

April 4, 2016

What It Means To Be A Christian: Jesus Is Lord and Savior

1 Peter 3:18 (ESV), **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”**

This past week we have been looking at what it means to be a Christian. There is so much confusion in our culture about what this actually means. I believe that the church is largely responsible for this self-inflicted confusion because we have forgotten the Gospel call of Christ. What passes for the gospel call today in many pulpits continues to get broader and more fuzzy as time passes. But this is not the Gospel call of Christ.

The Gospel that our Lord and Savior proclaimed was really a call to discipleship, it was a call to follow Him and to submit to Him in obedience. The Gospel according to Jesus is not a call to make a decision or to pray a prayer. John MacArthur writes that “contemporary Christians have been conditioned to believe that because they recited a prayer, signed on a dotted line, walked an aisle, or had some other experience, they are saved and should never question their salvation.” This is what most within the evangelical tent believe it means to be a Christian.

Over the past week we have learned being a Christian is more than just identifying oneself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. What we have learned is that being a Christian means that one has embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, and salvation. We have looked some truths that are found in Scripture in our pursuit of a better understanding of this issue.

The first truth was that God is the Sovereign creator. We are created by a personal God to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The second truth we learned was that God is absolutely and perfectly holy which means that He cannot commit or approve of evil. God also requires us to be holy as well. The third truth we learned is that we are the opposite of God, mankind is sinful. Everyone is guilty of sin and this means that we are completely incapable of understanding, loving, or pleasing God on our own. The last truth we looked at is that sin demands a penalty. God’s holiness and justice demand that *all sin* be punished by death. Romans 6:23 says tells us that **“the wages of sin is death.”**

The truth which we will be looking at today is that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Sin has consequences and the eternal consequence of our sin is eternal death or separation for God. There is no way we can ever do enough good things to pay the penalty for our sins. God knows this so He sent His only Son to die on the cross (a brutal death) to pay the penalty for our sins. He died in our place.

Romans 10:9 says that **“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”** Even though God’s justice demands death for our sin, God’s *love* has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners. 1 Peter 3:18 says, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”**

Jesus Christ’s death on the cross satisfied the demands of God’s justice and His (Christ’s) perfect sinless life satisfied the demands of God’s holiness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”** This then enables God to forgive and to save those who place their trust in Christ. Romans 3:26 says, **“It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”**

Tomorrow we will conclude our series as we look at the final truth which is the result of placing our faith in Jesus Christ.