

What A Small Price to Pay



By Rob Pue

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What does it mean to you to be a Christian? When you hear someone say they're a "Christian," what does that actually mean? Does it mean they attend a church on a regular basis? Does it mean they grew up in a Christian family and believe in God? Does it mean they once prayed a "sinner's prayer" – perhaps as a child at summer camp? I ask these things because when people tell me they're a "Christian," I have to wonder, because "being a Christian" doesn't seem to mean what it used to mean.

These days, it's hard to tell Christians from unbelievers. Most show no signs of being any different from the world. There are many who claim the name of Christ, but in doing so, I believe they're actually taking the Lord's name in vain, because they have no fruit to show as proof of their conversion. Even many true Christ-followers may worship the Lord in private but are unwilling to bear witness of their salvation in public, for fear they'll be looked upon as strange, different or a "fanatic." Jesus said if we're ashamed of Him to those around us, He will be ashamed of us to His Father.

There are also those who really believe they're saved; they really believe they're Christians, but they've been so deceived by false teachers offering "cheap grace" and "easy believism." They may attend a church service every week, but they're so biblically illiterate they couldn't tell you much

of anything that God's Word says – or commands. They've built their spiritual house on sinking sand, and when trials come, they look to everything and everyone EXCEPT God, and prayer is only a "last resort."

Even more concerning is the example they portray to the unsaved. This is VERY concerning because as the world becomes increasingly wicked and evil, there can be no fence-sitting allowed; no wandering the middle of the road. You're either on the side of Jesus or you're on the devil's team. Jesus said, *"If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."* But today, our churches teach that being a Christian costs you nothing. We're told that God doesn't require anything of us and that we can have our "best life now." I hate to tell you, but that's the exact opposite of what Scripture actually says we can expect when we choose to follow God.

Read the book of Acts. What did the early followers of Christ experience? Hebrews, chapter 11 lists a few things: *"...cruel mockings and scourgings...bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented."*

These believers held fast to the words of their Lord, Who said, *"In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."* They had real faith and courage to withstand the worst the world could hurl at them, considering it a privilege to suffer for the cause of Christ. But today, it seems the most people are willing to do is put a "fish" on the back of their car.

Many are so clueless and so lacking in discernment, they even parade their unbiblical and ungodly pursuits with the world. Many times I've been astounded to see some of the postings on social media by professing Christians. They post things from their favorite secular music and entertainment stars – and

what passes for “music” and “entertainment” today would very well be considered absolute pornography and vile filth not so long ago. Even pastors share things on social media promoting popular music, movies and TV shows, and these things are FILLED with homosexuality, adultery, fornication, foul language, openly mocking the traditional family structure and even blaspheming God Himself.

One pastor posted his list of favorite movies. I was stunned. According to a popular Christian movie review website, these movies are replete with blasphemy, taking the Lord’s name in vain, drug references, profanity, “potty” humor, countless sexual innuendos, extensive homosexuality – including scenes of men kissing on the mouth for extended periods of time, and blatant ridiculing of Christians, Christianity and Jesus Christ Himself! By their count, 88 times in one movie alone! All in the name of “comedy.” Now, if my words offend you, that’s too bad, because mocking and ridiculing the Savior is NOT alright, and for a Christian PASTOR to promote such things on his social media page shows a complete lack of spiritual maturity and wise discernment. Not to mention the effects that filling one’s mind with this garbage has on a person’s mind and soul. How can someone who does so, then be counted as fit for ministry LEADERSHIP? My Bible says that our elders and leaders are to be beyond reproach, holy and pure in all their ways.

But that’s the way things are these days. Our modern pastors just want to be well liked and popular among the people, and they especially want to appeal to the young people, so they would rather be seen as “just a regular guy” than a wise, spiritual leader. In fact, the more worldly they portray themselves, the more “hip” and “cool” they think the kids will believe them to be. It’s just so sad to see so many leading so many astray.

But it gets even worse. A study just released, which can be found at the website: ConquerSeries.com shows that 68% of

church-going men, and over 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis. Of young "Christian" adults, 18-24 years old, 76% actively search for porn. Interestingly, another study from last year showed that 76% of regular church-goers now accept homosexual so-called "marriage" as just fine – just another "alternative lifestyle" that should be accepted and celebrated. I assume the militant transgender movement currently being actively pushed on our young children will soon overwhelm our modern American churches too, and to question any abomination at all will earn one the title of "hateful bigot."

It all comes back to cowardice and a lack of Godly leadership in our churches. It's because of these wolves in sheep's clothing that our country is quickly rotting now, from the inside out. For decades, many of our churches have been promoting a false gospel, which requires nothing – no repentance, no change of heart, no spiritual transformation. They rarely even speak of the blood Christ shed to redeem us. The result is a generation of professing Christians who can ridicule and mock the Savior in the TV programs, movies and music they enjoy, in complete ignorance that anything is even wrong with it. Their entertainment is as demonic as anything Satan could ever devise, and they find absolutely nothing wrong with it.

They may go to church, but only to receive a message that makes them feel good about themselves. There's no conviction of heart, no godly sorrow for sin. For that matter, sin is rarely even mentioned, if at all. They have no idea at all who the real God is and have zero interest in reading or studying the Scriptures on their own either. The result is that much of today's Christianity is simply worthless, vain religion, laced with secular humanism and universalism and so, of course, anything goes. We all do what we feel is right in our own eyes, and no one is allowed to pass judgment on anything or call sin "sin." I assert that MANY of today's

professing Christians are woefully unaware of the true state of their souls and woefully ignorant of Scripture. As Second Timothy 3:5 says, *"Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such, turn away."*

As a child I learned, *"For the grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we are to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age."* (Titus 2:11-12). Now, I ask you: do we believe that? Or not. I understand, everyone is at a different level of spiritual maturity and we need to gently instruct baby Christians. But we MUST instruct them rightly. Anything less is just a lie. And I will be the first to admit that I have not always lived up to God's holy standards, and I know I fall woefully short of the mark even today. But it remains the standard by which we're all called to live, as Christians. We are to DENY ungodliness and WORLDLY LUSTS – not jump into it head first! We are to live soberly, righteously and godly today – in this present age.

The greatest evidence of a soul truly and soundly saved is the gift of the Holy Spirit. When you truly become a Christ-follower, the Holy Spirit of God Himself comes to dwell inside you. You will KNOW IT when it happens. There will be no doubt. This is more than just your "conscience." This is the Spirit of GOD I'm talking about. It's God's Spirit that enables us to accomplish what Paul exhorted of the Romans, in chapter 12: *"And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

You can't have the Holy Spirit living within you and still go on living a carnal, hedonistic lifestyle like the rest of the world. You can't have the Holy Spirit and not have a deep desire to grow ever closer to Christ, to continue on in sanctification. A truly saved Christian will look different, act different and BE different from the unsaved world around them. 1 Peter, chapter 2 tells us, "But you are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.”

Our enemy will still tempt us and he actively works to destroy each of us, exploiting each of our personal weaknesses. But true Christians are transformed as our minds are renewed and our souls born again, of the Spirit of God. Those without the Spirit cannot discern spiritual matters. It's not that they don't want to – they are wholly unequipped to understand. That's why the Gospel of Christ makes no sense to them. That's why they can read Bible passages, but cannot understand them. One must become a true child of God. There's no faking it, at least not for very long.

Look also at Romans 8: *“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”*

I'm concerned with those who think they can fake it. One foot in a church building and one foot in a sewer. Jesus told us of the narrow road and the narrow gate that leads to life, and He warned us that FEW there would be that find it. He also told us that MANY will be very surprised on Judgment Day when they hear His words, *“depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”*

One researcher noted that the population of the world in Noah's day was 300 million. How many obeyed God and were saved? 8. Eight out of 300 million. Likewise the population of Sodom and Gomorrah at the time of their destruction was estimated at 200,000. How many were saved? 3. Three out of 200,000. Jesus said that His return would be like in the days of Noah, and the days of Lot. VERY FEW actually were saved.

The “narrow gate” Jesus spoke of is very narrow indeed. But it’s the only gate that leads to life.

I urge you to examine your hearts and lives, and do it today. Scripture tells us to do just that, to make sure we’re in the faith. We must pay attention to what we put into our minds and hearts and lives. We can’t fill ourselves with filth and expect the Holy Spirit to reside there too. We cannot mock God, blaspheme the name of Christ and embrace what the Scriptures call “abomination” and then expect to live fruitful lives for the Lord, nor should we expect any reward anywhere near heaven.

I can’t imagine living without God; He is my Rock and my Salvation...yet just as our Savior was persecuted, we can expect the same. He will be there with us, to help us through it, but the Christian life is not one of ease and has no part in the evil things of this world. Seek God and pray without ceasing. He will reveal Himself to you – His TRUE self – as He promised.

If you do this, you can expect ridicule, mocking, disdain and in some cases, outright hatred from those who choose to remain in the world, practicing worthless religion. As Paul warned Timothy, *“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* Oftentimes, the worst persecution comes from religious people and false Christians; the love of God is not in them. But what a ridiculously small price to pay for a relationship with the Most High God, our Creator. Even though we may die for our faith, what a small price to pay for an eternity as a child of the King of Kings. You can no longer sit the fence and you’d best get out of the middle of the road, while you still can.

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