

Are You A Christian? Sermon March 21, 2021

If today we would approach some church-goer Christians with a question: “Are you a Christian?” almost everybody instantly would say “YES, I AM”.

If we would continue asking: “Why do you call yourself a Christian?”, people might say: I had a Christian mother; in my childhood my parents or grandparents took me to Sunday school; at the church I received a Bible; I ate chili and apple pie.

But if we would ask: “Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?” most people would remain silent, or speechless. I am sure that YOU won’t remain silent facing this question. OR ...?

Dear beloved, it is so sad, that many Christians does not know what it means to FOLLOW JESUS, and they don’t know that it is possible to be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the God of the universe.

Are you a follower of Jesus? If someone were to ask you if you were a follower of Jesus and what made you one, what would you say? Many would say: I go to church, I’ve been baptized, I am a good person, I give to charities, I am a religious person, I pray sometimes, I participate in communion, etc..

While it is good to practice these activities, they alone do not indicate that we are followers of Christ. Just engaging in certain activities is not equivalent to following Jesus.

Today, let us evaluate what a follower of Jesus Christ is and whether we, you and I, are true followers of Jesus.

1. My dear beloved, do you believe that the Creator of Universe, your Heavenly Father, who created you, who constantly watches you and cares for you, **LOVES YOU DEARLY?**

Please remain silent for a moment, and think about the answer you would give before you say that aloud. - Let me repeat the question: **do you believe that GOD LOVES YOU DEARLY?** And now please give me your answer.

The Bible says that: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). Just as we love Christ for salvation, so we must continue to live by faith as we follow Him. If we don’t love Him, it means we don’t believe that He loves us so dearly. And if we cannot love Jesus as He loves us, it means that we are self-centered. It is so sad, that we accept His love, all God’s blessings, but we don’t show that we love Him as well.

How would we feel if our children would not show any love and any appreciation towards us? What if they would love you only with words?

As genuine followers of Christ, we should love our Lord with all our hearts, minds and with our whole beings, and we should rely on Him to enable us to maintain this love-relationship.

We have to LOVE our Saviour, We have to Love the Holy Spirit, as our Creator, Saviour and Sustainer, as our Lord taught us: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and will all your strength”* (Mark 12:30). The love we are to have for Christ involves our entire being. Wholehearted love for Christ affects what we think, what we do, and where we go. We cannot serve Him, we cannot follow Him, and we cannot maintain a living relationship with Jesus if we don’t LOVE Him.

Oh, how wonderful it would be if we all could say together: “Lord Jesus, I like being with you, I like to be in your presence; it brings me pleasure.” Being in a relationship with Jesus is a two-way street. He enjoys you, and He wants you to enjoy Him.

2. The second thing we have to ask from ourselves is: **Do we pray regularly?**

In the Bible, we often read that the Lord Jesus wanted to be alone to talk to His Heavenly Father. Although Jesus was God, it was important for Him to maintain the Father-Son relationship. *“It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God”* (Luke 6:12). If we would like to follow Jesus, we have to pray regularly, as He did. We have to maintain our relationship with Jesus, as He did with His Father. Prayer has to become a priority. We must make it a daily habit to have a quiet time alone with God.

The time we spend face to face with the Lord, gives us new strength, sanctifies us and can build a new and stronger Spirit within us. Being face to face with the Lord, we can recognize well how many sins and burdens are in our hearts. When we are face to face with our Lord Jesus, He will grow in us, and we will grow in Him. For this we should pray: “My Lord and my God, help me to be face to face with you every day, and shape me with Your Spirit.”

Starting and finishing each day in prayer is a good way to make sure we are walking in Christ’s footsteps.

Be vigilant in the morning, though blue sky is promising a peaceful day. There may be a storm in your heart which could strike you, the wanderer, while you return home. For this in the morning be vigilant, and pray.

Be alert at noon, while in the noise of the earth, the peace of heaven is forgotten. Try to find a minute to be alone in prayer and love. Let us be vigilant, at noon hour and pray.

Be alert in the evening while silence descends on the earth. Come and visit your heavenly faithful friend. His heart hurts if He has to wait in vain. When you come, He receives you with His outstretched arms. Let us be vigilant in the evening, and let’s pray.

Be vigilant, wherever your day might turn, for He is constantly watching over it. Let’s fill our whole being with love and living faith. Let us be vigilant, and pray constantly, knowing that He is listening.

Traditional Hungarian Hymn; Author unknown.

3. The third question we have to answer is: **Do we obey our Lord as we follow Him?**

“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).

Following requires obedience. Obeying should be the main desire of our hearts. It is ALWAYS good to obey Him because He is the source of every good thing. The Lord Jesus said that those who serve Him will follow Him. If we would like to follow Him, we have to serve Him.

Jesus came as a servant, and as His followers, we have to serve as well. Serving the Lord means WE SERVE OTHER PEOPLE. All of us have the capacity to serve the Lord in some fashion by serving others. Service comes in many different forms: helping, caring, encouraging, comforting, giving, teaching, or sharing God's Word.

Do we like to share? Do we like to share the gifts He gave us? Do we like to share not only those things that we don't need, but also those that we would need tomorrow, but somebody else needs TODAY, NOW?

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19) said Jesus to you and me. This is Jesus' command, and if we are going to follow Him, we HAVE to share not only what we know about Him, not only the truth of the Bible with others, but the goods from our pocket, our valet, and the second slice of bread.

To serve means not only to GIVE but to GIVE UP.

Those who were listening to Alpha Program, heard the story of Maximilian Kolbe, who was forced to Auschwitz. Once a prisoner from Auschwitz was missing. For this his group was punished. The whole group was asked to line up. They were told that every tenth person has to step forward and they will be executed. Everybody was stressed to the max, hoping that they won't be singled out. There was a man, who was the tenth in that row. He started to cry loudly. "Please forgive me, not me, I have wife here around me, I have children, they will need me. Please, please, please." There was no mercy. A man, next to him, stepped forward and said. "Please forgive him and take me instead of him. I have no wife, no children. Take me." This person was Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Roman Catholic Priest. He volunteered to die in place of a stranger in the death camp of Auschwitz. Kolbe was serving a stranger by giving up his life.

Jesus said in John 12:26, *"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."* In order to serve Christ, we must follow Him. In return, we are promised the presence and protection of the Father.

LOVE, PRAYER, SHARING: These are the characteristics of a true follower of Jesus Christ. It can be difficult at times, but it provides fulfillment knowing that we will be rewarded in due time.

As the Scripture encourages us in Galatians 6:9, “*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*” We must keep our eyes on the prize!

We need to understand that being a Christian is not just a title or label. It is something you are and something you do. You believe in Jesus, so you follow Jesus. Wherever He leads.

TODAY His message is: Follow Me!

After the resurrection, on a lonely beach one morning, Jesus fixed His eyes on the disciple and simply said, “*Follow Me!*” (John 21:19).

If I choose to be a Christian, I have to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Millions of people claim to be Christian—followers of Jesus Christ. Yet their beliefs, practices and lifestyles differ greatly. Jesus said His true followers are “called, chosen and faithful.” How can we discern who His true disciples are?

“*Those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful*” Revelation 17:14.

Jesus Christ exclaimed, “*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven [that is, the Kingdom of God, who is in heaven], but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21).

Let us look up to Jesus. Let us serve Him sharing His words and our talents. Let us be blessings for others.

Let us remain faithful in His service, that at the end we may hear His voice saying to us: “*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!*” (Matthew 25:23) Amen