

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get your coffee or tea. Get comfortable and let's talk.

I'm a Christian. But what does that really mean.

So, What is a Christian? Well the first account of this term is in Acts 11. Here, Barnabas is going to get Saul (or Paul) and bring him back to Antioch. According to the Bible (NJKV) in Acts 11:25-26. *<sup>25</sup>Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.<sup>26</sup>And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

This term Christian given to those in Antioch that were followers of Christ or "the way" as it was called in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. This was not a nice name. It was derogatory at best. Josephus the Jewish historian writes, "the tribe of Christians, so named from Him (that is Jesus); The roman historian Tacitus writes near the end of the 1st century. In the Annals, that "by vulgar appellation [they were] commonly called Christians". So, the term Christian was not meant to be a compliment. But the early leaders in the Church seemed to embrace this mocking.

1 Peter 4:16 (NKJV) reads Yet if anyone **suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed**, but let him glorify God in this matter. Paul uses this terms throughout his letters to the churches and it is used in Acts and the letters from Peter.

So, the term Christian was intended to be an unflattering way to describe a "Follower of Christ" or "Followers of the Way" as it was commonly referred to in the early centuries. And the early Church turned this term into a rally cry.

But what does it mean to be a "Christian", a true "Follower of Christ"? Well "follow" is an action word. The word follow means to "go or come after; move or travel behind, or more specifically to "strive after", to "act according to", "conform to", "practice".

So a follower follows. That is if you follow someone. You try to be like them. You go where they go, do what they do, try to act like them, speak like them. This is not just an intellectual thing. You can't just think about. It's more than spiritual. You have to do something and take action to be a follower.

Another word for this is disciple. A disciple is a follower or student of a teacher or leader. When we say we are disciples of Jesus? What we are really saying is we are a student of Jesus and we try to be like Him.

It is like being an apprentice of Jesus. We work all day, all the time, continually to be like Jesus, to learn from Jesus, to follow Jesus. This is not a part-time job. You can't follow only when its convenient.. If I say come follow me and you say sure. Then you never move, you are not following. Even if in your mind you mean to. Follow requires physical action.

Now, this is not the "Christian" I was taught when I was younger. I thought it was just a choice I made to be Christian and then you had your ticket to heaven and get out of jail free card. Once I'm in I'm in right?

I realized I was only a “Cultural Christian”. I Said, “I’m a Christian, I go to church, I thought I’m a good person.” But this was just “lip service” without any “True Service” to the one I claimed to love. I realized I must STRIVE every day to be a servant of Jesus. To be His Hands & Feet. A True Disciple of Christ. So, What does that mean. We don’t have to guess because Jesus told us.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20(NJKV) *<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.***

Many have asked, Why did I get started doing Missions. Well that is what Jesus told us to do as his disciples. GO, MAKE & TEACH Be on God’s Mission, not my mission.

I believe God has given each of us a specific and purposeful mission. We Just need to say, “YES & then DO SOMETHING”

This is missions. In your home, in your neighborhood, in your country and around the world. Jesus has given us a commission as Christians. I like how the Amplified version puts it in Acts 1:8 (AMP) *<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be **My witnesses** [to tell people about Me] both **in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”***

Tell people, show people about Me, Jesus. But Where? Jesus told us, “in Jerusalem”, that is right here where we live. Our families, Our friends, at work and at the store. “in all Judea”, or here in our community, our town, our country through actions that reveals Jesus to them. “in Samaria”, in places we are hated. Samaritans and Jews did not even speak or look at each other. They hated each other because of ancestry. Jesus is telling us to engage with those who hate us. Let Jesus worry about the outcome. We just need to “follow” and do as our “Leader” leads. He tells us to do. And lastly “even to the ends of the earth”. This is getting way out of your comfort zone. God wants us to be more than we think we can be. For me the ends of the earth is the Bicol region of Philippines. For you it might be closer to home but it must be inconvenient to be sacrificial to repeat the benefits Jesus promises.

Jesus will tell you your mission. Follow is an action word. We must do the “actions” Jesus is telling us to do. Or in other terms. Get up and “do something” your Lord is asking. He has already placed it on your heart. Just do it.

That’s what a Christian is. The world will say your crazy. They’ll say, “you gave your money away for what.” Our family pooled together and bought a pastor a new truck. None of us go to his church. But God said do it, so we gave \$30K just like that. The world thinks that is crazy but that’s how God works. Its His money after all.

They’ll say, “you did what?” When you give your time, energy and money away. They’ll think you are crazy. You spend your own money to make meals and take them to the homeless downtown. Or, for us, we use our vacation time and money to go to Philippines and sweat and work, be bit by bugs and use our money so we can give away clothes, shoes, school supplies, medicine. They’ll say that’s crazy. Or you use your own money to provide scholarships for 150 students, or you use your own money to build churches or start

business to strangers half the world away. Yes that's crazy by the world's standards. But that's what God asked us to do. And yes everyone tells us we are crazy. I say crazy in love with God.

Following is an action word. When we follow, we change who we are and how we behave to be in line with who Jesus is and what He does. The world will call you "Crazy Christian" but I only care about one person's opinion. The one I follow, my Lord, my savior and my God.

If you worry about what the world thinks, what your family thinks, what your co-workers think, then you are not following Jesus. If you don't live it, you are just a "Cultural Christian" without any true service to your Lord. How will anyone recognize you as a Christian if you don't "do something".

**Let's pray.**

**Lord Jesus, I pray for the listeners today. I pray that they let you lead them and simply say yes to your urgings. Say, Yes and then do something.**

**I trust you and will follow you, in whatever you ask me to do. Your will on earth, not mine.**

**And thank you Jesus for allowing me to be part of your work here on earth. You told us the world would think we are crazy. Because they thought you were crazy. I'm proud to be one of your Crazy Christians.**

**And I pray all these things to the Father in your name Jesus. Amen.**

Thank you for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please select like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me. I want your feedback so let me know what you think

See you next time at the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.