Christian

Intro: The term Christian appears three times in the Bible: Acts 11:26 “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”; Acts 26:28 “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”; 1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” In each of these scriptures a basic idea of Christianity is set forth.

I. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS A DISCIPLE
   A. Acts 11:26 “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”
   B. A disciple is a learner.
      1. Christianity is a taught religion.
         a. John 6:44-45 “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”
         b. Mat. 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      2. One does not become a Christian through:
         a. dreams and or visions.
         b. Direct working of the Holy Spirit independent of God’s word.
            (1) Jam. 1:18 “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
            (2) 1 Pet. 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”
      3. Remaining a Christian is a continual learning process.
         a. 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
         b. Heb. 5:12 “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”
         c. 1 Pet. 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”
         d. 2 Pet. 3:18 “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”
   C. A disciple is a follower of Christ.
      1. Jesus left an example of life to be followed.
         a. Gal. 4:19 “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”
         b. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
         c. Phi. 2:5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”
         d. 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”
e. 1 John 2:6 “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

2. The standard for Christian conduct is not:
   a. Worldly philosophy, Col. 2:8 “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
   b. The law of Moses, Col. 2:14-16 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:”
   c. Mysticism, Col. 2:18 “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”
   d. The crowd, Mat. 7:13-14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

II. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS PERSUADED
   A. Acts 26:28 “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”
   B. A Christian is convinced in his mind that Christianity is true.
      1. Paul sought to persuade men at Ephesus, Acts 19:8 “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.”
      2. Paul sought to persuade men at Corinth, 2 Cor. 5:10-11 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”
   C. The Christian is persuaded that he can live the Christian life.
      1. 2 Cor. 10:13 “But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.”
      2. Phi. 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
   D. He is persuaded that Christianity is worth the price that one must pay to be a Christian.
      1. Denial of self, Mat. 16:24-26 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
      2. Supreme love of the Lord, Luke 14:26-29 “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.”
      3. Sacrifice any and everything that stands between him and faithful service to Christ, Phi. 3:7-8 “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them dung, that I may win Christ,”
4. It is because of the reward.
   a. Mat. 10:22 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”
   b. Heaven.

E. Hard to persuade people today.
   1. So many attempts to persuade people by advertisements and door-to-door salesmen.
   2. People are persuaded on basis of need.
      a. Need security.
         (1) 1 Pet. 5:6-7 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
         (2) 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”
      b. Need purpose in life, Ecc. 12:13-14 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.”
      c. Need happiness and peace.
         (1) Rom. 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”
         (2) Phi. 4:4-6 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
         (3) Mat. 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

III. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO IS WILLING TO SUFFER FOR DOING RIGHT
   A. 1 Pet. 4:15-16 “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”
   B. Suffering is all about us.
      1. Some suffering is the result of living in a world of physical pain and death.
      2. Some suffering is the result of foolish and sinful living, poor choices in life, 1 Pet. 4:15 “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.”
      3. Some suffering is the result of doing God’s will:
         a. 1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf:”
         b. 1 Pet. 3:14 “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”
         c. 2 Tim. 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
         d. Suffering may be in the form of unjust criticism, evil statements, and ostracism:
            (1) 1 Pet. 2:12 “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
(2) 1 Pet. 3:16 “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

(3) 1 Pet. 4:4 “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:”

   e. Suffering may be in the form of physical pain inflicted; 1 Pet. 4:12 “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:”

C. A Christian is willing to suffer for the Lord’s sake.

1. The prophets were persecuted, Mat. 5:12 “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

2. Early Christians were persecuted, Acts 8:1-4 “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

3. Apostles rejoiced in suffering, Acts 5:41 “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”

4. Christ suffered, 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”

D. The Christian’s attitude in suffering for the Lord’s sake.

1. The Christian will rejoice.

   a. Mat. 5:10-12 “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

   b. Jam. 1:2 “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;”

   c. 1 Pet. 4:13 “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

2. The reason we can rejoice is that suffering if properly endured will work for our good.

   a. Rom. 5:3-5 “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

   b. Jam. 1:3-4 “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

IV. A Christian Is One Who Is Not Ashamed

A. 1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

B. He is not ashamed of the Lord’s work, Mark 8:38 “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

C. He is not ashamed of the gospel, Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

D. He is not ashamed to be part of a religious minority, Mat. 7:13-14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in
thereat: 14Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Conclusion:

1. The Christian is one who glorifies God, 1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”
   a. He glorifies God by being a disciple of God’s Son, Heb. 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”
   b. He glorifies God by living for God.

2. He is not ashamed for the world to know where he stands and for what he stands.

3. The Song, “I’m Not Ashamed To Own My Lord” expresses the true sentiment of the Christian.
   I’m not ashamed to own my Lord, Nor to defend His cause; Maintain the honors of His word, The glory of His cross.
   Firm as His throne His promise stands, And He can well secure What I’ve committed to His hands, Till the decisive hour.
   Then will He own my worthless name Before His Father’s face, And in the new Jerusalem Appoint for me a place.