of us are not that way. Most of us say, how worldly, how worldly can I get and still satisfy God? Well, you cannot get any more worldly than the fact that you know that you have worldliness in your life, and you can be worldly over so many things.

You can be worldly over homes, over clothes, over language, over just an attitude, you can be worldly in your attitude. But the thing that we are really emphasizing here, that a Christian is one that is separated from the world. I have been in revival meetings, you may not agree with this, or you may, I do not know, but I have been in revival meetings where people have become so convicted, and I assume that it was conviction, I pray that it was conviction, and I feel that at this point, as I share it with you, it was conviction, where they have become so convicted over books that they were reading, and clothing that they were

wearing, and habits they had, that they would bring their books and clothing and such like this to the church and have a bonfire.

You say, well, that is not scriptural. Oh, yes, it is. That is very scriptural.

They had a bonfire in the Bible where they bought books that taught heresy and all that. That is what I am talking about, and burned them. And so, a child of God, a person that is a Christian, is saved, sure, and separated.

That is right, separated. Well, excuse me, let us go on. Fourth, a Christian is one that is Spirit-filled, filled by the Holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit of the living God.

Isn't that wonderful? Now, I believe that when a person gets saved by the grace of God, washed in the blood of the Lamb, if they were obedient to the light that God gives them from that moment on, excuse me, if they were obedient to the light that God gives them from that moment on, I believe they could stay right with God and filled with the Holy Spirit. But let me say this. I have been saved for almost 32 years, and I have never, never known a person that has been able to do that.

And I believe that the Bible teaches that a person needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And I believe that a person that is obedient to the light that God gives them is continually cleansed and continually filled. But there are two bases for filling when a person is not filled with the Holy Spirit.

And one base is the fact that you have all your sins confessed up to date. And the other fact is that just by simple faith, you claim the filling of the Holy Spirit. Now, some of you may get this mixed up with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, or the endowment of the Holy Spirit, which I separate the filling from the anointing or the endowment, however you want to refer to the anointing.

But the Bible says, in Ephesians 5, 18, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. And so I believe that a Christian is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in our lives, there is the expression of that filling of the Holy Spirit.

So I trust that today, someway, somehow, you realize that a Christian is one that is filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, let me say this again. Two bases of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

A person must have their sins confessed up to date. And then a person must also believe by faith for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Now, I think that we have made the filling of the Holy Spirit a big crisis thing in the life of the believer, where I think it should be a day-by-day, day-by-day experience.

You know, I think it just should be a day-by-day happening. We should be constantly asking God to show us the sin in our life, and we should allow the Lord to put that sin upon our, our, excuse me, our, his finger upon that sin, and expose it to us, and just really get out there and confess it, and believe the Lord for the cleansing and for the filling. And I believe we can just walk with God on the filling of the Holy Spirit like this day-by-day.

And when we are filled, the Spirit of God shed abroad in our lives will express the fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5, 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. So I feel that we're to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not to the point of our thinking we're filled, but to the point of having the expression of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

You say, well, Brother Manley, I'm filled, but I do not have the expressions of the filling of the Holy Spirit. That's mentioned here in Galatians 5, 22 through 23. Well, you're just not filled.

You're just, you are whistling in the air. Friends, there's no reality to your filling, because when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, there is the expression of Christ through that mortal flesh, in the expression of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and faith, meekness, temperance, and so on. And so I trust that you realize that a Christian is one that is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, it doesn't stop there. In our day and time, and this is tragic, in our day and time, we are running into a great segment of the people of God that say, boy, wow, the ultimate is to be filled with the Spirit. And it's just stopped there.

But I do not believe that. I believe it goes further than that. I believe that the next, a Christian is a soul winner.

I believe a Christian is a soul winner. You say, what do you mean a soul winner? I believe a Christian is one that is reproducing, bringing men and women to Jesus, getting people saved by the grace of God. Now, I think the most significant thing that ever happens to a Christian is get saved.

I think the second significant thing that happens to a Christian is for him to live like he's saved. I think the third significant thing that happens to a Christian is for him to be a fruit-bearing Christian. Now, John 15, 16, I believe it is, says, yes, it's John 15, 16.

You've not chosen me, but I've chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you, or give it to you. Now, this verse definitely indicates that a child of God is to bear fruit. Now, our time is going to end up running out on us, so let me hurry.

This 15th chapter of the book of John is not talking about the fruit that represents a character. It's talking about the fruit that brings forth souls unto Jesus. Bear much fruit, and ye shall bear more fruit.

And so I believe the Bible teaches us that. There's a great verse in Revelation, Revelation 22, 17, that is just so beautiful about, I believe, indicating the responsibility of the saint. Let's see if I can get to it here before our time runs out.

And it says, And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come.

And whosoever will let him take the water of life. Isn't that beautiful? The Lord's talking about inviting people to Jesus. So I believe that we definitely have that responsibility.

And I believe a Christian is a soul winner. Then I believe that a Christian is a person with a song in their heart. Now, you might say, well, I don't understand that.

Yes, I believe a person that is a Christian is one that is happy. Now, I could have tied this in a while ago with the fullness of the Spirit. Because when you talk about the fullness of the Spirit, you're talking about, and the fruit of the Spirit is love and joy.

A person that has a song in their heart, and a peace in their heart, see, is one that's Spirit-controlled. But I believe a person definitely has a song in their heart. And John 15, 11 also says, These things have I

spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

So a Christian is one that I feel experiences spontaneous joy. I mean joy, regardless of what the circumstances may be. Now, happenings lend to happiness.

But friends, the Lord is the source of our joy. We can be full of joy even when we're brokenhearted over some issue. Yes, I wish I could describe the difference between joy and happiness.

But the Christian is one that is full of joy. One with a song in their heart. And so I trust today that God has given you some light.

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