

What a True Christian Really Looks Like

It's easy to understand why nearly all non-Christians, secularists and the media misunderstand Christianity. Today words and their definitions are nearly meaningless because the same words are used to support particular, even opposite agendas. Relativism and proof-texting are the means to this end, justifying the terms people use about themselves and others.

Division among denominations, churches, organizations, and even personalities advocating their own version of truth certainly hinders non-believers from understanding Christianity.

However, identifying real Christianity and the people of the Cross is straightforward.

Christianity is rooted in the historical person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus' words and actions communicate God's unconditional, immeasurable love, expressing God's unbending commitment to human redemption. To know Jesus is to know God; one's belief about Jesus yields eternal consequences.

A true Christian believes Jesus is not only the Word of God but he is the key to understanding God's revelation (John 1, 5, 8; Romans). Jesus made authoritative claims about His deity, the eternal co-existing relational nature of God, and the necessity for salvation, truth and life, all of which only He can provide. His claims got Him killed (John 10:29, 30, 8:24-27, 5:18, 3:35, 15:26, 19:10-11; Luke 2:49, 11:13; 1 John 4; 1 Pet. 1; Matt. 26:39).

Knowing Jesus is evidenced through a Christian's commitment to the authority and divine authorship of the Bible as God's Word, which cannot be altered (Prov. 30:5-6; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2

Pet. 1:20-21). Knowing Jesus naturally results in the rejection of false teachings that arose centuries (Quran), even millennia (Book of Mormon), after eyewitness testimony and texts about Jesus, claiming additional revelation to the Bible not only existed, but abrogated biblical truth.

Genuine Christians affirm the Bible alone communicates God's divine answer to humanity's deepest needs, provides moral and ethical guidance to foster human flourishing and right and peaceable living. The Bible records the true gospel of Jesus Christ, which offers forgiveness, mercy, grace, redemption, hope, joy and eternal life.

Birth, baptism, ethnicity or culture do not a Christian make. One becomes a Christian only through faith in Jesus Christ, whose grace and imputed righteousness personally transforms believers relationally to him. Such conversion, what Jesus called being "born again," results in obedience demonstrated through love. As one New York minister says, "We don't love people in order to share our faith with them. Rather, we share our faith and ourselves with them in order to love them."

Love is demonstrated through action; consider the numerous humanitarian organizations, hospitals, charities, schools and social reform efforts begun by Christians that have transformed societies worldwide. Or the assurance of kindness, joy and hope expressed by those who genuinely know the origin of such gifts.

People of the Cross affirm what no one else can: Jesus defeated the most brutal humiliating first-century, state-sponsored act of terrorism. Christians preach Christ Crucified because God's love is more powerful than any government's cruelty.

Unlike Muslims who kill because of alleged insults to their prophet Muhammad, Christians lift up, point to, celebrate, and worship Jesus Christ's indescribable humiliation—because he

overcame it, and for eternity. He who is “faithful and true” will return a hero riding a white horse and avenge everyone killed in his name. People of the cross can rejoice in persecution and sing before being beheaded—knowing neither is final—because Jesus Christ defeated both.

This is why People of the Cross don’t riot, burn, loot or kill after learning that Bibles and churches are burned and Christians are murdered. The blood of the martyrs, as Tertullian remarked millennia ago, is still the seed of church. The church does not die even in death—it’s witness contagiously knows no bounds.

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