

“Quitters”

Christian: It's Not What You Think, Part 2

October 8th, 2017

“He [God] knew how or why everything happened; He knew the disposition of every single soul. He wasn't going to let anything happen by accident! Nobody was going to Hell by mistake. This was His world, all this! He had complete control of it; His justice, His mercy – were not our justice or our mercy. What folly to even imagine such a thing.

I didn't have to know how He was going to save the unlettered and the unbaptized, or how He would redeem the conscientious heathen who had never spoken His name. I didn't have to know how my gay friends would find their way to Redemption; or how my hardworking secular humanist friends could or would receive the power of His Saving Grace. I didn't have to know why good people suffered agony or died in pain. He knew. And it was His knowing that overwhelmed me, His knowing that became completely real to me...And why should I remain apart from Him just because I couldn't grasp all this? He could grasp it.”

Anne Rice – “Out of Darkness: A Spiritual Journey”

If you can figure your god out, your god is too **SMALL**

“Today I quit being a Christian. I'm out. I remain committed to Christ as always but not being 'Christian' or to be part of Christianity. It's simply impossible for me to 'belong' to this quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and deservedly infamous group. For ten years, I've tried. I've failed. I'm an outsider. My conscience will allow nothing else.

My faith in Christ is central to my life. My conversion from a pessimistic atheist lost in a world I didn't understand, to an optimistic believer in a universe created and sustained by a loving God is crucial to me. But following Christ does not mean following His followers. Christ is infinitely more important than Christianity and always will be, no matter what Christianity is, has been, or might become.”

Anne Rice – Facebook, July, 2010

“My commitment to Christ remains at the heart and center of my life. Transformation in Him is radical and ongoing. That I feel now that I am called to be an outsider for Him, to step away from the words “Christian” and “Christianity” is something that my conscience demands of me.”

Anne Rice – interview, 2010

Some of you know the **TENSION** of wanting a connection with God through Christ, but being turned off by religion or church which can seem to want more **FROM** you than **FOR** you

The word “Christian” can pretty much be **ANYTHING** you want it to be; it's not **DEFINED** in the New Testament

The early Christians called themselves **“DISCIPLES”** which is well defined by Jesus and the New Testament writers

Jesus gave us the defining characteristic of His disciples – how we **TREAT** each other – it is to be the same way **HE** treated us

John 13:34-35 (NIV) “[Jesus said] A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are My disciples if you love one another.”

1 John 4:7 (NIV) “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

John writes that the way you know somebody is really a “God-person” is how well he or she **LOVES**

1 John 4:8 (NIV) “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

John says the essence of God is **LOVE**; and that love was **PROVEN** to us in Jesus

1 John 4:9-10 (NIV) “This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

You will never be eye to eye with anyone Christ didn’t **DIE FOR**; God’s love is for **EVERYONE**

For John this isn’t a theory or something he read about – he **SAW** it happen

1 John 4:11 (NIV) “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

The word “ought” is a financial term that infers indebtedness, i.e. there is a debt-debtor relationship, you have with everyone you meet; “we **OWE IT**” to God to love one another

We’re to love others in such a remarkable way that **OUTSIDERS** will notice

God wants us to love people in such a way that we **ERADICATE** anyone ever saying as His disciples we are “quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and a deservedly infamous group.”

People who experience this kind of love don’t **QUIT** Christianity, they are **DRAWN** to it

Maybe we all need to **QUIT** “Christianity” to once again **BECOME** disciples

Our problem is we settled for being Christians, for the brand Christianity, and we gave up our **LEVERAGE** in society when we opted for anything other than **LOVE**

Your best opportunity for (*you fill in the blank*) is to **LOVE** one another, the way **JESUS** loved you

My Next Step Today Is:

- This week I will try to be conscious that every person I meet, Christ died for
- I will try to love fellow believers this week in such a remarkable way that outsiders will notice
- I am interested in being baptized on Sun, Oct 22 (*this will be the last baptism until next summer*)

Next week: Join us as we continue this series by looking at “Insiders Outsiders.” Invite a friend!

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