

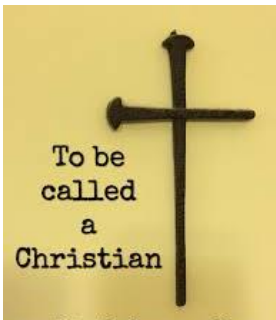
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## Can the Real Christian Please Stand Up?

Words connote meaning. The first time a word is used, it is noteworthy to understand its original meaning or etymology and its importance. The word 'Christian' was used in Acts 11:26 to describe God's followers in Antioch. Acts 11:26 says, *'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.'* The historical context here defines the meaning of what it is to be a Christian and there are 6 elements in the definition of a Christian (Acts 11:18-26).



### 1. A Christian is one who believes ONLY in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord



The 10 Roman dictators of the first 3 centuries expected absolute allegiance from the people by demanding the people bow and worship them as gods. Christians who did so would have compromised their beliefs. What is the meaning of a belief? What do you believe about the Lord Jesus Christ? While some believe that Jesus was a great man, a teacher, a prophet; they do not believe that He is the only

Saviour and true God who alone can save us from the condemnation of hell through His atoning death on the cross of Calvary and His resurrection (John 20:29). A true Christian will not worship God and idols at the same time (1 Thess 1:9).

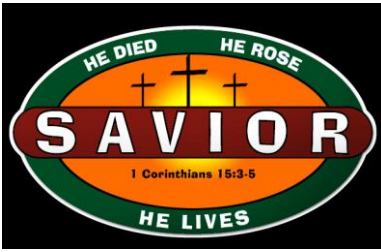
In Acts 11:17-18, we are taught to believe in Christ, glorify God, and show forth true repentance unto life. Christians do not merely profess to believe in Christ, they are also able to respond in genuine ways. What do we believe in Christ? There may be many who are called "saviours" or "avatars" (popularized by the Hollywood movie by James Cameron) in this world. Some people think that they may be saved by their good works, transcendental meditations, yoga, morality, or some special spiritual exercises to bring them to nirvana or nothingness. Burning incense is often related to the calling of spirits and is a widespread practice in Wiccan communities and ancient witchcraft. The use of the occult-like tarot cards, astrology, and fengshui are prevalent in the postmodern world. These occultic practices would not save us but could lead us to spiritual obsession. Only Christ alone can save us. We need to believe in the life, death, and the resurrection of Christ. One cannot be a Christian if he does not acknowledge that Jesus is God.

**A Christian**      **1. Heard and Believed the Gospel**

No Christians in Antioch until some Acts 11:19-21

"Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord."

The apostle Peter acknowledged and taught without apology the deity and humanity of Christ through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. This is mentioned in the book of Acts. The term 'Christian' was first used in Antioch, recorded in the Bible in Acts 11:26. Note that some New Agers may consider themselves "Christians"; yet they believe in the falsehood of pantheism (everything is god and god is everything) and they think that they are gods in themselves and that salvation is by works. Eph 2:8-9 say, '*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*' and Tit 3:5 says, '*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*'



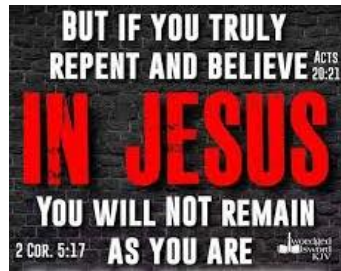
A Christian believes that Jesus is fully God and fully man, that He died for his / her sins on the cross, and He rose again on the third day. 1 Cor 15:1-4 say, *'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received,*

*and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.'* A Christian must believe that Jesus came into the world, lived a perfect life, died, and was resurrected from the dead; and have personally trusted and received Christ as his / she personal Saviour and Lord. He or she must be faithful in following Jesus, in the reading and application of His Word, in prayer, Sabbath worship, and in faithful discipleship.

## **2. A Christian is one who deals with his or her sinfulness and forsake sin in evangelical repentance unto the Lord.**

John, the Baptist in Matt 3:8 spoke of the need to show forth the fruit of repentance. The Greek word here for repentance refers to a change of orientation in our heart or a change of mindset towards God (vs. 18). For people to take the step of faith and identify with Christ, repentance unto life must be real and visible. Sinful

habits such as smoking, taking drugs, adultery, buying 4D (gambling), idolatry, covetousness, blasphemy and adultery, among others should come to an end when we put our faith in Christ. Acts 20:21 says, *'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'* True evangelical repentance is a hallmark of salvation where we are to forsake our sins, to take up the Cross, and to follow Christ fully. Paul in 1 Thess 1:9 says, *'For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.'*



**3. A Christian is one who is transformed with one purpose of heart - to cleave unto the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour to the end.**

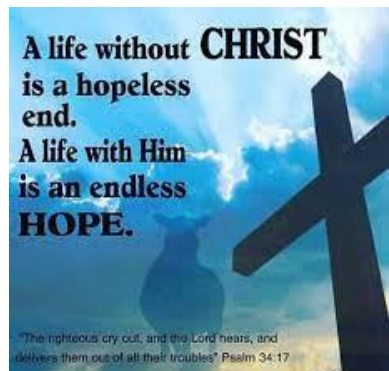


The question is commonly asked *'How about those who were with us before and then they left the Lord?'* John in 1 John 2:19, answered that question. *'They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.'* John was teaching the perseverance of the saints. A good example is Polycarp, a disciple of John who was 86 years old

when they brought him to Rome and executed him for being a Christian. He was courageous and faithful to the end and is now in the presence of God.

Many may face persecutions for being a Christian in the last perilous days but a true Christian will never give up. Barnabas cleaved unto Christ (Act 11:23) and persevered on. He never gave up on Christ no matter what others said or did to him, or in whatever discouragement or taunting he faced. He had a clear spiritual direction and endurance in his daily walk with the Lord; and we need that as well today. A true Christian will never give up his faith as it is secured in Christ, and he or she will persist to the end of life.

Paul testified to the gospel of the grace of the Lord and how Christians ought to live for Christ and not for themselves. Paul's testimony was clearly written in Acts 20:24, *'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.'* Jesus says, *'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'* (Mark 8:36). Some unbelievers may be wealthy but unlike a Christian, they have no hope for eternity. In the eyes of the Lord,



they are all spiritually bankrupt and they face a Christ-less future of eternal damnation. Life without Christ is a hopeless end, but with Christ, it is an endless hope.

A Christian is transformed by the Spirit of God. Acts 4:36-37 cite Barnabas as a good example of a committed Christian who sold his land and sacrificially gave all proceeds to God. When God saves us, do we honour and remember Christ with all our heart and soul? Barnabas honoured God and he cleaved to the Lord and was used by God to lead a pioneering mission team to plant the first few churches in Asia Minor.

#### **4. A Christian one who is justified by faith and has the Holy Spirit in his or her life**

A Christian is one who is 'good' (Acts 11:24) not because of himself but because he has been saved by Christ and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him (1 Cor 6:19-20). Barnabas was



full of the Holy Spirit (v. 24) because it was the Lord who had changed him. 1 Cor 6:19 says that our *'body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.'* A true Christian will strive to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, to live in a manner guided by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit daily and not according to the flesh and its worldly temptations. Eph 5:18-21 says, *'And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.'* We need to be sensitive to the prompting and guidance of the Spirit daily.

**5. A Christian is one who is transformed by God and exhibits true saving faith in his life**

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Heb 11:1-3, 6 say, *'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh*



*to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'* A saving and lasting faith in Christ as our Saviour will stand the test of time. A Christian's faith is not superficial but profound and real. He has faith in God as the Almighty Creator and Saviour and has full confidence in His Holy Word. Faith is trusting in and depending on God fully. All the worldly things that we are dependent on will pass away one day, but Christ is completely reliable and is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We can trust in Him fully. Rom 10:17 says, *'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'*

**6. A Christian is one who will seek to honour and worship God with other believers in church**

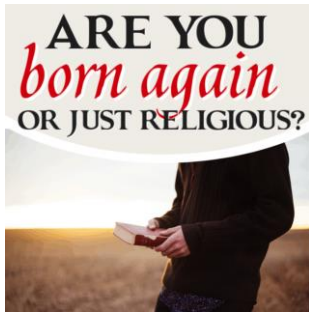
True Christians love the Lord and His Word and will want to assemble themselves with like-minded brethren in the church and worship God on the Sabbath day. Heb 10:24-25 says, *'And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of*



*ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.'* A distinguishing mark of the Christian is that he/she worships the Lord in spirit and in truth; although coming to church on the Lord's Day in itself does not necessarily mean that one is truly a Christian. Even



when travelling overseas, the Christian would remember God (i.e. he will look for a sound church to worship). He desires the edifying fellowship of saints, the preaching of the Word, and corporate prayer with God's people. Mal 3:16 says, *'Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.'* These are distinguishing marks of a genuine Christian saved by God's grace.



Are you truly a born-again Christian with hope, joy, and peace in your hearts today? You can be if you seek Christ now as your Saviour and Lord and you can be assured of your salvation and life eternal in heaven with God. Our lives on earth are short and they can vanish anytime; as we witness the deaths of many (i.e. a brother-in-Christ died in his sleep recently), which are recorded every day in the obituaries of

the daily newspaper (Psalm 90:12).

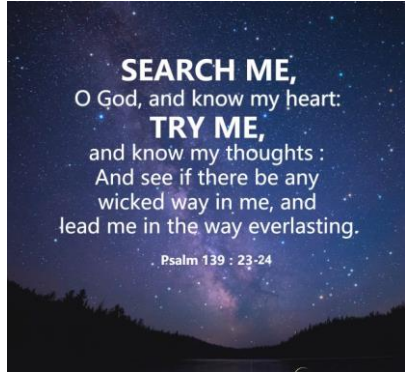
A true Christian is one not only in name but genuine in his or her heart condition as well. One can be saved now and be full of the Holy Spirit and of good faith in Christ alone. You can be a true Christian in your heart today not just in your mind. If you are not, come and humbly seek Christ as your Saviour and Lord in evangelical repentance of sins and believe in Christ who died for your sins and rose again, victorious over the grave. He is God. Be filled with eternal hope, peace, joy, and comfort through Christ as your Lord alone today. Romans 10:9-10 say, *'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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'* Do it now before it is too late! Psa 2:12 says, *'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'*

## Conclusion

Psa 139:23-24 say, '*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*' Such soul-searching enquiries demand our immediate prayerful attention. Let us seek Christ and confess and repent of our sins if we have fallen short before the Lord in one area or another. Our failings should stir our penitent hearts to

God and to greater spiritual awakening. Get right with God first and then get right with your fellow men. Take some time to humbly and fervently seek the Lord and consider what action is needed for our genuine faith in Christ. Ask the Lord for wisdom and strength to work on it and determine in your hearts to seek God with a clear conscience before God and men. Our temporal lives are fleeting away with each passing moment as we witness the infection of about than 15 million people globally in less than 7 months due to the coronavirus in this pandemic which is still virulent and spreading widely in different countries. Psa 90:12 says, '*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*' Let us continue to honour, fear, and love the Lord, and serve Him with greater zest and devotion in these last days till He comes.

*Jack Sin*



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## Memory Verse

*Mark 2:5* When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

## Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! Kindly comply with the safety measures available on the notice boards. For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks today on “The Divine Cure of the Paralytic” (Mark 2:1-12), continuing the Jul to Sep 2020 theme of “Examining the Ministry & Teachings of Christ”.
3. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on “The Healing of the Impotent Man” (John 5:1-15).
4. Sunday School classes continues in church after the worship service
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom.
7. Pastor will be speaking at a Married Couples Webinar on 28 Jul at 8 pm on “Biblical Perspective of Marriage and Divorce”. Those interested may inform him.
8. Those who would like to help with the cleaning or safe management procedures of the church, please see Dn Yue Kay.
9. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
10. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
  - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mailed to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
  - **Fund transfer**\_to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
  - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

## *Examining the Ministry and Teachings of Christ*

LORD'S DAY PROGRAMME FROM JULY-SEP 2020

### **JULY**

**5**

The 3 Fold Focus of Christ's Ministry (Matthew 9:35-38)

**12**

The First Miracle at a Wedding (John 2:1-13)

**19**

The Beatitudes Explained (Matthew 5:1-12)

**26**

The Divine Cure of the Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12)

### **AUGUST**

**2**

The Healing of the Impotent Man (John 5:1-15)

**9**

The Demonstration of Faith (Luke 7:1-11)

**16**

The Eternal Profit of a Soul (Mark 8:27-38)

**23**

Blind Man Sees Again (John 9:1-32)

**30**

Feeding 5000 Hungry Men (John 6:1-15)

### **SEPTEMBER**

**6**

Overcoming Temptation by Christ (Matthew 4:1-13)

**13**

Christ as the Bread of Life (John 6:48-69)

**20**

Abiding in the True Vine (John 15:1-16)

### **GOSPEL SUNDAY**

The Light of the World (John 8:12-36)

REACH US!

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