

Devoted to Following Christ

Message 01 in the series "Devoted"

A. We are devoted Christ followers.

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Matthew 16:13-16 (RSV)

Note: Christ (ancient Greek) = Messiah (Hebrew) = anointed one

Note: Christian = Christ follower

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1(NIV)

B. Five reasons we are devoted to following Christ:

1. Christ is the Son of God.

"Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together." Colossians 1:15-17 (NLT)

Good News! Since Christ created us, He knows how to recreate us. "...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

2. Christ is our savior.

"Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God." 1 Peter 3:18 NLT

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:6-8 (NLT)

Good News! Christ saved us from our sins and made us friends with God! "...since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:9-11(NLT)

3. Christ conquered the grave.

"God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News." 2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NLT)

Good News! Because of Christ, we don't need to be afraid of dying. "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die." John 11:25-26 (NLT)

4. Christ is always with us.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

Good News! Nothing can separate us from Christ's love. "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39 (NIV)

5. Christ is coming again soon.

“Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Hebrews 9:28 (NLT)

Good News! We still have time to surrender our lives to Christ. “As God’s partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it. For God says, ‘At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.’ Indeed, the ‘right time’ is now. Today is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT)

WARNING: Intellectually acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ is NOT the same as surrendering our lives to Him. “Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon—an evil spirit—cried out, shouting, ‘Go away! Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’” Luke 4:33-34 (NLT)

Good News! We still have time to tell others about Christ. “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” 2 Peter 3:11-12 (NIV)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Acts 11:26 tells us that followers of Jesus were first called “Christians” (Christ followers) in Antioch. What do you think a Christ follower looks like in our culture?
2. Read Matthew 16:13-16 & Colossians 1:15-17. How does it make you feel to read that we can have a personal relationship with Christ who holds the entire universe together?
3. Read 1 Peter 3:18 & Romans 5:6-11. How does it make you feel to read that Christ knew full well what sinners we were and died on the cross to save us?
4. Read John 11:25-26, Revelation 21:3-4, & Isaiah 26:19. Then discuss the following statement by D.L. Moody: “Death may be the King of terrors... but Jesus is the King of kings!”
5. Read Luke 4:33-34 & James 2:19. How would you explain the difference between believing facts about Christ and surrendering one’s life to Christ?
6. What goes through your mind when you hear someone say, “Jesus is coming back soon”? Why do you think many people are talking about Christ’s return?
7. Spend some time as a group praying for friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors who need Jesus. Ask God to help us live godly lives in front of them. 2 Peter 3:11-12