

## Study 0092

### THE CHRISTIAN IN THE MARKETPLACE (2)

When we began this series, “*The Christian in the Marketplace*”, in our last study, we looked at the wrong notions that have eclipsed the true descriptions of who a Christian truly is, what really is a marketplace, and how a Christian is expected to conduct himself/herself in the marketplace. Our assignment then, was to test and whet our understanding, from a biblical/scriptural viewpoint, who truly is a Christian, what really is the marketplace, and what principles in general should guide the Christian in the marketplace. We were also asked to study, and note our observations on **John 8:31-59**. And, it is here that we shall commence this study.

### Some Pertinent Observations on John 8:31-59

In reviewing **John 8:31-59**, let us note at the outset that the Lord Jesus was addressing the Jews who had believed on Him because of the words He had spoken (**John 8:30**). We can liken these believing Jews to today’s church attendees who have laid claim to believing in Jesus. So, our observation will centre essentially on those who claim to believe in Jesus, those who attend church, and, those who go by the appellation of ‘Christian’. Let us also quickly state that the word ‘disciple’ as used in the passage of scripture under review by the Lord, refers to anyone who adheres, with all gravity, continually and completely, without reservations, to the word of God, and to Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. It was in **Acts 11:26** that the name ‘Christian’ was first used to describe the disciples of Jesus Christ; thus, the words/phrase ‘disciple’, ‘disciple of (Jesus) Christ’, and ‘Christian’, refer to the same people, and will be interchangeably used in our observations below.

1. The Lord spoke the words in **John 8:31ff** to the many Jews who believed in Him as He spoke the words of God to them, and from this, we note that:
  - a) He was actually saying that it is one thing to claim to believe in Jesus because of what you have heard; but it is an entirely different thing to believe in Him as the Messiah (or Saviour from sin), the Son of the living God (**Matthew 16:13-19**). A similar incident occurred when some people believed in Jesus, because of the miracles He did but He did not commit Himself to anyone of them (**John 2:23-25**); including Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, who sneaked to see Him at night later that day (**John 3:1-2**). Nicodemus was, however, brought to the realization that being born again is the issue in the kingdom of God; not merely believing in Jesus for miracles sake (**John 3:3-21**)! So, you are not a Christian just because you believe in the words or miracles of Jesus, rather, you are a Christian, to begin with, because you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world from sins; particularly yours!
  - b) Following from the above, we note that if what you believe of the Lord is merely what you have heard of the word of God only, and not in God Himself and Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the One who can, and will save you from sins, then you are no different from those who believe and applaud the writings of philosophers, and therefore, you are not a Christian (**Acts 17:16-21; John 17:3**)!
  - c) Again, the Lord Jesus is saying that, it is one thing to believe in the words of God; it is an entirely different thing to put them to practice (**Matthew 13:19-23; James 1:22-25**). It is not merely by believing the word of God that marks you out as a disciple of Christ; the actual living out of the word of God on a daily basis, and in our daily interactions with people, is what marks you as a Christian.
2. You are not a disciple of Jesus Christ if you are not continuing in (that is, walking in or living by) the word of God daily (**Acts 2:41-42**). In other words, if you do not avail yourself of the undiluted teachings or doctrines of the Lord, you cannot be a Christian (**1**

**Peter 2:1-3!** Indeed, it is by continuing in the word of God (adhering strictly to the teachings of Christ), that the Christian is made completely free from sin, the flesh, and the world (**Proverbs 11:9**). For an individual who claims to be a Christian to seek deliverance from men, is an indication that the individual is either ignorant of what it is to be a Christian, or he or she is not a Christian at all!

3. Anyone who makes a practice or habit of sinning is not a Christian (**1 John 3:4-10**)! We are not talking of the occasional errors of unintended sins (which must nonetheless be confessed), but the deliberate and blatant acts of disobedience and contrariness to the word of God (**1 John 5:16-17; Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30**)!
4. You are not a Christian because you attend a particular church, which is known for doctrinal teachings of holiness, humility, the Holy Spirit, etc.; neither are you a disciple because someone who serves and deeply loves God is your parent, mentor, pastor, or spiritual leader; nor are you a follower of Christ because you come from a lineage of people who followed Christ. John Wesley, the fiery preacher of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century whom God used to establish the Methodist Church or Episcopal Church (American), testified that his claim to being a Christian at first, was based on his ancestry in the church, and his being ordained a minister; but when he met a group of Moravian Christians (of German descent) who showed no fear of death in the face of danger, it dawned on him that he didn't yet have Christ in him; so he began to seek Christ, until he finally received Him, and then he went on preaching the truth about Christ, salvation, the Holy Spirit, etc. (**Philippians 3:4-11**).
5. You are also not a Christian, if any of the following apply to you:
  - a) You are looking to a pastor or a ministry for your deliverance. Only Jesus, the Son of God, can truly and completely deliver a person from sin and its stranglehold; and that, at salvation, and as you continue to put to practice Christ's teachings, as contained in the bible.
  - b) The word of God has no place in your heart (**Matthew 13:19-22**); that is, you have issues with, and quarrel with, the word of God, and, you seek to kill (malign/discredit) the servant of God who has told you the truth.
  - c) Your profession of God as your Father is not matched with your love for Him and His word (**1 John 4:20-21; 5:1-3; Matthew 15:3, 7-9**). We are not talking of a mouthed love, but a love that is marked by our obedience to God's word, our devotion to Him, and, our dedication to serving Him!
  - d) You do the deeds of the devil, which include murder (**John 10:10**); telling lies (**Revelation 21:5-8; 22:15**), and not abiding in the truth (**2 John 1:9**).
  - e) You are unable to heed the word of God. This is a person who just cannot do the word of God, no matter what (**Acts 7:51**).
  - f) Your doctrine or philosophy of death is contrary to God's word (**Acts 17:22-34**). That is, what you believe about death does not include the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.
  - g) You rely on your pedigree or ancestry; rather than on the finished work of Christ on the cross at Calvary as the basis of your eternal salvation and your standing before God (**1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 6:14**).

At the end of the scripture verses under review, we see a strange thing happening: the same people who claimed to believe in Jesus, because of the words of God, which He spoke to them, were the same people who wanted to stone Him, the very Word of God! We indeed, find such contradictions in men and women today, which lay claim to being Christians/disciples of Christ, only for them to live contrary to Him and His teachings, and in fact, persecute Him (**Galatians 1:13-24; Acts 9:1-5**). Are you one of such? (**2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**).