



The Voice of Truth

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Just What is a Christian?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

1. A Christian is a disciple of Christ. A disciple is a learner, a follower of Christ (**2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:21**).

2. A Christian is a light in the world. A Christian life must light the world around him with the light of truth. We should not allow any filth to hide the pure beauty of that glorious light (**Matt. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 4:6**).

3. A Christian is one who is not ashamed. He is not ashamed of the Lord's Word, the gospel of Christ. He is not ashamed to be part of the one body, the one church. He is not ashamed for the world to know where he stands and for what he stands. The song "*I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord*" expresses the true sentiment of the Christian (**1 Pet. 4:16; Mk. 8:38; Eph. 1:22-23**).

4. A Christian is an epistle of Christ. The Christian is often the only epistle the world will read, and Christ is portrayed only by His saints. The Christian must present the Savior to a lost world in need of salvation (**2 Cor. 3:2-3; Phil. 1:20**).

5. A Christian is holy. Christians are called to be holy people. God has always demanded holiness of His people. The Christian is to be holy in all manner of living (**1 Pet. 1:16; 2:9; Lev. 9:2; 11:44-45; 1 Pet. 1:15**).

6. A Christian is a soldier in the army of the Lord. He is one ready to fight error, sin and Satan (**1 Tim. 4:7; 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7**).

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (**Eph. 4:1**). When tempted, let each Christian remember who and what he is!

Has "The Salt" Lost Its Flavor?

By Jonathan L. Perz

In the great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples saying, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (**Matthew 5:13**). The intent of these words was to promote the need for faithful living and good examples from those following Christ. Unfortunately, many making a profession of Christianity today have lost sight of the Lord's teaching.

As the salt of the earth, Christians are to be distinct—set apart—not only by their proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ, but by the faithful lives they live. Just as salt, they are to have a distinct flavor and to be a preservative against the evils and woes of society. When they lose that distinct flavor—the soul preserving power of Christ—they are good for nothing.

To make the application more specific, simply look around at the world. Morality is in short measure these days. Things like immodest apparel, sexual immorality and lasciviousness are the "in thing." Sins of all sorts are declared good and acceptable. Homosexuality is

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embraced as an alternate lifestyle. Abortion has made wholesale murder legal and acceptable. Lying is commonplace and, in some places, expected. “Anything goes” is the standard for most. The unlimited vices that Hollywood and television alone have brought into the home are enough to vex any righteous soul who falls prey to their temptation. These are just the prominent sins of the world, the list of sins is endless! While conditions such as these have existed for centuries, and will continue to exist, the Lord expects better from His disciples. He says, “you are the salt of the earth.”

We have lost our flavor when we are unfruitful in the Lord. When we stop growing by study and meditation of God’s word, we are unfruitful (**2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:12-16**). When we are not rich in good works, we are unfruitful (**1 Timothy 6:17-19**). When we stop manifesting our love for our brethren and our neighbors, we are unfruitful (**2 Pet. 1:5-8**). When we grow weary in well doing, we are unfruitful (**Galatians 6:9**). Such Christians are “good for nothing.”

We have lost our flavor if we no longer cry out and fight against the evils of this world and those who seek to justify such evils. Things such as abortion, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage, and the vices of Hollywood need to be fought, resisted, spoken against, and denounced for what they are—sin—condemnable in the sight of God (**Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11**). Does this mean we must make every battle a big one? No. We simply need to use every opportunity afforded us to teach God’s word and be a good example (**James 5:19-20; Matthew 5:16**). If Christians fail to do this, they become “good for nothing.”

We have lost our flavor when we turn a blind eye to wrongs being perpetrated in this world. I can’t help but think of how easy it would have been for John the Baptist to simply turn his back and ignore the sin of adultery between Herod and Herodias (**Matthew 14:3 ff**). Yet, John understood the leaven of evil, spoke against it and lost his head for his faith. The safe and easy choice was silence, yet John the Baptist was “the salt of the earth.”

We have lost our flavor when we defend error. So many professing faith in Christ would never practice homosexuality or consider having an abortion, yet they want to defend the right of others to choose such an option. In the sight of God, the consequences of such thinking are one and the same as having become a homosexual or having an abortion. Consider the teaching of **Romans 1:26-32**. Yet, the more subtle the error, the easier it is to defend. Even those who I would call brethren have come to the defense of those who teach that divorce and remarriage for any cause is acceptable in the sight of God (**Matt. 19:1-9**). Friends, we implicate ourselves by so doing (**2 John 9-11**) and should be “thrown out and trampled underfoot,” that we might be saved in the end (**1 Cor. 5**). What grave damage this little bit of leaven can do!

Finally, we have lost our flavor when we become the sinner ourselves. Such is often the case. The damage done to the cause of Christ by those who teach error, commit iniquity, live immorally, drink, gamble, lie, and manifest every conceivable wickedness in the eyes of a lost and sinful world have caused many to esteem Christianity as nothing more than a hypocrite’s religion. These ungodly examples, when left unchecked and undisciplined by the church, can virtually render a church useless in a community. Friends, such is despicable and will not go unpunished.

When Christians lose their flavor, the world loses its taste for righteousness. Whether in the home or in the workplace, amongst neighbors, family, or friends, we must always strive to be the seasoning, preserving, flavorful salt of the earth our Lord expects us to be. If we find our own lives to have lost that soul preserving flavor, let us confess and repent of our error, restore the old and straight ways, and strive never to lose our flavor again, lest we find ourselves thrown out and trampled underfoot as good for nothing (**Proverbs 28:13; 1**

John 1:9; cf. Revelation 21:7-8).

Suffering For Christ

By David J. Riggs

Suffering is to be expected by those who follow Christ. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (**2 Tim. 3:12**). Christians are not to regard it odd or uncommon when they are made to suffer for Christ. "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you." (**1 Pet. 4:12**). Instead of being surprised when persecutions come, one should be surprised if they don't come. In fact, one would do well to consider whether or not he is living godly in Christ if he is not suffering persecutions. Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." (**Luke 6:26**).

When one is converted to Christ and begins to live godly in Him, persecutions of all kinds are usually heaped upon him. Often relatives and loved ones turn against him. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household." (**Matt. 10:34-36**). Often the first to place undesirable terms on the new converts are their own close friends and companions. "In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you." (**1 Pet. 4:4**).

Persecutions, whatever they may be, must be endured. We cannot place our relatives and loved ones above the Lord (**Matt. 10:37**). We must carry our cross daily (**Luke 9:23**). We will be hated of all men for his name's sake, but we must endure (**Matt. 10:22**). We will have sore tribulations, but we must be faithful to death (**Rev. 2:10**). "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (**2 Tim. 2:12**).

We should never be ashamed for suffering as Christians. "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." (**1 Pet. 4:16**). Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." (**Luke 9:26**).

Persecutions must be endured with patience. "But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God." (**1 Pet. 2:20**). "...Knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." (**Rom. 5:3-4**).

Let us count it a great honor and privilege to be allowed to take part in the afflictions of Christ. The apostles rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer for His name (**Acts 5:41**). The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed (**Rom. 8:18**). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (**2 Cor. 4:17**).

Points to Ponder...

No one becomes a Christian on his own terms.

Never give an excuse you would not be willing to accept.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17