

23T18a Why be a Christian (Part 1)

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I'm Kip your host here at the PUNLA Coffee Table.

Let me ask you a question. Why should you be a Christian?

Let's pray.

Why should you be a Christian? This was a question we posed over the dinner table a while back. We usually hear a lot about the Cost of being a Christian, But what about the cost if you are not Christian. Or you might hear the things you can't do if you become a Christian. Instead, why don't we talk about what we can do because we are Christian and things we get because we are followers of Jesus.

Remember a Christian is a follower of Christ. A servant of Jesus. But a non-believer does not understand this. Deep down inside, a nonbeliever wants to know why they should become a follower of this Jesus.

Too often pastors and Christians talk about the cost of being a Christian. Reality is everything has a cost. To you, to somebody or to something. There is a price for every choice we make. Being a Christian has a price, not being a Christian has a price.

I think we should talk about why we are Christians. What we can do because we are Christians. What is the cost if we don't follow Jesus.

What do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? Rich or poor there are many things that people worry about. Poor people envy the rich for what they don't have and are depressed about it. The rich always want more and envy the things money can't buy and are depressed about it.

Now can you remember when you were a child. Did you worry about any of those things. Whether you had or did not have, you trusted in someone to provide for you.

Now think about it. What if you could trust someone to take care of you now. Someone who wants the best for you. Would you follow that someone?

I contend that as humans we all yearn to follow someone. It's just how we are made. Whether from the living or the dead we look to someone for guidance and direction. When we were young it might be our parents or teacher or coach or some celebrity. As we grow older it might be a political leader or someone from history. You learn about them and try to emulate them or in other words you try to become more like them in your words, actions, attitudes.

So, Why this Jesus? Why be a Christian or Follower of Christ. My first response to this question is if not Jesus then who? Who is worthy of me emulating them. I contend we

all emulate someone or some ones. I've heard people say they don't follow anyone and if that is you, then good for you. For myself, I need guidance, so yes I look for people to emulate. People I can work to be more like. And it's not just one person typically. When I learn about someone or if I'm being taught by someone, I try to emulate the wisdom and character traits of that person that I admire.

Well, when choosing someone to follow, you should see if they have something, a trait, a character, an attitude, a style, etc. that we wish we had. I personally have a list of people I wish to emulate in some way. Some from the Bible, like David's heart, Daniel's faith, Joseph's perseverance, Paul's peace, Peter's boldness and of course my master Jesus. But I also have many people, I listen to and know that I try to become more like. This list includes people like Dallas Willard, my parents, my wife and so on. Each has something I want to develop or a trait I know I need to improve. They are worth emulating.

So again, "Why Jesus?" First, you have value to God. He was willing to take on humanities flesh and live among us, so that we would have a way to live with Him. Now that's love. But I think we can better understand "Why Jesus" by looking at the Character of Jesus and His promises. There are a lot of Promises of Jesus in the Bible. But, I want to show you just a few. What are the top things people worry about. Money, Security, Health, Children, etc. Would you follow someone who can help you with these worries?

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT) ***28**Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29**Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30**For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

We all have burdens and worries. Things that keep us up at night. Jesus is telling us He will give us rest from these burdens and worries. We just need to rely on Him. Jesus promises to teach us how to handle our burdens. He says His yoke is easy. Everyone has a yoke. But having someone to help you carry it and guide you removes worries from these activities. We just need to trust Jesus to lead us where we need to be. And lastly, the burden Jesus gives us in return is light and easy to manage.

Let me say it this way, Sleep like a baby. Did you know Jesus promised this. I can paraphrase it this way. Give your troubles to Jesus and trust Him with the outcome. Then sleep like a baby. Yes, following Jesus means you can rely on Him to take care for you, so you don't need to worry.

Jesus tells us, his followers, that we don't need to worry. Luke 12:22-31(NLT) ***22**Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, **do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23**Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. **24**Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? **25**And which of you by **worrying can add one cubit to his***

stature? ²⁶*If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?* ²⁷*Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* ²⁸*If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?* ²⁹*And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.* ³⁰*For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.* ³¹***But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.***

In this scripture, Jesus is promising you a life without worry. He promises to take care of your needs. Just like the Father He is. He will take care of you.

God promises to give us guidance & help. Proverbs 16:9 ***A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.*** And again, in James 1:5(NKJV) ***If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***

If we follow Jesus, He will give us help making decisions. We have the bible and the holy spirit to help us. Jesus also promises peace to those that follow him. In John 16:33 (NLT) ***I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.***

Or in Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) ***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and He will make your paths straight.***

These verses promise us Peace and Assurance if we surrender control to our leader, King Jesus. We also have a reason not to be overwhelmed by our circumstances.

2 Cor 4:14-18 (NLT) ***We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you.*** ¹⁵*All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.* ¹⁶*That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.* ¹⁷***For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!*** ¹⁸*So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

There are many, many more promises in the scriptures. But, I know all this in the Bible may not be compelling to everyone. So let me give you some EXAMPLES from real life. From my life and my family's lives. My life and my family's lives are filled with what I'll call Beautiful Catastrophes. A Beautiful catastrophe is a burden like health, finance, family issues. Burdens. The world sees catastrophe, but the outcome is beautiful. A Beautiful catastrophe. These are Beautiful Catastrophes teach me that I can trust

Jesus with the outcome. I've learned in the valley or on the mountain top. No stress. God defines success. No worry of outcome. It's truly beautiful.

HEALTH story. Health is one thing we can't control and can't buy. I had COVID-19 in March 2021. I was very sick. In COVID isolation unit at the hospital for a week. I was barely able to breathe. This was a test of how much I trusted God. As I laid in the Hospital thinking I could die. I felt peace and assurance. I realized Death is just graduation to heaven. I trusted God loved my family and they would be taken care of if God was going to take me home. If I was not a follower of Jesus, I'd be scared to die. I'd be worried about my family. Peace and assurance are an amazing feeling, its complete serenity in the midst of the storm.

MONEY story. I work as a consultant. For more than ten years, I've only gotten paid when I have work. I have to trust God will bring me work to pay my bills. During this same time period our giving to Charities and Ministries has steadily increased. When we began our charity, we committed a large amount of our finances to fund the mission activities God was asking us to do. For years my work was good, we had plenty of money for our mission work. Then my work almost completely dried up. Very little work. God kept telling us to do our mission work. So we kept using our money for God's work. Now I was working less than a quarter of my old workload, yet we had plenty of money. Our bills shrank. Our costs of living went down while inflation went up. God's economy. We have learned if God wants us to do something, the funds will be there. If it's His will, it's His bill. I don't worry about money because I know the one I follow is trustworthy. I trust He will take care of my needs and provide for His plan.

Now this is not blind trust or blind faith. I trust because Jesus has provided. Jesus has proven to be trustworthy.

Now my wife and I both have stories about finding jobs which are miraculous. God truly leading us as His followers. And there are many other stories.

Let's Pray...

Through the process of following my Master Jesus. I have lost my insecurities. If He asks me to do public speaking, then I speak. If He asks me to give money, then I give money. I follow wherever Jesus leads. And my old selfish, self-centered life is gone, replaced with an exciting, amazing life of being a follower.

As an old Hymn says, "It is well with my soul". No matter what situation I'm in life. I trust God and it is well with my soul.

We talk around the dinner table about the bigger view. Seeing God's bigger plan at work. It is so **Exciting waiting on God.**

So, I asked you Why Jesus? I say who else.

- No worries, No burdens
- Sleep like a baby
- He'll care for you.

- Guidance & Help
- Hope & Peace
- Assurance.

Why wouldn't you choose Jesus. The last question I have for you is Will You?

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. If you liked the message, please share a link with a friend. You can contact me at kip@punla.org if you have comments or questions. So, until next time @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. God bless.