

July 23, 2017
What is Christianity?

Here is another question posed by the Catechism. Have you ever thought about this question? I hope so. The world most certainly thinks about it. It thinks things like, "Organized religion," "Doctrines of men and the rich," "Hypocritical practices." Because of this, I really hope that you have thought about this question. If you haven't really thought about it, take a few minutes to do so now. After you've pondered this question for a bit we will turn to the help of scripture to think through it some more.

The Catechism states that Christianity is the life and salvation given to the faithful through Jesus Christ. Here it cites Acts 11: 26, John 14: 6, Acts 4: 12 and a few others as its proof of this. But, for now I would like to consider how different a view this is from the views that I mentioned the world takes on Christianity. The world lays some serious charges against the church and its practice of Christianity that are, in a way, well deserved. Over the years the church has made its mistakes and earned the title of hypocritical and selfish.

Now, look at how the Catechism explains it to you through scripture. Christianity in scripture is not a religion as we understand it popularly today (or really at any time). Rather Christianity is a gift from God to men through Jesus Christ. In other words, to be Christian is to know the salvation God has for you through the person, work and name of Jesus. There can be no other proper definition of the term Christian. Acts 4: 12 tells us that there is no other name than that of Jesus Christ under which anyone

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can be saved. Then a little later in Acts, we find that the disciples were given that title first in Antioch. Literally translated the word would mean something like "little Christs." But, how appropriate is this name that was given to the disciples and all followers of Jesus after. It is the very title of Jesus, "Messiah," hung around our necks for all people to see.

The first thing that the people in Acts noticed before labeling the disciples were their words concerning Jesus. Because of these words and the message of salvation that they conveyed, anyone proclaiming Jesus salvation and grace were labeled Christians. These men were both Christian by faith, for Jesus was the name under which they were saved and by action for Jesus was the name which they preached for the salvation of others.

So, what is Christianity? Over the years people in the church and claiming to be in the church have made mistakes and strayed from the path on occasion. But, Christianity is another name for the gift of God through Jesus of salvation and grace. Christians are therefore the people who are under the name of Jesus and who ever have Jesus on their lips and hearts. Christians are those who have Jesus in their lives. 1 John 5: 11-12 states, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son does not have life." Christians are those who have life. Christianity is the gift of life from God to be given Jesus name and live under it.

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