

DISCOVER CHRIST- IANITY

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March 1, 2015

Sermon in a sentence: Christianity is the faith that invites us, and shows us the way into a personal, love relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Congregational reading: Hebrews 2:1-4, 9-11, 14-15, 17

Scriptures: John 20:30-31; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23; John 2:29; Heb. 11:6; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:17

Hebrews 2:1-4, 9-11, 14-15, 17 NKJV Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power

of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

There is no accurate count possible of all the religions in the world today, and all the accompanying gods associated with them. But it is quite clear that religion is of great interest and vital importance to very many people around the world. What we believe about God has been seen to unite or divide families and nations, and many of life's greatest decisions are based on one's religious beliefs.

Discovering Christianity is the focus of this lesson, the faith that takes its name from the title of its founder, Jesus of Nazareth. His title: "Christ" means 'the anointed of God' or 'Messiah'.

The story of Christianity goes back to the beginning of recorded history and is outlined for us in The Holy Bible, the scriptures Christians follow.

In the simplest terms, Christianity tells of the God who created humanity, with the intent and desire that He would be able to enjoy a love relationship with them. He created perfect, sinless human beings and placed them in a perfect world, intending for them to live forever in His presence.

Almost immediately, God's plan was thwarted as Adam and Eve disobeyed His instructions and chose to follow His archenemy Lucifer. Through their disobedience, sin entered our world.

By way of definition, sin is any thought, act, (or omission to act), that goes against God’s word and will. It is not very difficult for us to identify sins. Before we do something wrong, there is an internal voice that speaks to us – our conscience, telling us we are about to violate God’s law. At some point, all of us who have heard that voice have chosen to ignore it and do what we know is wrong. Therefore, all of us have sinned.

**“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
(Rom. 3:23).**

Sin cannot survive in God’s holy presence. His glory and righteous perfection obliterates sin, just as light dispels darkness. Sin, or any vessel containing it dies in God’s presence. Therefore our sins earn us spiritual death that eternally separates us from God.

For the wages of sin *is* death (Rom. 6:23a)

To fulfill the righteous and unchangeable nature of God’s law, every sinner has to die, so His original desire and plan for eternal communion with humanity was destroyed.

In God’s mind however, He felt He had to do something to remedy the situation. He was simply not willing to sit idly by and allow Lucifer to systematically destroy His people through sin. As we read in the first half of Romans 6:23, the wages of sin is death, BUT the rest of the verse introduces us to the good news that:

**“... the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord
(Rom. 6:23b).**

How is this possible? God settled upon a totally radical plan that is truly beyond human ability to understand. He decided to strip Himself of all His divine privileges and

come to earth as a human being, subject to all the same issues, problems, sicknesses, disappointments, temptations and potential failures we all face. He decided to live a perfect human life, as God originally intended for us to live. As a sinless man, He was not subject to the death penalty as we are, but He lived specifically to die – to substitute His death for ours!

Having surrendered Himself to death, Death found out it could not hold Him – it had no legal right to do so. So, after three short days, Jesus rose from the dead and has freely given us His gift of eternal life, having suffered our penalty of eternal death!

Here is where it impacts us as individuals: Christian faith demands that we believe everything I have just outlined, and ask Jesus to apply His substitutionary death to our personal account. Yes, He died to save every soul on Earth, but only those who will believe His story and come to Him in faith actually receive the gift of eternal life He graciously purchased for us.

So, as Jesus told the crowd in Capernaum:

“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:29).

The writer to the Hebrews adds:

“[For] without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Jesus lived a perfect life, died a sinner’s death, lay three days in the tomb, and rose again to make us right with God, pure and holy, possessors of eternal life. All through His great love and amazing grace!

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor: 15:1-4).

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

As Christians, our lives demonstrate the fact that we have been “born again” – we are a “new creation” in Christ.

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

He transforms us from sinners to saints, by the power of His Spirit that dwells in us. Our lives are fulfilled by virtue of our close personal relationship with Him. We are not consumed with the pressures of trying to please God through good works that earn His merit. He has done all the work and simply credits His righteousness and sinless perfection to us.

In summary, Christianity is faith in the God who gave Himself for us, to be our Saviour from sin, so that we can live in love with Him, forever.