

REVIEWING REAL CHRISTIANITY

In 33 A.D. there were only a handful of disciples (120). But within 300 years the Christian faith dominated the known world. Rome's Emperor became a believer and Christianity became the official religion of Rome who had been visibly opposed to the Christian faith.

How did that happen? Now one out of every three people in the world claim Christianity as their religious faith (2.3 billion).

In those first 300 years it was illegal to be a Christian. In fact, being a Christian was not a way to get ahead; it was a way to lose your head or killed in another hideous way. It was socially unacceptable.

Now everything done in the name of Christianity is real Christianity. Jesus warns that in the last day people who claimed to be Christians will hear from Jesus, ***“Depart from me; I never knew you!”*** “But Lord didn't we do many Christian works?” Yes, but they were fakes and false believers.

I. The real Christianity had supernatural powers.

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a noise like a strong blowing wind came from heaven and flames of fire that were separated and stood over each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages by the power the Holy Spirit was giving them.” (Acts 2:1-4, NCV)

A. Only the church has the Holy Spirit.

1. God only indwells believers.

2. The disciples were given an impossible task: The Great Commission.
3. And one possible task (Acts 1:4-5). Go to a place, wait and pray. When they did the possible, God did the impossible. *“He brought the world to them!”*

***NOTE** Jesus told the disciples in His resurrected body that He was going away, but He was going to return and not just be with you, but in the person of the Holy Spirit, be IN YOU!

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

4. God brought the world to them and the Holy Spirit would give them power to fulfill the Great Commission.
5. The amount of spiritual power is given proportionally to the time you spend in prayer!
6. Prayer is the plug we use to connect with God’s power.
7. They prayed for 10 days, Peter preached for 30 minutes, and heaven fell.

***NOTE** That’s why we want to focus more on prayer over the next few years. WE have many miraculous stories, but I want more!

B. The indwelling Holy Spirit was accompanied by three miraculous sign.

1. A noise like a storm: If you have been in a tornado you know the wind has a powerful sound like a train. It did not say it was a storm, but sounded like one.

Key: His coming was in great power.

2. There were something like flames of fire over every believers head. You could not see that you had a flame over your head, but others could. They received it by faith.

Key: His coming was radical.

3. They spoke in other languages, but everyone understood what was said. It was a miracle of hearing.

Key: His coming was multicultural. Many languages, yet everyone understood.

“Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.” (Acts 2:43)

***NOTE** Most churches see no sign of God’s power upon it. There is no story, no legacy.

“The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power.” Power to let go of the past and move into the future!

II. It understood everyone’s language.

“They all began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave each of them the power to express themselves.” (Acts 2:4, NLT)

A. This is not a private prayer language.

1. This was for their mission so it was not for edification, but for evangelism.

“There were religious Jews staying in Jerusalem who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because all of them heard the believers talking in their own language. In amazement and wonder they exclaimed these people who are talking like this are Galileans! How is it then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native language” (Acts 2:5-8, NCV)

2. God’s miracle is “the good news is for everyone.” The gospel of grace is for every race.
3. This is a reversal of the curse at Babel (Genesis 11).
Confusion.
4. They didn’t want God, they felt they could get to heaven without God.
5. In the power of the Holy Spirit He brought people together into one family.

B. What is your love language?

1. Some speak service.
2. Some speak organization.
3. Some speak the language of music.
4. What are you doing with your language of love?

III. Use everyone’s gift.

A. In the church there was no audience, only an army.

1. Everyone was involved.

“Then Peter stood up and said...these people are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only 9 o’clock in the morning...

2. Everyone is included.

B. We are going to refocus, mobilized so our lives will count for eternity.

IV. It offers life changing truth.

A. It preaches and teaches biblical truth.

1. It's preaching, not performance.
2. It's instruction, not entertainment.
3. It's only the truth that sets you free from hurt, habits, and hang-ups.

“Peter...addressed the crowd...let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below...and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:14, 16, 19)

B. You will never understand what God is doing now if you don't know how He has worked in the past.

Peter's sermon:

- Jesus is God! His miracles proved it. (vs. 22)
- He died on the cross. (vs. 23)
- God raised him back to life. (vs. 24-32)
- This gives us gladness, joy & hope. (vs. 26)
- He has sent His Spirit from heaven. (vs. 33-35)
- We must repent and be baptized. (vs. 36-38)

- We will be given His Holy Spirit. (vs. 38-39)
- We must live differently from the world. (vs. 40)

“Those who accepted His message were baptized and about three thousand were added to their number that day!” (Acts 2:40-41)

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching...” (Acts 2:42, NCV)

C. Real Christianity is based on the Bible – “The apostles teaching.”

V. It provides a loving support network.

A. They were committed to Christ and one another.

“...they took part of the fellowship and sharing in fellowship meals and in praying together...” (Acts 2:42)

1. They were family, not a social society.

“...they met in small groups...”

2. In our church that’s called Sunday School.

3. Their world thought they were weird, but the one thing that impressed them was “how much they loved each other.”

B. The world tries to create that but it’s phony.

1. Singles bars. Where else do you walk up to a total stranger and offer to pay them something?
2. That's so shallow; it's pretending.
3. Real fellowship happens in a family and church is a family.
4. Brothers & sisters hug and express love and appreciation for each other.
5. Our words speak life into one another.
6. Jesus gave (a look, a word, and a touch)

VI. It enjoys celebrative worship.

“They continue to worship together in the temple courts...praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.” (Acts 2:46-47)

1. We want to have freedom, fun and fulfilling worship.
2. We want to be positive and praise God for the good news.

“You’ve shown me the paths that lead to life, and your presence fills me with joy! (Acts 2:28)

“Because of this, my heart will be glad, my words will be joyful, and I will live in hope.” (Acts 2:26, NCV)

3. We are wired to worship God.
4. If you don't you will worship sports or something else.
5. Knowing our purpose and God's presence brings joy!!
6. Every week our joy needs to be restored.

VII. It makes genuine sacrifices.

“All the believers shared everything with each other. They would sell their land and the things they owned and then gave the money to anyone who needed it.” (Acts 2:44-45)

A. This is not Christian communism.

1. Capitalism says “what’s mine is mine and I’m going to keep it.”
2. Communism says “what’s yours is mine and I’m going to take it.”
3. Christians say “what’s mine is really God’s so I’m willing to share it.”

B. Generosity is not legalism, but loving God and others before myself.

1. Generosity always produces joy.
2. We should want to give!

Jesus said, *“There is more happiness in giving than there is in getting.”*

VIII. It creates exponential growth because they reached out to their world.

1. Identify.
2. Intercede.
3. Invest.
4. Invite.