

PULPIT SERMONS

DEFENDERS OF THE WORD

Are You A Christian??

By G. M. RAYL, D.D.



(TEXT: Acts 26:28, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.")

(The theme of this sermon is, "What is a Christian.")

"Are you a Christian?" Every time I hear this question, it brings back remembrance of an experience in my life that I will never forget. As I was growing up from a boy unto a young man, I never went to church except for funerals or some other special occasion, therefore I knew very little about Christianity. I would sometimes wonder about what would happen when I died, and I remember on several occasions, that I would ask some older person what I would have to do to go to heaven, I was told that all I had to do was be good. So I believed that if I was good that I would go to heaven when I died.

It may be a shocking statement to say that many people living all about us are in the same condition that I was, do not know what it means to be a Christian, I believe that we could go to a prominent corner of a large city, stop the first ten people that pass us, and ask them the question, "What does it mean to be a Christian?" Nine out of ten would answer in one of the following ways: They would say that it means to be honest, to be a good neighbor, to be a lodge member, to obey the Golden Rule, to be confirmed, or to join the church. Not one of them has come within a mile of the true answer. The tragedy of the situation is that even some of the people in the church are self-deceived; they think they are right with God because of decency, respectability, membership in an organization, or mental assent to a creed. All of these four things are good and commendable, but they do not make us a Christian. John 3:7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Oh yes, I tried to be as good as I knew how to be, I never got too drunk too many times. I didn't do too much fighting at the dances that I attended at times. I loved to go to the movies and watch western pictures, sometimes when I would get mad and curse a lot I would get ashamed of myself and think that I should stop cursing so much or I wouldn't go to heaven if I should die. Remember it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. No one had ever asked me if I was a Christian, until one night I went to my first Pentecost church, I had never had an experience like this! I felt about as much out of place as a tramp would in a king's palace. There I sat while they prayed, sang, testified what the Lord had done for them, and rejoicing in the Lord. After the preaching was over

and the services was dismissed, the old preacher came back to me and grabbed my hand and said that he was glad that I had come and invited me back. He looked me right in the eye and said, "Are you a Christian?" I felt as guilty as a sheep killing dog, I stammered around and said, "yes." Oh, what a lie, for there I stood so under conviction by the Holy Spirit, with condemnation wrote all over my face and a pack of cigarettes in my shirt pocket. I didn't fool that old preacher. And thanks be unto God, before that week was over, that preacher seen me give my heart to God, yes I was born again, my sins was under the blood of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Yes, I had the witness of the Spirit that I was a child of God, a Christian.

Who is a Christian, and how can a person be right with God? A Christian is one in whom Christ dwells: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). You have the witness of the Spirit that you are a child of God and an heir of glory, Rom. 8:16, 17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." If you are a true Bible Christian such as you may and should be, then you have peace with God, and all your sins are forgiven and your name is registered in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rom. 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

You are saved from the love of the world. You are not eagerly seeking its wealth, and striving to lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth; you do not desire the honors and praise of men, neither do you follow their customs and fashions, for you have learned and proved, in your experience, that there is something better. 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Rom. 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

You either keep out or come out of all oath-bound societies. 2 Cor. 6:14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what

fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

You give freely and liberally of your means to relieve the poor and advance the Truth. You love the Word of God and delight in its study; have great peace and do not stumble into sin. Psalms 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

You love the Prayer meeting, and are constant and active in your support of it as far as possible. Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the matter of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

You make no attempt at outward display, either in style or living or by personal adornment with gold, precious stones and costly array. 1 Peter 3:3-5, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands."

You are saved from the bondage of depraved appetites and habits. Strong drinks, tobacco, opium, cards, rink-going, dancing, horse-racing, gambling, lying, swearing, stealing, cheating, scolding, fornication, adultery, pride and all uncleanness and foolish talking and jesting, do not longer bind you and bring you under their power. The ruling power of sin is broken and your emancipated soul has victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. There is no law out against you, but you are free, yes, free indeed. Gal. 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

You do not run in debt without knowing how or when you will be able to pay. Rom. 12:17, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Rom. 13:8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

You have confidence toward God and are entirely condemned, either of God or of your own heart. Your communion with Him is real; often sweet and precious beyond expression, and your

prayers are most graciously heard and answered. 1 John 3:22, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." By constant abiding in Christ, you are saved from committing all known, hidden and outward sins. 1 John 3:6, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

You suffer in some form, and to a greater or less degree, from the persecuting spirit of the ungodly; and are not loved, courted and sought after by the world, 2 Tim. 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." John 15:19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." 1 Peter 4:16, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

You hunger and thirst after righteousness. Walking after the Spirit, you are led to see the need of an experience beyond what you now enjoy, and you are eagerly desiring and pressing on for the whole will of God to be done in your soul, and to know more and more of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, until you comprehend it in its breadth and length and depth and height, and are filled with all the fulness of God, 1 Peter 1:16, "Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The question naturally arises: How can one become a Christian? God has the answer in His Word in Rom. 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." 2 Cor. 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." First you must believe in your heart that you are a sinner, then you must believe that Christ died for our sins, 1 Cor. 15:3, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." When we so accept Christ, the Spirit of God through the Word of God performs the miracle of God that makes us the children of God. We then rest in the Word of our Lord, John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Rom. 10:10, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Have you received Christ and confessed Him as your Lord and Saviour? If you haven't, then why not? Oh, Why Not To-Night?

CHRIST
CAN CHANGE
THE WORLD

