

"WHY AM I A CHRISTIAN"

Micah 6:7, Matt. 5:1-13, I Peter 3:15

Not going to ram down your throat what I believe.

But we should be clear about what we believe and why we believe it!

We shouldn't keep it a secret.

Still waters run deep they say, but I challenge you who are quiet, or reserved, or tight-lipped or indifferent -- rather than sincerity and compassionate conviction.

We ought to know and we ought not to be ashamed of letting others know that we are - and why we are Christians.

Some folks would in your office or place of work take courage if you would say -- "I am a Christian and I dislike lying, dishonesty, and cheating. Some young lady or man in the office may be uttering "a thank God", and you would be to them like a great rock in a weary land. In the shadow of you they would rally and gain courage and grow in Christian faith.

✓ (Dr. Peter Brodie) said, "I was looking for a church. I was in a strange town. When you go into a new place you always meet the folks who do not belong to the town. I met half dozen and I did not understand so many I asked had never heard of this church of St. Clemmons. There was one (old lady) and I was desperate by this time, and I did not think she had all of her senses, that one old lady, I asked her. She said "you mean that deaf and dumb church up in the Caldesac near the corner."

Devastating was it not.

What a name - what an inappropriate description - a deaf and dumb church - pushed away up in a Caldesac.

Think if your church had been deaf to all the people in your neighborhood - to all the questions - deaf to cries for help - what a condemnation of your church.

Think if your church had been dumb and no message going out from it. From the pulpit and the pews. The message goes from both places. To denounce evil and proclaim the Gospel.

A terrible name deaf and dumb church.

Now back to the lady who pointed this church out was referring to a local church that was unique in the back area, and that it re-ordered a real ministry, it spoke the message to those dull of hearing and to those slow of speech. It ministered to the whole country of Kent in Southern England. It was a ministry to the deaf and dumb of a fine quality.

The church must have within them a conviction - the people must have a hope and a reason. They must be able by word and deed to express the why and wherefore of their belief.

I am a Christian and I'm not what I ought to be, but God forgive me that I'm not better.

I. I HAVE FOUND IN JESUS THE LORD OF ALL ^{the} GOOD LIFE

To take Micah's own words 6:7 - ("He hath shown the old man what is good.")

Most men and women for the most part want to be good.

There was a criminal lawyer, (Sir Norman Bracket) in England had to deal with immoral characters. However, he used to say there is a nobility that haunts every man.

(Hypocrisy) - if men are not good they pretend to be good.

The strange fact is that in all places and at all times men have been aware of (right and wrong) and have held that there was an essential difference between.

A Moscow party official - and Eastern striptease dancer - a Southern Baptist Minister, will all admit there is something that is right for them and something wrong for them. That there is some act that would cause them shame and remorse. They have a sense of right and wrong - why this? Why this conscience - is not this the (voice) of God. Does this not point to the fact that man is troubled by goodness. He is always wondering what is the good life. Does this not signify that man was meant for goodness!

(Sin) is a fraud.

To me Jesus gives me answers to this need. He tells me how to treat my neighbor, and my family.

He tells me who they are - He tells me how to treat my enemies and treat myself.

Jesus clears away the jungle around my life that so often restrains relationships.

There is no difference between a man or a woman, the rich and the poor, wise, simple, all must have rights and responsibilities.

Some may think that (forgiveness) is compromise - soft and jelly like.

Jesus shows forgiveness is a braver and better way.

The only way to destroy your enemies is to make them your friends. We are only 24 hours from any part of the world, unless our leaders learn forgiveness and get this light, there is a poor future for the world.

If we study the Beatitudes we find in them a pattern of goodness, gentleness, helpfulness, spiritual strength that we find no where else.

Southern Seminary - Dr. Ellis Fuller was president for many years.

Dr. Fuller tells when he asked Elizabeth Bates to marry him, he said to her, now as I ask you to marry me, I must honestly say that you will always have second place in my life.

He quickly said, yes, you will have to accept second place - because I have given my life to Jesus Christ and answered the call to preach His Gospel, and he must have first place. And he will always be first place. But you will have second place.

And she answered, I would not have it any other way, if you put me in first place ahead of Jesus Christ, I would not marry you.

This is what Jesus says (supreme allegiance) of your life must be to me.

Every relationship in my life straightened out when I put him in first place.

Jesus knew the secret of good living, He was as good as his word.

Jesus gives us the power and the punch to live the Christian life. Christianity is not just good advice alone.

It is good news.

It is (not) struggling (to do) the best you can.

It is trusting in Him and linking up with Jesus -- plugging into great and abundant resources.

"Not I but Christ within you" says Paul.

I'm a Christian in so far as I'm in Him.

II. I'M A CHRISTIAN, I FIND THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

Why am I here? What is there to life in the hereafter?

Some say how can you believe in God when nations war and torture citizens, Governments oppress and deny freedom. When there is cancer and disease and things strike down the finest of men and the finest of women.

I would not claim that Jesus has told us all of the answers or told us everything.

But he has told us enough.

He has given us at least (a lamp) to our feet if he has given us no search light to pierce the distant sea.

He has said and has shown that it is not fate but a Heavenly Father who is the power behind all things,

The last word is not with evil or hatred, or pain, or sorrow, but with goodness with love, and with peace and forgiveness.

Where are the oppressors now, they have gone down into the sands of destruction.

Jesus has given to human life a dignity, a nobility, and a possibility.

He went to the (cross) that was value he put on the individual. Price paid for me a sinner.

Why am I a Christian, God forgive me that I'm not a better Christian.

✓ Christianity answers the riddle of life. Years ago - (true story) - man, wife, 8 children left tenant farm in West Tennessee at Humboldt. Soil worn out, went west to Fort Worth, Texas to try find a new life - new start.

No sooner settled out there, man took sick - died. Poor mother - 8 children to support.

No Social Security - just words in dictionary.

No relatives West of Mississippi.

Her neighbors said she baked the (best home-made bread) they had ever eaten!

She got busy in kitchen - made bread. Sent the 8 children out, on the streets to sell. Sold lots. Kept baking day and night.

Old hotel across the street torn down. She went over, found great big wood burning stove and bought it for a song. Had it hailed, put in her back yard. Too big for one house. But built a shed over - not have building restrictions that destroy much freedom of operation today.

Baked bread in that shed and in the kitchen.

Results - (today) one out of every five loaves of bread that are baked in Texas are baked by the bakery she established.

Mrs. Baird's homemade bread

8 million satisfied customers buy her bread every day through the South West.

How in the world did she do it?

She said "I had the Lord Jesus with me, that is the only way I could do it!"

God gave her promises every day. In the morning when she got up, she fell on

her knees and claimed those promises. Every night on her knees, she thanks the Lord.

She (lived to be 94.) Last 2 years of her life spent in hospital bed. But active - alert.

Every week 7 of the 8 children - one had died - came into her room for a board meeting for the bakery until she died.

She died literally with the Bible in her hands reading the Word and claiming the promises. "I will not forsake or leave Thee." The Lord Jesus will see you through the riddles of life.

III. I AM A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE I FIND, I HAVE IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST THE MOST SATISFACTORY IMMORTALITY

(Best assurance)

- New Testament does not argue for (life after death) - it assumes it. And that's the best witness. And Jesus taught this.

Go to (any nation) in history and you find the longing and desire for life after death.

Men began to build tombs - life was too short. Not long enough to blossom and bloom.

Is not this longing for life after death a (sign) that God has put eternity into the heart of mankind. God is not mocked.

God has put in us many desires and appetites. Everyone is fullfillable.
There is no hunger, or desire that he will not fill.

We may be in a desert and thirst, there may be no water, but water does
exist to quench our thirst.

Christianity does more for us. Jesus Christ portrays for each of us a Heavenly
Father. God is love - one upon one - even the hair of our head is numbered. A
God like that will not allow one thing to block his care for us.

The love of God is forever and his loved ones are eternal.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ - the evidence of that is so compelling.

Above all the manner of it - who could have invented it? It is so considerate
and gracious.

To come back from the grave after those days, to come back into human life,
and assure them that they were immortal and assured them of a new quality of life
in the Father's love, it can be beginable now.

These are the glorious things that have made me a Christian.

Jesus is the Good - Christianity the answer of the (riddle) of the world.

B. 34: 9 "O taste & see that the Lord is good - Blessed is the Man That trusteth in Him

Risen Christ confirming the resurrection of the individual and of life
(ever-lasting)

I will tell of these things.

Psalm 25:8 Good & upright in behavior therefore will he
teach sinners in the way " -10-

This Sabbath Day we hope in the truth that we shall be in Heaven with Thee.

Roman 2:4 Despises them the riches of his goodness & forbearance
& long suffering; Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth
them to repentance?

Nahum 1:7 "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble;
and he knoweth them that trust in him "