

A Christian Acts 26:24-29

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

A Christian? What does it _____ to be a Christian? Today, we're going to explore _____ is a Christian and what it means to be one. We don't want to be Christians in _____ only; we want to _____ God with all our hearts and souls. We don't want to be part of a social _____ or merely belong to a popular worship society. Our Lord _____ us to something much higher and nobler. The Lord has called us to be part of His family, to _____ in His ways. In Christ, we must _____ to sin and _____ for righteousness. In Christ, we _____ for those who hurt and make every effort to lead everyone to faith and obedience to Christ.

When someone mentions the word "Christian," what do you picture in your _____? Some picture Christians as people who genuinely _____ the Lord and strive to follow His teaching. Others say, "My _____ were Christians, so I'm a Christian." Being a Christian, however, isn't like being an American. We can say, "I was _____ in America, so I am an American"; but Christianity isn't like that. Many children are born in a Christian environment and _____ Christian ways in early childhood; but this by its self doesn't make them Christians. They become Christians when they _____ to follow Christ and give their lives to Him.

This is not a childish choice; it's the most critical and important _____ that you'll make in your lifetime and it will affect every other choice you make. When a person becomes a Christian, he no longer _____ to himself. He's taking on Christ as his _____ and Master. He's taking up his _____ to follow the Lord. If he's serious, he'll never be the same. I hope and pray that you're serious about your faith in Christ Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the book of Acts 26:24-29.

Every Christian is first a _____. A disciple is a _____ of Jesus Christ. The term "disciple" means a "learner" or "pupil." The disciples of Christ, however, were _____ than mere students. They _____ themselves to Christ and His teaching. In the last words of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, "Go therefore and _____ disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Christ's disciples were to observe _____ that Jesus taught. They were never to choose to follow some commandments while ignoring others.

Jesus described what He _____ His disciples to be and what they were to do in several passages. Jesus gets specific in three passages in the Gospel of John. First, the Lord Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will _____ that you are my disciples, if you

have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Being a disciple of Christ _____ you to love other Christians in the same way Jesus loves them. A disciple is _____ to lay down his life for others just as Jesus did. When Christians love each other, people notice that. They notice that love and are _____ to it. They want some of it.

Second, the Lord Jesus wanted people to focus on and remain in His _____. He said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____” (John 8:31-32). A true disciple does not make his own _____ or do his own thing. He makes his home in the words of Jesus found in the New Testament. He knows _____ the truth can set him free. He abides in the words of Jesus so he may know the truth. He’s not willing to settle for anything _____. He’s not willing to go into human traditions. He’s not willing to listen to _____. He wants to _____ what the Lord Jesus has to say.

Third, the Lord Jesus wants us to bear much _____. The Lord said, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so _____ to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you _____ my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (John 15:8-10). Christians, that is, disciples, bear fruit by serving others and by teaching others the _____. As disciples, they imitate their Master in kindness and love. They make it their business to _____ people to Christ and to honor God with their lives.

At first, everyone who followed Jesus was called a _____. Acts 6:7 says, “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became _____ to the faith.” Jewish priests became Christians because they knew that He was indeed the Son of God, and they wanted to _____ the Lord. In time, however, the name of Christ began to be _____ to the disciples. They were more than merely _____; they belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word Christian is more than an adjective; it both describes and identifies those who _____ Christ. The word “Christian” adds the suffix “-ian” to the word “Christ.” This suffix originally applied to _____. It came to denote the adherents, or the followers, of an individual or group. A Christian is a slave or adherent of _____. He is committed to Christ and follows His _____. The New Testament uses the word “Christian” only _____ times. The first is in Acts 11:26. “And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” These believers, these disciples “were first called Christians in Antioch” because their behavior and their speech were _____ Christ. This passage fulfills a _____ found in Isaiah 62:2 that, “The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a _____ name Which the mouth of the LORD will designate.” The word for “called” in Acts 11:26 is not the usual word, but one that has the force of a divine _____. This is not a term of derision like some think, but one that _____ Himself designated.

The second use of “Christian” is found in Acts 26:28. “Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In (such) a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’” Paul was defending himself in Caesarea

before Agrippa and Festus and giving him _____ to believe. Paul responded, “I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these _____” (Acts 26:29). Anyone who knows the love of Christ _____ for everyone else to know that love and grace.

Then there is the third use of the word Christian. It’s found in 1 Peter 4:15-16. “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be _____, but is to glorify God in this name.” Those who wear the name of Christian must live to _____ Christ. It’s a worthy name. Their behavior and words should _____ that they gladly belong to Him!

If you’re a Christian, you’re also a _____. Yes, a saint! The word for “saint” and the word for “holy” are really the same word in the original Greek. The word “holy” is an adjective, while the word “saint” is a noun. When people are sanctified (that is, made holy) by the _____ of Jesus Christ at the time of salvation, God makes them saints. So, _____ saved person is a saint. Ananias told Paul that he was to go to the Gentiles, “to open their eyes so that they may _____ from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified (that is, made holy) by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18). If you have been sanctified, that is, made holy by the blood of Christ, you are a saint.

Paul greeted the Christians in Corinth, “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those (who are) sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2). **Read what Paul said to the church at Ephesus that was made up of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesians 2:19-22.** The New Testament knows nothing of some _____ class of “saints.” This concept was developed many centuries _____. If you’re a Christian, you want to _____ to Jesus and what comes in the Bible, not to those other things.

If you’re a Christian, not only are you a saint but you’re a _____ of God. Yes, a child of God! John 1:11-13 says, “He (Jesus) came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the _____ to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Only God can make a child of God. Only God can make a saint, a Christian or a disciple. Children of God are born again by the _____ of God. Galatians 3:26-27 tells us how: “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ (that is, immersed in water into Christ) have put on Christ.” When people believe and put on Christ in baptism, they become children of God, saints, disciple and Christians.

If we’re God’s children, let’s _____ like our Father in heaven. Philippians 2:14-15 says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” A child of God must act differently than the _____ acts. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:44-48.**

If you're a Christian, a disciple, a saint, you're a _____ or _____ in Christ. Hebrews 2:11 says, "For both He (Jesus) who sanctifies and those who are sanctified (made holy) are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to _____ them brethren." All of the Christians are brethren. When Paul and Peter wrote their letters, they frequently addressed people in the _____ as "brothers and sometimes as sisters." **Read what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:22-23.** You have to _____ the gospel to be a child of God. As children of God, we must love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

God wants us to be _____ as brothers and sisters. We unite on His _____. **Read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10-11.** Instead of holding fast to one another in Christ and His Word, they were splitting into _____. **Read Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13.** As brothers and sisters we must _____ united behind the Lord Jesus and not be split into groups and denominations. **Read what the Lord Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-21.** The current division among people who call themselves Christians is a _____ block to those in the world.

Brothers care about each other and stay united. Galatians 6:1-2 says, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

Are you a true Christian, a disciple, a saint, a child of God, and a brother or sister in Christ? Have you denied yourself and taken up your cross? In God's eyes, our highest calling is to wear and honor the _____ of Jesus Christ. We must _____ become a fair-weather Christian, a pretend Christian, or a Christian in name only. Christians should truly honor the name of Christ in every aspect of their _____. A true Christian has denied himself, taken up his cross daily, and given his _____ to follow the Lord. Sadly, many who wear the name of Christ _____ to understand that they truly belong to the Lord Jesus. When you confess Christ and you're baptized into Christ, take your commitment seriously!

Read Peter's description of a Christian in 1 Peter 2:9-10. One who takes God seriously realizes what God has _____ for him to save him and to give him an inheritance in heaven. He realizes how much _____ God's marvelous light is than the darkness of the world. He knows he belongs to God!

Who do you belong to? Do you belong to Christ? To become a Christian and to belong to Him, you must _____ that He is the Christ, the Son of God. You must _____ of your sins and turn to the teaching of Christ. Upon confessing your faith, you must be _____ into Christ, born again into the family of God. When you're baptized, immersed into Christ in water, God will _____ away your sins; He'll make you holy, and add you to His family as His child. Acts 22:16 says, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Oh, how I wish you would become a Christian today!