

[Looking Back to Look Ahead!]
“The Bible Only Makes Christians Only!”
1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Intro. – Jesus said as recorded in John 8:32 “...*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” Today our message to the area and around the world is that they too can know the truth and be free.

Christ sets men free; yet, so many walk the earth shackled and chained -- not only by sin, but with man-made creeds, doctrines and even names.

You and I know that names are significant. They identify, clarify and thoroughly explain. Let me further illustrate with the following:

When the 1960s ended, San Francisco's Ashbury district reverted to high rent, and many hippies moved down the coast to Santa Cruz. They had children and got married. Sadly, most of the time in that order. But they didn't name their children Mary or Paul. People in the mountains around Santa Cruz grew accustomed to their children playing with kids named *Time Warp* or *Spring Fever*. And eventually *Moonbeam*, *Earth*, and *Precious Promise* all ended up in public school. That's when the kindergarten teachers first met *Fruit Stand*. Every fall, according to tradition, parents bravely apply name tags to their children, kiss them good-bye and send them off to school on the bus. So it was for *Fruit Stand*. The teachers thought the boy's name was odd, but they tried to make the best of it. "Would you like to play with the blocks, *Fruit Stand*?" they offered. And later, "*Fruit Stand*, how about a snack?" He accepted hesitantly. By the end of the day, his name didn't seem any more out of place than Star Bright's or Sun Ray's. At dismissal time, the teachers led the children out to the buses. "*Fruit Stand*, do you know which one is your bus?" He didn't answer. That wasn't strange. He hadn't answered them all day. Lots of children are shy on the first day of school. It didn't matter. The teachers had instructed the parents to write the names of their children's bus stops on the reverse side of their name tags. The teacher simply turned over the tag. There, neatly printed, was the word "Anthony."

In John 17, Jesus prayed that His followers would be one that the world might believe. You know, as well do I that the religious world today is divided. One obvious indication of this divisiveness is the names used to identify the differing groups.

You'll remember the Campbells in Pennsylvania. Let me now introduce you to a contemporary of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. His name is Barton W. Stone. Stone was a Presbyterian preacher given two churches to serve in the great Common wealth of Kentucky (Cain Ridge and Concord). When he first became a Presbyterian preacher, Stone was asked at his "licensing" if he "accepted the tenets of the Westminster Confession of Faith." His answer? -- "As far as consistent with the Word of God."

It was only a matter of time before Stone was tried for heresy, found guilty and banished from the Presbyterian church for preaching and practicing "things contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith."

Stone and others through their own study of the Bible gave up infant baptism, realizing it was nowhere to be found in the Bible. In turn, they immersed each other into Christ. They also changed names. No longer adhering to manmade names they simply identified with the name *Christian*. That was the only name they found in the New Testament.

From these events developed the simply slogan: "The Bible Only Makes Christians Only." Such is not a creed, nor is it a claim to be the only Christians. It simply is saying if one is a follower of Christ they ought to exalt the *name* of Christ rather than some man or idea.

Purpose: to give three reasons why The Bible Only Makes CHRISTIANS Only

I The Name *Christian* is DIVINE

- yes, the implication is rather subtle – other names (manmade names) are NOT divine:

A. It Was Prophesied

1. Isaiah 56:5 “...*I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.*”
2. Isaiah 62:2 “...*you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will designate.*”
3. Isaiah 65:15 “...*My servants will be called by another name.*”

4. Amos 9:11-12 “...*And all the nations who are called by My name...*”
 - a. note: these and other passages show that God would call His people by a “new name”...
 - b. this “new name” would be designated by the mouth of God... i.e. come by divine inspiration..

B. It Was Fulfilled

1. Acts 11:26 “...*the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*” Note: Antioch was the first local church to be made up mostly by Gentiles.
2. Acts 15:14 “*God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.*”
3. One last matter – in Acts 11:26 “*called*” is used only in the sense of a “divine calling” – not a label or derisive name; nor, was it a name chosen by themselves. Christian is a divinely conceived and given name spoken by THE MOUTH OF GOD.

The name *Christian* is divine!

II The Name *Christian* is AUTHORITATIVE

- implication being, other names are not as or have any authority
- Illus. – Shakespeare “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” I.e. a rose by any other name is still a rose. Try to convince anyone of such by calling them a name other than their given name!

A. Names Stand for Something

1. Think your name doesn’t make a difference? Try signing a personal check with name “Batman”...
2. Names always stand for something and we all know it!
3. Acts 26:27-28 Paul preaching to King Agrippa: “*In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.*” (learner, follower, belonging to Christ)...
4. 1 Peter 4:16 “*But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.*”

B. Names Prove Something

1. The name we wear identifies Who has saved us, to Whom we belong, and to Whom we should be living – that name is Christ!
2. Revelation 22:3-4 “...*and the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and His bondservants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*”
3. Why then go around wearing other, religious and manmade names when we can wear the authoritative and divine name, *Christian*?!
4. Illus. – Leslie Wolfe was a missionary for 50 yrs in Philippians. Was there during WW II. Captured and imprisoned. Japanese questioned him knowing he was a missionary. They asked, “What church do you belong?” “Ch or Christ/Christian Ch.” “Where is your headquarters?” “Heaven” “What kind of a Christian are you?” “No kind, just a Christian.”

This name, *Christian* is authoritative like none other!

III The Name *Christian* is SUFFICIENT

- implication being, other names in comparison are not sufficient...don’t measure up...

A. Sufficient for Unity

1. Our text and all of 1 Corinthians addresses a church where Christians were acting like worldly, irresponsible children...
2. Some were saying they were “Paul Christians,” others were claiming to be “Apollos Christians” and still others were claiming to be “Cephas/Peter Christians”
 - a. did Paul, Apollos or Peter die for you? Never! Only Christ died for you and me!
 - b. Paul, Apollos and Peter – servants of Christ... call yourselves Christians and follow Christ!

B. Sufficient for Any Matter

1. Division had occurred in Corinth. Why? = people following men, exalting them and even wearing their names rather than the name of Christ.
2. Here's the point: the religious world is divided badly... manmade issues and not Biblical ones...
3. Plea of Restoration Movement simple – get rid manmade names and get back to the Bible alone!

Christian – the only name necessary and the only name sufficient!

Conclusion: In summary, like to turn to two men's responses when it became apparent their names rather than the name of Christ would be used. You will recognize both of these names:

Martin Luther: "I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutheran, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not of men. I have not been crucified for anyone. Paul would not have any who should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions, away with them all, and let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes."

John Wesley: "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten."

Dear brother, sister and friend, let's get back to Jesus. His name is divine, authoritative, and sufficient. Let's use that name alone knowing: "The Bible Only Makes Christians Only!"