



World Christian Fellowship

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Philippians 27 Who is NOT a Christian?

Philippians 3:1-3, *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. ²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! ³For we are the circumcision, who worship ^[a]God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

Apostle Paul was preaching the gospel of salvation by grace through faith, plus or minus nothing.

He was preaching the gospel of grace, no works at all whatsoever involved. Paul travelled around the regions and preached that and established churches. He was being followed by some Jews.

These Judaizers were propagating that believe in Christ, His death and resurrection is important, but God will not accept you unless you are circumcised.

You must affirm physical circumcision, surgical circumcision because that's the mark of God's people.

Secondly, you must keep all the ceremonies and laws of Moses.

So, Paul would establish a church. Into town would come these Jews. They would be accepted because they would affirm Christ. They would affirm the gospel. But the Judaizers will bring in this confusion to them.

It reached such a big problem that it became the major concern of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.

You had people on the one side who were saying salvation is by grace and works. God does His part in Christ; you do your part by being circumcised and keeping Mosaic law.

On the other hand, you had those who said salvation is by grace through faith plus and minus nothing!

No works at all, no circumcision, no ceremonies, no necessity to please God by your own merit, your own effort.

Paul takes the view of the Judaizers in V2.

Dogs,
Evil workers, and
Mutilation.

They are dogs.

Why?

Unclean outcasts.

They are evil workers.

Why?

Because they think they are doing and working good but the fact is they are working evil.

Because they are attempting to please God by their own self-effort.

The mutilation.

Why?

Because they do not have a true cleansing which circumcision symbolized, all they have is a physical surgery that's nothing more than a mutilation.

Circumcision was always an outward symbol of an inward reality!

On the other hand, he comes then in verse 3 to the true circumcision.

Circumcision symbolized the need for a cleansed life and a cleansed heart.

How do we know the true circumcision?

Three things characterize them.

1. Worship in the Spirit of God,
2. Glory in Christ Jesus and
3. Put no confidence in the flesh.

If we take the New Testament list of all characteristics of true Christian salvation and make a list, It may run in several pages but they all can be classified under this three categories.

God in His infinite wisdom gave it to Paul through His Holy Spirit to use the most appropriate words so beautifully.

The Holy Spirit has reduced the whole thing to three statements.

The distinctive tests of true Christianity are these three statements.

Please do notice that they do not speak of what you do, they do not speak of function but of attitude.

Worship by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

These are the things that are the distinctive qualities of true Christianity.

We will look at who are not the Christians and their distinctions.

1. Your conversion

Some people think they are Christians because of some event in the past.

- They prayed with the Sunday-school teacher.
- They prayed with their mother.
- They prayed with their father.
- They went forward in a church service.
- They signed a card.
- They were at a youth meeting and a person spoke at camp and they went down and they prayed a prayer.
- They knelt by their bed.

No past event of a supposed conversion is a verifier of true salvation.

For most Christians there was no event. There was no moment in which in their own mind they knew the time and the place and the event.

Large members were raised in Christian families, they came through a process of believing. They do not know that moment in time when they went from not believing to believing because they never did not believe.

Some people may have come from different faith background, they may have been raised in an unsaved family, and maybe at some point they were began to be exposed to the gospel. Then

they were more and more exposed to it and realized one day that they had committed their life to Christ. But they can't necessarily identify the moment in time because the Lord was taking them through a process of opening their heart to an understanding of the Word of God.

Also, it is no proof that a person is not a Christian because they don't have an event, because they can't identify a moment.

Nor is it any proof that a person is a Christian because they had an event.

You have to have both of those. Just because you walked an aisle, prayed a prayer, signed a card, went to camp, did whatever, that in itself is not a proof.

Let us look at the example of Simon the Jew:

People of Samaria think he is of God, but he is actually of Satan. But he had some tremendous Satanic demonic power.

Acts 8:9-11, *But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great,¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God."¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.*

Now when Philip arrives, now you have got a true man of God, now the man of Satan is going to be exposed.

Acts 8:12-13, *But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.*

So, Simon could look back and say, "I remember the day Philip preached and I remember the day I heard the message and I remember the day I prayed the prayer and I remember the day I was baptized."

Right?

He had his event not only that, he continued with Philip.

Why was Simon amazed?

Because the power of God is infinitely greater than the power of Simon or the power of Satan. What Simon seeing was not the depraved wonders of a vile being, Satan and his demons, but the pure unadulterated majestic power of the living God flowing through Philip. The level of achievement was way beyond anything Simon had ever experienced or accomplished.

Acts 8:18-19, *And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them*

money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

That is the greatest trick Simon would have ever seen.

Why?

The Apostles were laying hands on these new believers and they began to speak in languages. Just like they did on the day of Pentecost.

These were half-Jew Samaritans and they were one with the Jews in Christ. So, when they began to do this miraculous speaking of languages like Acts 2.

Now it becomes apparent to us that the reason Simon had an event was because he wanted to be able to do bigger tricks.

He wanted the magic.

The motive was wrong.

Acts 8:20-23, *But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."*

Spiritual characterization of Simon.

What he was like?

- He was going to perish.
- He thought he could buy the gift of God with money.
- He had no part and no portion in the true coming of the Holy Spirit.
- His heart was not right before God.
- He was wicked and needed to repent.
- The intent of his heart was wicked and needed to be forgiven. He was in the gall of bitterness and he was a slave of iniquity.

Was Simon a Christian?

No!

Did he have an event?

Yes.

The event in isolation from the life proves nothing.

That is why it is no proof that a man is not a Christian because he can't point to an event, nor is it a proof that a man is a Christian because he had an event.

Yet, the church is filled with people who are banking salvation on a past event.

If there was a real change, then you don't need to look at the event because you can see the change.

- What do you look for?
- Do they worship God?
- Do they glory in Christ Jesus?
- Do they reject the flesh?

A moment of believing whatever kind of believing it was didn't save Simon.

2. Moral Code

Living by a moral code!

Many people who live in this world are moral.

Many people live by high standards of honesty, charity, kindness, morality, ethics.

Mormons, very ethical on the surface, very moral, charitable, kind, and honest superficially. That's what they propagate. A lot of people like that.

There are a lot of unsaved people in liberal churches who are very compassionate and ethical. They are set to live according to the Ten Commandments. Many of them trying to live according to the Sermon on the Mount. Live out the quote/unquote "golden rule."

Many ethical people living by a moral code. That in itself does not verify salvation because you can subscribe yourself to a moral code for a multiplicity of reasons.

Fear, some people live by a moral code because they are afraid of God.

Some people live by a moral code because they want to please their parents. It's very important that their parents be pleased because they are under their parents. In other words, mentally they feel the bondage of parental pressure to live by a certain code.

There are some people who live by a moral code because they believe that if they do, that will get them to heaven.

They believe if they do God will reward them somehow in this life by making them rich or famous or successful.

There are some people who live by a moral code just to avoid a dirty conscience and guilt.

But that is not synonymous with salvation because there are so many reasons why people could live and do live by a moral code.

Illustration:

Matthew 19:16-22, *Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"* ¹⁷*So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."* ¹⁸*He said to Him,*

“Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’¹⁹ ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

²⁰ The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The rich young ruler confesses that

- don't have eternal life,
- don't have any hope for the future,
- worried about dying,
- don't know where I am going.

He was not secure. He was afraid of the future. So, he wants eternal life.

- He hadn't attained what he wanted.
- He hadn't yet attained what he wanted.
- How had he been trying to attain it?

He had done all those things at least to the level that he assessed them which would not be a true level.

He hadn't truly done them, but his deceitful heart would lie to him about what he had done. But he thought he had kept it all.

In short, we can see he lived a very moral life on the surface. But he knew he still didn't have eternal life.

You can live by the highest ethical code, the one given in Exodus 20, the very Ten Commandments of God and still not have eternal life.

A moral life didn't save him. Yet he was trying to live a moral life in order to get eternal life.

So, living by a moral code you can't be a Christian.

3. Knowledge of the Truth

We used to call it head knowledge.

Head knowledge instead of heart knowledge.

- Head knowledge gives you information.
- Heart knowledge gives you transformation.

There are a lot of people who know the facts about Christ.

- They know the facts about God.
- They know God is God.
- They know God is three in one.

- They know Christ is the Son of God.
- They know Christ is deity.
- They know Christ came into the world and did miracles.
- They know Christ died on a cross.
- They know that He died a substitutionary death.
- They know He rose again the third day, that He offers salvation by grace.

They know all of that in their head, but that's not synonymous with salvation.

It's not what you know.

- The Pharisees and the scribes like the other Jews,
- like Simon who was looking at an event,
- like the rich young ruler who was looking at a moral ethical standard,
- other Jews knew all about Christ from His birth on.

They knew everything about Him.

They knew all of His miracles were legitimate.

There was no way they ever argued against them.

They never denied them.

Do you realize that?

Do you realize that throughout the whole miraculous ministry of Jesus Christ no one ever denied any of His miracles?

They couldn't deny them because they were undeniable.
So, they knew it in their minds. They knew everything He did.

Matthew 12:31-32, *“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³²Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Why?

They have seen it all, heard it all, and experienced it all, yet won't believe!

They have it all in their mind.

Hebrews 6:4-6, *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

It is not enough to have a head knowledge.

Faith without works is Dead.

James 2:18-19, *But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will*

show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

The devils believe but they tremble, yet they are not saved.

You can believe it's all true.

If you don't commit yourself then there is no use.

Head knowledge doesn't mean anything.

The Jews had all knowledge of god and Messiah still they missed Him.

Many people even now have the knowledge about Christ and God.

Remember Judas one among the 12 disciples?

Judas had all the knowledge, watched in close circle, experiences the divine power, and had all those knowledges yet he completely missed his eternal life.

Judas never ever was saved.

He went to his own place when he committed suicide.

4. Religious activity

- Going to church,
- Being baptized,
- Taking communion,
- Singing in the Choir,
- Lighting candles,
- Praying beads,
- Doing religious pilgrimages,
- Going to Jerusalem,
- Doing certain prayers,
- Staying on your knees,
- Etc.,

Many people go through complex religious motions thinking that all of that religious activity equates to salvation.

Matthew 25.

Last week we saw in detail about the ten virgins, waiting for the wedding.

When the bridegroom came and went into the chamber to join the bride for all the wonderful festivities, five of the virgins went in and five had to stay out because five had failed to put oil in their lamps.

That is a very graphic picture of Israel, of the unpreparedness of Israel.

They had oil.

Others did not, it is simply the salvation, the right to enter the Kingdom which includes the Holy Spirit.

Some had all the dress and all the garb, and they were there in the right place at the right time but without the reality.

It was external and it was not internal.

So, they were left out of the Kingdom.

Israel was religious but shut out.

There are some churches where there is reality and some churches where there's form and no reality.

There are a lot of people who have a very religious life and it is a form of religion without reality.

5. Serving in the name of Christ

Service in the name of Christ isn't a proof of salvation.

Matthew 7:21-23, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then*

I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

You represent Christ is not enough.

There are a lot of people who say they represent Jesus Christ, but when their life gets exposed, you ask the question.

Do they?

Just because you say you serve Christ it doesn't mean you do possess eternal life.

Just because you preach Christ doesn't mean you really know Christ.

There have been a lot of people, false people, preaching a true message.

So, when you look for the verification of a person's spiritual condition, where do you look?

- Simon had an event, but he wasn't saved.
- The rich man had a high moral ethical code which he lived by, but he wasn't saved.
- The Pharisees and the scribes and Judas saw everything that Christ died, heard what he said, and they weren't saved.

- There were people in the church certainly at Sardis in Revelation that were doing their religious duty and serving Christ and thinking they were alive, but they were dead.
- There were people in the church at Laodicea who were doing the same kind of stuff and Christ spit them out of His mouth.

There have been lots of people praying and fasting, giving money, going through religious motions who will never enter the Kingdom.

All those 5 points does not verify their real salvation.

Conclusion:

Any of those things can be counterfeit.

- You can have a counterfeit event.
- You can have a totally wrong motive for your moral life.
- You can know something to be true in your mind and never commit your heart to it.
- You can carry out external religious service all you want, and your heart cannot be necessarily right with God.

What marks a true Christian?

Three things:

1. An overflowing heart of worship.

If you want to look at your life,

Don't ask these questions:

- ❖ Do I attend a service?
- ❖ Have I been baptized?

Ask yourself,

- ❖ Does my heart long to glorify the Lord?
- ❖ Do I love to praise Him and worship Him?
- ❖ Is it my heart's desire to serve Him?
- ❖ What is my attitude toward God?

Because if you are a Christian then the Spirit is in you prompting you to worship.

You will have a heart of adoration, praise, and longs to serve God from the inside out.

Ask these questions:

- ❖ Do I love to praise God?
- ❖ Do I love to talk with Him?
- ❖ Do I love to learn about Him in His Word?
- ❖ Do I want to serve Him?

Sure, sin gets in the way and interrupts that and confuses my mind sometimes but isn't there something deep within me that

longs to praise and worship and love God, to read His Word, to know more about Him, to serve Him with all my heart?

2. Glory in Christ Jesus

If you are a true Christian all your boasting, all your rejoicing is going to be in Christ because all the credit belongs to Him.

So, you haven't done anything to earn it.

A true Christian gives all the credit to Christ and they rejoice in Christ.

They are so thankful for Christ. Christ has done it all.

Whereas the false religionists want you and God and everybody else to appreciate what he has done. The true Christian wants everyone else to appreciate what Christ has done.

3. Humility

The basic attitude of a genuine believer.

Put no confidence in the flesh.

Very humble by the fallen condition of his human flesh.

He doesn't trust the flesh.

True Christian began in the Spirit and he will continue in the Spirit. He knows that all the good that comes to him and

through him is by the power of God, he has no confidence in his flesh to please God.

How do you identify a true Christian?

Look for one who worships from the heart that's prompted by the Spirit.

Look for one whose glory and joy and boast is all Christ.

Look for one who when viewing himself is humble.