

# What's So Great About Being a Christian?

Philippians 4:4-7

## I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Some have a sour view of what it means to be a Christian.
  - A. Many believe that Christians are is somber, gloomy and dejected.
  - B. They believe that God just wants to enforce a bunch of arbitrary rules so He can rob every one of the “fun things” in life. Drain the fun out of lfie!
  - C. Christianity is treated as if it were only for old ladies and children; surely no thinking adult who wanted to enjoy life would sign up on God’s “dotted line.”
2. But this picture is just the opposite of what is painted in the Scriptures.
  - A. First century Christians were happy and joyous (**I Pet. 1:8**: “*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*”; Phil. 4:4-7).
  - B. The early church did not consist of just old ladies and children, it was made up of young and old, male and female (Acts 8:3, 12; 9:2; 13:50; 17:12; 22:4; Gal. 3:28).
3. Philip preached to the Ethiopian nobleman about the Lord, Acts 8:35-39.
  - A. When the eunuch heard the preaching, believed it, confessed Christ as Lord, and was baptized, we are told that “he went on his way rejoicing.”
  - B. Paul and Silas were “put...into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks” (Acts 16:24) yet “were praying and singing” praises unto God, and they also preached Christ to their jailor (Acts 16:25-34; **Jas. 1:2**: “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,*”).
  - C. These two joyful Christians made a great impression on the prisoners and the jailor.
    - (1) Paul & Silas made such a huge impression on the jailor that in his time of greatest distress he responded:

**Acts 16:27-30**: “*And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.’ 29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’”*
    - (2) Note the great change in the jailor’s frame of mind:
      - (a) Before: He was ready to kill himself!
      - (b) After: when baptized into Christ, he “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” (v. 34)
4. Even when they were persecuted, first century Christians “rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” (Acts 5:41)
5. **3** Of all the billions of people that live upon this earth, Christians have more and better reasons to be happy than any others! **What’s So Great About Being a Christian?** Let’s look at some reasons.

## II. DISCUSSION:

**What’s so great about being a Christian? Christians are...**

1. **4** Recipients of God’s love:

- A. God loves us and wants us all men be saved! 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; **Jn. 3:16**: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish; but have everlasting life.”
- B. But, only the Christian tastes the goodness of God’s love (e.g., **Heb. 6:4-5**: “...were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...”).
- C. Despite our mistakes, and the knowledge that we cannot save ourselves, God cares for us. **Psa. 46:1**: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”
- D. Do you ever stop and consider your life before becoming a Christian?
  - (1) We took joy in things that are shameful (**Rom. 6:21**: “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.”).
  - (2) When I think of my past sins it makes me cringe! It makes me “ashamed.” 1 Tim. 1:13: “I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man,” v. 15: “chief of sinners”
  - (3) And, I know, understand and agree that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).
- E. And it is then that I remind myself: **Rom. 5:8-9**: “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”
- F. Why shouldn’t we be happy and confident?
  - (1) God cares for us to the ultimate degree!
  - (2) Through God’s love for us He has solved our greatest problem (**Rom. 8:31b-32**: “If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”).
  - (3) Do you remember how you felt when you recognized your lost condition and realized God loved you so much He provided a way out! Wow! It’s great being a Christian!

**What’s so great about being a Christian? It’s great being a Christian because...**

2. **5 Christ died for us**: Christ died upon the cruel cross to save us from our sins.

- A. What is the greatest degree of love a man can demonstrate for another? Jesus answers: **Jn. 15:13**: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”
- B. The highest award of valor given by our armed services is the *Congressional Medal of Honor*.
  - (1) As of June 2017, 3,515 Congressional Medals of Honor have been awarded.
  - (2) Of those awarded, 621 were awarded posthumously, in other words, the one recognized gave the ultimate sacrifice for his/her comrades.
  - (3) It is truly an honorable act of love to sacrifice one’s life for his/her friends.
- C. But, God’s love is far greater! We didn’t deserve for anyone to die for us! Much less “His only begotten Son”!
 

**Rom. 5:6-8**: “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- D. It would do us all good to think about our sins, I know it’s awful and painful. Then think of the price that had to be paid for those sins to be forgiven (Matt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 18).

- ☛ Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest associates,
- ☛ Jesus was falsely charged,
- ☛ A murderer and robber was preferred by the people before Him,
- ☛ Jesus was “scourged” to within an ‘inch of his life,’
- ☛ Jesus had a “crown of thorns” unceremoniously jammed onto his head,
- ☛ Jesus was then struck on the head with reeds, spit upon and mocked by the soldiers,
- ☛ Jesus was forced to carry His own cross,
- ☛ Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross,
- ☛ Jesus was then suspended in mid-air on that cross,
- ☛ Jesus suffered unimaginable pain on the cross,
- ☛ While suffering that pain He still endured even more ridicule and mocking.

E. How much did He love us? How much does the Father love us?

- (1) It’s not like God just snapped His fingers and magically our sins were forgiven.
- (2) It took the most unjust and monumental execution of all time for that to happen!
- (3) Jesus died a cruel, shameful death; not because you and I are good or righteous; exactly the opposite is the case!

**Rom. 5:8:** *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

- (4) If we got what we deserved we would be lost forever in a hell “*prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matt. 25:41).
- (5) But, instead; we’ve been given the greatest gift of all!

**Rom. 6:23:** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

F. If there was ever a reason to rejoice, this is it! Not because we are sinners, but because Christ died for us.

**Heb. 2:14-18:** *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”*

G. We often sing, “What can take away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

- (1) And this is right, for, “*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.*” Hebrews 9:22.
- (2) When we had absolutely nothing we could do about our lost condition; God stepped in and gave you and I the greatest gift ever given.

**1 Pet. 1:18-21:** *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained*

before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

- H. Yes, it is great to be a Christian! **Heb. 10:19-22a:** “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,”

### **What’s so great about being a Christian?**

#### **3. 6 Jesus Christ is our great high priest:**

A. As sinful creatures, we cannot come before God and plead our case alone.

(1) But Jesus can and does. “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” 1 John 2:1

(2) He is our great High Priest:

(a) The High Priest, under the Law of Moses, gave an offering on the Day of Atonement; first for his own sins, then for the sins of the people:

**Heb. 5:1-3:** “For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.”

(b) The Levitical High Priest took the blood of a bull into the most sacred place in the tabernacle, the *Holy of Holies*, and sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:14-15).

(c) The *Holy of Holies* was a type of heaven; and Jesus entered the true *Holy of Holies* (heaven itself) and offered His blood; He didn’t need to offer blood for Himself but He did need to offer His blood for us! And, that’s exactly what Jesus did:

**Heb. 2:17:** “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

(d) The results of Jesus’ High Priesthood:

**Heb. 4:15-16:** “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

**Heb. 10:19-25:** “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

**Heb. 7:23-25:** “Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

B. What’s so great about being a Christian? We have Jesus as our Great High Priest!

### **What’s so great about being a Christian? Only Christians find the...**

#### **4. 7 True meaning and purpose of life:**

- A. Philosophers through the ages have sought an answer to the question: “What is the purpose of life?”
- (1) I believe every thinking person that ever lived has struggled to answer that question.
  - (2) But, as men we can never supply the answer to that question in and of ourselves.
  - (3) Voltaire, the great 18<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher, sums up the purpose of life for most: “Pleasure is the object, duty and the goal of all rational creatures.”
  - (4) This just shows how blind man is to life’s true purpose; truly did the prophet say, “*O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*” (Jer. 10:23)
- B. Another philosopher, a wise man; some 3,000 years ago searched for the true purpose of life.
- (1) He looked at riches, he looked at great wealth and possessions, he looked at “wine, women and song”; he looked at every earthly pursuit and came up empty-handed.
  - (2) He searched and searched and found everything in this life (i.e., life “*under the sun*”) to be “*vanity*” (i.e., empty, void of any lasting value).
  - (3) He ultimately found the true purpose of life: **Eccl. 12:13-14:** “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*” (KJV)
- C. The aimlessness that is rampant in our society today is directly traceable to a loss of faith in God and in Christ.
- (1) There has never been a society more highly educated, more materially blessed, or more technologically advanced than ours. Yet there has never been a society more lost and aimless regarding the true purpose of life than ours today!
  - (2) When man turns from God, he loses his true purpose for living! Gen. 1:26-27; Eccl. 3:11
  - (3) Jesus pointed this out in His own life on the earth (**Jn. 4:34:** “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*”; **Jn. 6:38:** “*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*”).
- D. The Lord fulfilled that purpose in His life, for in His prayer, just before His death, He said; “*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*” (Jn. 17:4).
- (1) God’s desire for each of us is for our life “*to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom. 8:29; “*conformed*” is to be molded into His shape, figuratively His nature; Strong says this conformity is gained through the idea of adjustment of parts; accomplished via the Word).
  - (2) Thus, we can only fulfill the true purpose of our life when we are willing to adjust our life to imitate His life.

- (3) When we do, just as Jesus did, we will “glorify God” in our lives upon this earth and it is only then that we can say we have fulfilled His purpose for giving us life.

**Rom. 12:1:** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable [Gr. *logikos*: reasonable, rational] service.”

- E. Paul succinctly summed up the meaning of man’s existence upon this earth when he said: “That they should seek after God...” (Acts 17:27)
- F. What’s so great about being a Christian? It’s great to know one is fulfilling the purpose for which God created us!

### **What’s so great about being a Christian? It’s great because as Christians we have...**

#### **5. 8 Fellowship with other Christians:**

- A. Someone has said, “No man is an island.” and that is true (**Rom. 14:7:** “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.”).
- (1) Everybody needs someone they can depend on!
- (2) So many people are lonely, because they are alone; having no one they can depend on.
- B. At the very heart of Christianity is the fact that as Christians we are one in Christ.
- 1 Cor. 1:10:** “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
- 1 Cor. 12:25-26:** “that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”
- Eph. 4:16:** “...whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”
- C. The Christians in Jerusalem, over 1900 years ago, felt and lived that way (**Acts 4:32:** “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”).
- (1) We need one another. We need the strength, encouragement and wisdom of one another; especially in times of sorrow and grief; in times of tribulation and trial.
- (2) Paul exhorts to: **Phil. 1:27:** “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,”
- (3) The psalmist wrote: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” **Psalms 133:1.**
- D. Our “togetherness” as Christians is a great source of comfort:
- Rom. 15:5-6:** “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- E. God comforts us, so we can comfort others: **2 Cor. 1:3-4:** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our

tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

- F. By myself I might not be able to stand, but with other Christians I can (**Eph. 4:16**: “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”).
- G. Now that’s something to celebrate!

### **What’s so great about being a Christian? Being a Christian...**

#### **6. 9** Brings peace:

- A. We live in a world of turmoil, anger and strife; peace is a coveted, but rare treasure.
- B. But as Christians we know and serve the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6); only He can bring true peace to our lives; **Rom. 5:1**: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”
  - (1) His sacrifice makes that peace possible: “Having made peace by the blood of His cross.” (Col. 1:20)
  - (2) When Paul speaks of our being at peace with God, note what he says about Christ.  
**Eph. 2:14-16**: “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”
  - (3) So, in Christ, we have peace with God and with each other.
- C. The Lord discusses another kind of peace that is vital in Christianity.
  - (1) He says: “Be not anxious for the morrow.” Matthew 6:34.
  - (2) But how can we avoid worry and anxieties that rob us of peace of mind?
  - (3) Matthew 6:33 gives the answer: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”
  - (4) In other words, be a faithful Christian. This is the only way to true peace of mind.
- D. When we put our trust in Him, live in loving obedience to His will, then we can rejoice in the Lord.  
**Phil. 4:4-7**: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- E. What’s so great about being a Christian? It’s the only way to gain true peace in this life and in the life to come!

### **What’s so great about being a Christian? Only a Christians has...**

#### **7. 10** The assurance of heaven:

- A. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:19, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”

- B. And how right that is! Life here, with all its problems, temptations and turmoil, is tolerable only because of the hope we have in the Lord Jesus.
- C. What a joyous thought! Jesus has gone to prepare you and me a place in heaven! **Jn. 14:1-3:** *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*
- D. It is great to be a Christian because our hope is not centered here, but in heaven.  
**I Pet. 1:3-4:** *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”*
- E. As a child anticipates the joys of a birthday party, so the child of God lives with hope of eternity in heaven (My joy over my baseball and glove as an eight-year old.).
- (1) Jesus promised: *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”* Rev. 2:10.
- (2) But what assurance can we have that we will really go to heaven?
- (3) The Scriptures give us the assurance of our hope (**Titus 1:2:** *“in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,”*; **I Pet. 1:4-5:** *“an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*).
- F. What’s so great about being a Christian? It’s the only path to eternal life in heaven!

### III. CONCLUSION: ||

1. What’s so great about being a Christian?
  - ☛ Christians are the recipients of God’s love,
  - ☛ Christ died to save us,
  - ☛ Jesus is our great High Priest,
  - ☛ Christians find the true purpose and meaning of life,
  - ☛ Christians have fellowship with other Christians,
  - ☛ Christians find true peace in this life and the life to come,
  - ☛ Christians alone have the assurance of heaven.
2. These things make the trials and tribulations of life but a *“light affliction”* (2 Cor. 4:16-17).
3. It is great to be a Christian, because life without Christ would not be worth living.
4. Are you a Christian? If not, you’re missing what life is all about!

Adapted from an article (*It’s Great to be a Christian*) by Carey Scott.