

Christianity is Relationship, not Religion or Ritual

INTRODUCTION

Religion

- *Some thoughts on religion.*
- Christianity is not a religion like other religions but is rather a life lived in a loving relationship with the true God and creator, our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently, a life lived in love for the human race that He created in His own image.
- 1Jo:4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. If we know God, i.e., if we have an intimate relationship with God, we will love God and show His love towards others He created in His image. We are growing in this love of God every day.
- The first question Jesus asked when He rose from the dead is addressed to the Christian leader of the 1st Century: John 21:15: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these"? Simon replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee". Love is defined in 1Co 13:3 as true loving relationship in action between us, God and others. Relationship is based on love but Religion is based on tradition.
- The Pharisees were full of religion and tradition but did not love God or have a relationship with Him.
- The word true religion in the New Testament is associated with relationship with God through sincere love, and gratitude for His sacrifice.
- Without this love relationship to the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ, religion is dead, even as we were dead spiritually, when sin created a barrier in our relationship with God, when we doubted His love in the garden of Eden. Christ came to remove this barrier of sin and doubt through His own precious blood. Now we have direct access to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, through His blood.
- Jesus did not come to establish a religion, but He came to reconcile us in an everlasting love relationship to God through the cleansing of His blood and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- There are many books that have been written about religion, sin and morality, but there is only one person who shed his blood for cleansing of sin, and only one person who rose from the dead whom we truly love and have an eternal love relationship with because, *1Jo:1:7 states: the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

- There are many religions in this world, with one-third being nominal Christians, and two-thirds comprised of other religions. However, true Christians are only 0.1% because they are the ones who have an intimate relationship with God void of religious traditions made by man.
- The medium brown in the next slide represents Christianity, being very scarce in this world.
- The next slide illustrates that even though Christianity Religion is one-third, protestants are only about 6%, six in 100, with true Christians in their pilgrimage to heaven, only about 1/60th of protestants or about one in thousand, who probably have a true relationship with Christ.
- So in an approximate estimation, true Christians are probably around 7 million compared to the world population of 7 billion, 1 in 1,000.
- This startling truth illustrates that only one in thousand are making it to heaven, while the rest of the religious people, including those who are religious in their practice of atheism, fall into the eternal lake of fire, Isa:5:14: Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure.
- This illustrates that Religion can only reform a person, while relationship with the true God alone can transform a person.
- Heaven is a place for those who are transformed into the image of Christ to live by God's moral and holy standards, not for those just reformed to live peacefully in a moral society by human standards, because human standards are filthy rags (Isa:64:6) compared to God's holiness and Christ's image. Human standards are uneven, and imbalanced which focus on minor things and neglect the major aspects of God's Word. Jesus calls the religious people who lack a true relationship with God in Mt:23:24 as blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.
- Religion is like astronomy looking at a distant planet through a telescope, and describing what you see in peripheral and distant terms. Christianity is owning that planet and the one who created it. SS 2:16 My beloved is mine and I am His. So all of mine is His and all of His is mine and that includes planet heaven. If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him Ro:8:17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
- Religion is writing an article about the king. Christianity is being married to the king. Rev 19:7: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

- Religion is trying to figure out where you're going. Christianity is following the one who came from heaven, has gone back to heaven and is now leading the way.
- Christianity is the only true religion because it focuses on the cross. The vertical line in the cross illustrates our relationship with God whom we call Father, and the horizontal line for the relationship we have with each other in Christ as brothers and sisters.
- In the first century and even now, millions of Christians died a torturous death, not because they were religious, but because they had the strongest and closest relationship with Christ, and they knew JESUS is the only way to the Father, only one who can forgive and cleanse us from our sins, only one who can lead us to heaven, and the only one who can give us eternal life, because He is the only one who rose from the dead. John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- Religion reforms, relationship with Jesus Christ transforms

Relationship

- *Now let's go to relationships from a Christian perspective for relationship is what Christianity is all about.*
- From the Bible, we learn that, God is a God of relationship, for He longs for our fellowship. He came in the cool of the day early in the morning to talk to Adam and Eve. Gen 3:8: And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, calling, Adam, Where art thou?
- *Ge:3:9: And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* God is a person, our Father who desires to have fellowship and communion with us, and He physically came to where Adam was, and called him "Adam, where art thou?".
- Next, Jesus God's son has betrothed us to Himself for we are his bride.
- Song:2:14: Jesus calls His Bride, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely". Song:7:12: Jesus calls his Bride, "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves".
- Christ is the focus of our relationship, since Christ united us to God in love and with the human race and the human race with each other through the cross.

- Relationship with God is built on love, *not* merited by what we have done for God but what Christ has done for us by reconciling us to God in love. 1Jo:4:19: We love him, because he first loved us.
- God is a person, he looks like us for we were created in His own image.
- Most of us look like a rubber stamp of our earthly father. More so we are beginning to look like and are being changed into the image of our heavenly father.
- God talks to us and communicates to us through the Bible, giving us critical direction. He wrote the Bible in the sky, He wrote it on stone and finally He gave it to us on paper so we can learn more about Him. Now we can hear it from our PDA 24/7. The Bible is a love letter from God our Father and Jesus our bridegroom to us. It is a greeting card send to u. Are we opening the mail daily to see what God is telling us?
- Christianity, is becoming one with God: In John 17:21 Jesus prayed, "Father I want all who believe on my Word to be one, even as you and I are one". Christianity is becoming united with God, becoming like Jesus and becoming one with God.
- When we take 3 cups of water and add Sodium metal to it, sodium catches fire, burns, emits light and dissolves in the water. We still see the water, but we don't see the sodium anymore. Sodium has become a hydroxide and has dissolved in the water, becoming one with the water.
- That's what happens when we blend with God, we get the Holy Ghost fire and become one with God, becoming a part of him. We get God's nature. That's why they say, tell me your friend and I'll tell you who you are!

1.0 The Intimacy of Our Relationship

- When you have a relationship with someone, you cherish the time you get to spend with them
- When you have a relationship with someone, you want to communicate with them
- When you have a relationship with someone, you want everyone else to know about them.
- When you have a relationship with someone you are willing to sacrifice for them.
- Saul had religion not relationship. He knew the Bible but did not know the God who wrote the Bible. But Saul's encounter with Christ gave

Him a new relationship, changed him from Saul to Paul, and his love for Christ and His Word, cost him his life.

- If we have a relationship with God we will cherish His Word because we love Him.
- God is our Father, Jesus is our Elder Brother and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter John 20:17 "Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father". John 14:16 Holy Spirit abides with us for ever
- New Testament Christianity is not a religion but a relationship. Rev 3:20 refers to Living with Jesus our Groom. In SS 2:4 we read, He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me is love. SS 2:16 is more personal in this relationship and states, My beloved is mine and I am His
- Christianity is a marriage relationship with Christ. Eph 5:31, 32 We are joined to Christ our husband as one flesh. Eph 5:30 We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

2.0 Preparing for the Heavenly Wedding with Christ

- Our earthly marriage which blends our Christian character, prepares us for the heavenly wedding. Eph 5:25 states Husbands love your wives even as Christ Loved the Church and gave Himself for His Bride
- Our earthly married life is a shadow of our eternal marriage to Christ. Eph 5:31,32 We leave our parents to be joined with our spouse to be one flesh even as Jesus left His Father to purchase His bride with His blood
- How we live our earthly marriage life will reflect on our eternal relationship with Christ. Col 3:19 Don't be bitter to your spouse. 1 Pt 3:7 Our prayers will not be answered if we do not live understanding our wife is a weaker vessel and give honor to them.
- Our love for our spouses needs to grow into the love Christ has for His Church Bride. Eph 5:28 Similarly husbands need to love their wives as themselves.
- Our obedience and respect to our earthly husbands is a reflection of our obedience to Christ. Eph 5:22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord
- But respect is not demanded, it is earned. 1 Jn 4:19 God did not demand love, He gave us His life and now we fall at His feet and worship Him in reverence.

- We fall down and worship Jesus because of the agony he suffered for us by laying down His life for us. Lk 22:44 In Agony, His sweat was like great drops of blood.
- Therefore, we also ought to be willing to lay down our life for our spouses. God was not ruling in heaven giving speeches on love. He came down, spread his hands and died on the cross. Eph 5:25 Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church
- We married for better or worse to our earthly spouse, even so we should be prepared to suffer with Christ. Mt 16:24 If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me
- We should go where Jesus goes, follow where Jesus leads, desire only Christ's beauty, and feed where it pleases Christ. Ps 23:1,2 Jesus takes me to green pastures and still waters when we follow Him.
- We should yield to the desire of our heavenly bridegroom in accordance with God's will, even if it means wearing the dresses he likes, going to only places where He will come with us, and listening to His favorite radio station or TV program, and singing the songs he likes. Eph:5:19: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
- Even as we are married to the life of our spouse and life with our spouse, as the church bride we are married to the life of Jesus and to live with Jesus.
- 2 Cor 5:15 He died for us so we should not live for ourselves but for Him who died for us so we might live.
- Esther became the queen because she was the only one who dressed, perfumed, and purified herself according to the King's desire which the king's chamberlain's alone knew.
- Esther 2:15: Esther purified and prepared herself according to King's desire known only to the king's chamberlain.
- There were many who tried to please the king, but only one who ministered to the King according to the King's desire, so Esther was crowned and the rest rejected.
- SS 6:8,9 My dove, my undefiled is but one, referring to the model of Esther who became the queen

- Mat 25:10 Five virgins were ready to be the bride, and five were not since they forgot the oil, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Those that were ready went to the wedding to be the Bride of Christ in an eternal relationship
- In that day many shall say to Christ, we did miracles, signs, wonders, but Christ shall say to them I cannot accept you as my bride because you ministered to me with an unclean vessel not according to my preference Mt 7:22, 23 Many shall say, Lord we prophesied, cast out devils, did many wonderful works, but Jesus will say depart from me you that work iniquity Mal 2:6 defines "iniquity" in one reference to one who ignores God's Word to be popular Iniquity Examples: King Saul: feared the people and did not enforce God's Word, Balam: desired the king's gold vs. obedience to God, Eli: did not restrain his children from committing adultery and robbing the sacrifice meat because he loved food more than God's Word, etc. Good Examples of those who lived without Iniquity: Paul: refused to accept Jewish opinion and risked his life by preaching salvation is for all races including gentiles and jews Daniel: did not fear the king and refused to stop praying

3.0 ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED

- 2 Cor 11:2 We are Espoused or Engaged to one (1) husband Christ
- 2 Cor 1:22 Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit as a seal and guarantee that He will return to wed us as His Bride. Rom 8:16, 17 We are heirs and Joint Heirs with Christ our Heavenly Bridegroom
- The first Adam was not a leader, but instead led humanity to sin, blamed it on his wife, and lost the opportunity to eat of the tree of life Gen 3:12
- The second Adam, Jesus, is our leader, who saved humanity from sin, took the blame on Himself, and became our everlasting life and our eternal husband. For as in the first Adam we all die, in the second Adam we are made alive, and have eternal life 1 Cor 15:22
- We now look like the first Adam, but soon we will look like the second Adam 1 Cor 15:49 As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly

4.0 The Wedding Day

- Multi-cultural bride Mt 22:2-9 The Jewish Nation refused the wedding invitation from the King, so the invitation was sent out globally to all nations Mt 28:18-20 (Kings Gospel to all Nations) Esther 2:8 Similar to the invitation King Ahasuerus sent globally to gather all candidates for the new global queen
- Rev 19:7, 8 The bride comes for the heavenly wedding with Jesus Christ in fine linen clean and white, glorious without spot or wrinkle Eph 5:27
- 1 Jn 3:3 The bride is ready, purified with the blood of Jesus, all discolorations on her dress removed with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and adorned with Holiness
- Rev 19:9 The wedding takes place in the presence of many guests

5.0 Wife of the Lamb

- In Rev 14:2-5, the wife of the lamb is found:
- Singing (a) before the throne in heaven
- Singing with voice like thunder
- Singing a new song and
- Playing harp music
- Her voice is now like Jesus, the voice of many waters

she was redeemed by Christ's Blood, she is the First-fruit that came from the tree (The True Vine-John 15:1)

- She talks like Jesus (voice of many waters)
- She resembles the Father's voice (voice like thunder)
- No one can learn the song except the 144,000
- She Follows the Lamb wherever He goes for the rest of Eternity

- She is Faultless, undefiled, virgin (power of Christ's cleansing blood)
- The entire body of Christ built upon the Cornerstone Jesus Christ Eph 2:19-22. Goodbye to lifeless brick and wood built homes. The Bride, the Lamb's Wife is a body, a person, and a City and is now God's Home. A name is given to the Bride, New Jerusalem, City of God, and is also a multi-national bride with a glorious body resembling City. Rev 21:9-27. How can the wife of Jesus Christ the Bride be a Glorious City and a Glorious Person? We'll know the answer when we get there!
- Bride in the future inviting the thirsty in the present Rev 22:17 The Bride and the Spirit of God have become one with the Father and the Son The Spirit and the Bride say "Come". The Gospel is simple:
 - Come to Jesus
 - Drink the Water of Life
 - Eat the Word of Life
 - Be baptized into the Body of Christ
 - Become Like Jesus Christ
 - Be married to Jesus Christ
 - Live Eternally with Jesus Christ
- John 17:22 Jesus prays for us: "And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we (Father and Son) are one.
- The Bride has become united with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, the All Triune God per the prayer of Jesus in John Chapter 17.

6.0 Eternity with God and God with Us

- Rev 21:3 We will dwell forever with God who wrote the Holy Bible:
 - on a tablet of stone,

- on parchments through the apostles,
 - on paper after Christ's death, and
 - through the Holy Spirit inscribed His Holy Bible, the WORD in our hearts
- God will dwell with us
 - Rev 22:4 We will see His Face, the face of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, The Triune God, and His Name will be on our Foreheads
 - God Himself will wipe our tears and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain only Everlasting Joy and Glory for All Eternity with God our Father, and Jesus our Heavenly Bridegroom and the Holy Spirit our Blessed Comforter.
 - The End of this Worldly Life and the Beginning of our Glorious Eternity with GOD!
 - He will be our Light, Life and Love FOREVER.

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