

# What is a Christian?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that first portion of Scripture that we read, Exodus chapter 19. Exodus 19. It's on page 72 in the Pew Bible.

Exodus chapter 19. And we'll just read again from the beginning. On the third new moon, after the people of Israel had gone out to the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain.

And so on. Now, as I mentioned this morning earlier to the children, and also in our Psalms, I want to begin this morning by asking that question.

A simple question. What is a Christian? What is a Christian? And I think it's a question that's relevant to all of us this morning, whether we're here or whether you're watching online at home.

[ 1 : 17 ] It's a question that's relevant to all of us. Or else, well, why are you here? Why are you watching online? Why are you here at all if you don't want to know what a Christian is?

So what is a Christian? As you know, being a Christian is not about what you do. It's all about what Jesus has done. What Jesus has done on the cross at Calvary.

So someone is a Christian, not because they've been baptized, or gone to church, or read their Bible. No, they're a Christian because they follow Jesus Christ. You're a Christian because you follow Jesus Christ.

That's what the word Christian means. A follower of Christ. Therefore, a Christian is someone who loves Jesus, and listens to Jesus, and learns from Jesus, and leans upon Jesus.

A Christian is someone who believes in their heart, and then confesses with their mouth that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners, and Lord over their life.

[ 2 : 25 ] My friend, are you a Christian? Are you a Christian? If not, why not? Why not?

Why are you not a Christian this morning? This morning, I want us to see that Exodus 19 answers that question, what is a Christian? And I say that because when the Apostle Peter asked the very same question, what is a Christian?

He asked it in his New Testament letter. And when he asked that question and answered the question, the language that he used was from the Old Testament.

The language he used was from this passage in Exodus 19. Because as we read in 1 Peter, Peter said, he said, Peter uses the language of Exodus 19, to answer the question, to what is a Christian?

What is a Christian? And so from this passage in Exodus 19, I want us to understand and unpack what a Christian is using four headings. So four headings.

[ 3 : 58 ] What is a Christian? A Christian is camping. A Christian is called. A Christian is chosen. And a Christian is committed. What is a Christian?

A Christian is camping. A Christian is called. A Christian is chosen. And a Christian is committed. A Christian is camping, chosen, called, called, chosen and committed.

So first of all, a Christian is camping. A Christian is camping. Look at verse 1. On the third new moon, after the people of Israel had gone out to the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain while Moses went up to God.

Now Exodus chapter 19, it introduces the next stage in the Israelites' wilderness journey towards the promised land. Because as we read, it's now the third new moon. It's the third new moon since the Israelites fled from Pharaoh and experienced salvation from slavery in Egypt.

[ 5 : 08 ] And the Israelites, they've now been journeying through the wilderness for the past two months. Because it was on the first new moon, this is now the third, that on the first new moon, the Israelites had the Passover, and they experienced the plague of death in Egypt.

And it was under the moonlight of the first new moon that the Israelites, they made their exodus from Egypt. And throughout these past two months in their wilderness journey, we've been following the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness.

We've been following it using our map. I don't know if you still have your map in your Bible. But we've been following it using the map of the exodus. We saw that when the Israelites left the land of Egypt, when they made their exodus from Egypt, they left the land of Goshen, which is the city from the city of Ramesses in northern Egypt.

And they traveled southeast night and day to a place called Sukkot, which wasn't actually a place in Egypt, but it's where they first set up camp.

Because the word Sukkot means tent. The word Sukkot means tent. And that was going to be the story of the Israelites. They were going to live in tents. The Israelites then continued their journey.

[ 6 : 22 ] They traveled down the west side of a large lake called the Bitter Lake. And they came to another place called Pi-Hi-Hiroth. And then just south, as they kept on camping every single night and moving on, then south of the entrance to the Suez Canal, that's where they crossed the Red Sea.

The Red Sea parted, and they passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. Then Moses led the Israelites southeast along the coast. They went through a wilderness, a wilderness called Etham.

They traveled for three days and three nights without water. It was a bitter experience of thirst that became even more bitter when they arrived at Marah.

Because Marah was a bitter place of testing. But the Lord transformed Marah to Matah from bitter to sweet. As they came to Elam, they continued camping.

Every night, they're camping all the way along. And they came to Elam. Then they went through the wilderness of Sin. And in the wilderness of Sin, they were starving. But you'll remember that the Lord provided for them.

[ 7 : 27 ] He provided morning manna for breakfast and a quantity of quail for dinner. Then the Israelites reached Rephidim. They've traveled all this way, hundreds of miles. And they reached Rephidim.

And they're now requiring refreshment, which led the people to grumble and groan against God and mutter and moan against Moses. And by this point, they've traveled all these miles.

They're camping every day. And by this point, Moses is at breaking point. He's on the brink of burnout. And as we saw in chapter 18, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, he gives some good and godly advice.

He says, Share and spread the load of serving the Lord. Share and spread the load of serving the Lord. And so now, two months into this, what's going to be a 40-year journey, the Israelites are still camping.

They're not home. They're not in a permanent residence. And we read there in verse 2, They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai.

[ 8 : 32 ] And there they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain while Moses went up to God. My friend, the Israelites had only been on their pilgrimage to the promised land for two months.

And already they've discovered that it's not a walk in the park. It's not a walk in the park. They've encountered wonders. They've encountered wildernesses.

They've experienced salvation and struggles and stresses and strains. They've seen trials and temptations and also tests of faith. In other words, you could say that for the past two months, they've just begun the Christian life.

They've just begun the Christian life. Because the Christian life, as you will know, my Christian friend, the Christian life is not a walk in the park. It's a long wilderness journey where the Christian is repeatedly reminded that a Christian is only camping.

A Christian is camping. I'm sure you remember James Reeves' song, or Jim Reeves' song, This world is not my home.

[ 9 : 43 ] I'm just a passing through. This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. And we're reminded of that so often, aren't we? We're reminded so often that we don't know what a day nor an hour will bring in our lives.

We're reminded that we could be called out of the scene of time into eternity. We're reminded of that time and time again. And as Christians, that's something we always need to remember, that a Christian is camping.

This world is not our home. This is not our permanent residence. As Jesus said to us, In my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. But I go to prepare a place for you, a permanent residence for you. And if I go, I'll come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

So this is not our home. This is not our permanent residence. And you know, that's the confession of faith of all those who walk by faith and not by sight.

[ 10 : 45 ] We see that in Hebrews 11. We're given that list of names of all these Christians who walked by faith and died in faith.

And what they all confessed, you read it in the chapter, they all confessed that they were strangers. They all confessed that they were camping. They were pilgrims on the earth because they were looking for a city that's not here.

It's a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. A Christian is camping. And you know, that's why I love the Pilgrim's Progress so much.

It's all about a man on a journey. He's camping. But what always struck me about reading the Pilgrim's Progress is that when he met someone, he would introduce himself by saying, at first my name was graceless, but now my name is Christian.

I am a pilgrim. I have come from the city of destruction, and I am going to the celestial city. At first I was called graceless, but now my name is Christian.

[ 11 : 57 ] I'm a pilgrim. I've come from the city of destruction. I am going to the celestial city. My friend, a Christian is camping. A Christian is camping.

This world is not our home. This is not our permanent residence. And of course, we're to enjoy life. We're to enjoy all the blessings and all the benefits of life.

And there are many of them. So many of them. But we must never forget that we're just passing through. You know, I once knew of a godly Christian couple, and that every night they would quote a hymn to each other as they went to bed and turned out the light at the end of the day.

And this is the hymn they would quote to one another. It's a beautiful reminder that the Christian is camping.

A Christian is camping. So what is a Christian? A Christian is camping. Secondly, a Christian is called. A Christian is called. Look at verse 3. While Moses went up to God, we read, the Lord called to him out of the mountains, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself.

[ 13 : 45 ] So when the Lord called to Moses, as we read there, when he called to Moses on Mount Sinai, what's really interesting is that it was the same location as when the Lord first called Moses.

Because if you go back to chapter 3, you'll remember that the Lord called to Moses out of the burning bush. You'll remember the burning bush. It was not consumed.

And the Lord called to Moses. He said to Moses that he was being called to redeem and rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. But now we're a few chapters on, and that mission is now complete.

And so the Lord is calling to Moses again. But this time the Lord calls Moses to preach God's word to the people, the people that he has brought out of Egypt.

And the message Moses is to preach is a simple message. Remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord. Remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord.

[ 14 : 51 ] Moses is to say to the people, remember the Passover and the plague of death in Egypt. Remember how the Lord buried the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Don't forget. Remember how he bore you on eagles' wings and brought you out of slavery. Remember the redemption and the rescue of the Lord. And you know, in many ways, that's the call of the gospel.

That's the call of the Christian gospel. Because the call of the gospel is simply to remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord. The call of the gospel is to remember the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Remember the removal of sin and the resurrection of the Savior. Remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord. But the thing is, we're not only to remember it, we're not only to remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord, we must respond to the rescue and redemption of the Lord.

We must respond to the call of the gospel. We must respond to this message because the call of the gospel is clear. The call of the gospel is compassionate.

[ 16 : 04 ] the call of the gospel is compelling. And you know, this is what separates the sheep from the goats. This is what makes the division and the distinction between a Christian friend and an unconverted friend. Because we must remember what Jesus did, but we must also respond to what Jesus did. We must respond to the call of the gospel.

And you know, the thing is, you know when the gospel is speaking to you. You know when the gospel is calling you to remember. You know when the gospel is calling you to respond. Because you're not only hearing it in your head, you're also hearing it in your heart.

And as your heart hears God's word, you know. You know. You know that it's speaking to you.

You know that it's speaking to you personally. You know that it's speaking to you powerfully. You know that it's speaking to you penetratingly. You know that it's not the education or the eloquence or the energy of a man. You know that all this that's been spoken to you is through the inspiration, the impact, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. My friend, as your heart hears God's word, you know that God is speaking to you. My friend, the call of the gospel is to remember Jesus Christ and respond to Jesus Christ. Because a Christian is called. A Christian, as Peter said, is called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel. So what is a Christian? A Christian is camping.

We're just passing through. A Christian is called. Called from darkness. Thirdly, a Christian is chosen. A Christian is chosen. Look at verse 5. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine.

[ 18 : 26 ] You shall be my treasured possession. When the Lord called Moses to preach God's word to the people, Moses was not only to call the people to remember and remember the rescue and redemption of the Lord.

Moses was also to call the people to obey the Lord and observe his laws. Because obeying the Lord and observing his laws, that's what would distinguish and differentiate the nation of Israel from all the other nations of the world. And this is important to understand because out of all the nations of the world, you read the Bible, out of all the nations of the world, the Lord chose Israel. Israel, he chose them to be his nation and his people. The nation of Israel was, as the Bible says, a chosen nation.

They were a chosen generation. They were an elect people. And you know, if we were to read Deuteronomy chapter 7, which is just an expanded and extended version of what Moses said here, Moses said to the people of Israel that day, he said to them, out of all the people on the face of the earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession. And he has chosen you, says Moses, not because you were more in number, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but he's chosen you because the Lord loves you. He's chosen you because the Lord loves you.

And you know, this is what we need to grasp. The nation of Israel was chosen by the Lord, not because there was anything good or gracious or great in them. No, they were chosen by God because God was being good, gracious, and great towards them. And the Lord says to his people, I have chosen you because I love you. I have chosen you because I love you.

And you know, that's the message of the gospel, is it not? Because it was Jesus who said, you did not choose me, but I chose you. And I chose you, says Jesus, because greater love has no man than this. That a man laid down his life for his friends. I have chosen you because I love you.

[ 20 : 52 ] I have chosen you because I love you. And you know, my friend, the doctrine of God's election, it's all based upon the goodness and the graciousness and the greatness, not of us, but of God. A God who loves us and a God who longs for sinners to remember the gospel, to remember Jesus Christ, to repent of their sins, and to respond to this glorious message of salvation.

This is what it's all about. But you know, for so many people, maybe in our congregation, probably in our community, for so many people, they hide behind the doctrine of election.

They hide behind the doctrine of election. You know, I remember when I was an apprentice, I probably told you this before. I was an apprentice electrician. I was 18. I'd just been converted. I was probably a few months into the Christian faith, but I wanted to tell everybody about Jesus.

So I said to my tradesman, I said, why are you not a Christian? Why are you not a Christian? And you know, to my surprise, he said, if I'm going to be saved, I will be saved, and there's nothing I can do about it. If I'm going to be saved, I'll be saved, and there's nothing I can do about it. I'd love to have that conversation again.

Because the answer he gave isn't true. It's not true. My friend, if you're going to be saved, you'll be saved when you do something about it. In fact, you must do something about it.

[ 22 : 34 ] Because your Bible exhorts you and encourages you to make your calling and your election sure. So my unconverted friend, your Bible never says, you will never find the words on the pages of Scripture, sit back and do nothing. You'll never find your Bible saying to you, wait for the bright light and the voice from heaven. You'll never see, read in your Bible that it says, if you're going to be saved, you'll be saved, and there's nothing you can do about it. No, your Bible says to you absolutely clearly and confidently, seek the Lord while he's to be found. Call upon him while he is near. So my unconverted friend, I want to say to you this morning, stop hiding behind the doctrine of election, because that's God's business. You leave that business with God. Your business is in the Bible.

Your business is to see that the Bible is full of gospel imperatives. Full of gospel imperatives. The imperative, come, call upon the Lord, commit your life to him, look to him, listen to him, live for him, forsake your sin, follow Jesus, find the Lord, ask, seek, knock. For everyone who asks, receives, receives. The one who seeks, finds. To the one who knocks, the door will be opened. My friend, the Bible is full of gospel imperatives. And your business, your business, God's business is the election. Your business this morning is in your Bible. And your Bible is full of imperatives that are compelling you to come to Christ for salvation. They are compelling you to come to him. So stop delaying, stop dithering, stop holding back. You come. You come. Because a Christian is to be committed.

What is a Christian? A Christian is calling. A Christian is called. A Christian is chosen. And lastly, a Christian is committed. A Christian is calling. Called, chosen, and committed. A Christian is committed. And that's our last heading this morning. Look at verse 5 again.

Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the people of Israel. And look at verse 8.

All the people answered together and said, all that the Lord has spoken, we will do. Now, as many of you know, when it comes to Christianity, my favorite word is commitment.

[ 25 : 32 ] Commitment. Because Christianity, it involves commitment. Christianity involves commitment. Christianity is not to be casual or careless or consumeristic. No, Christianity involves commitment.

It involves your time, your talents, and your treasure. It involves your presence in church. It involves your prayers for the Lord and His cause. It involves your passion for the Lord and His cause.

Christianity involves commitment. And a Christian is committed when they seek to serve the Lord. A Christian is committed when they serve as Moses was to say to the people, they serve as a royal priesthood and a holy nation. A Christian is committed when they serve as a royal priesthood and a holy nation. That's what the Lord said to the Israelites. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And of course, the phrase a kingdom of priests or royal priesthood, it emphasizes service. Like the Israelites, Christians are saved to serve. We've been redeemed and rescued from slavery to sin. Therefore, we're saved to serve. We're not to be spectators or scrutinizers sitting on the sidelines. No, we're to be servants. We're saved to serve. And as a royal priesthood, we're called to serve, not other people. No, no, first and foremost, we serve the King.

We serve a great King. We serve a great King. Do you know, I have the best boss in the world. I serve a great King, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. And we're to be committed in our service to King Jesus. Because that's what will differentiate. That's what will distinguish us as the Lord's people, our commitment as a royal priesthood and a holy nation. And that's what we see here, because the Lord chose the nation of Israel to be His people for a purpose. And the purpose, as the Lord explains throughout the Old Testament, the purpose was to be a light to all the other nations. As a nation, they had been called and chosen. They'd been called from darkness into light in order to be a light to all the other nations. They were to be a light to all these other nations around them that were still sitting in darkness. And that's the Christian life. We're called from darkness into light, to be a light to all those around us still sitting in darkness. And they were to be a light, as Moses was to explain, they were to be a light by obeying the Lord and observing His laws.

Because that's what would distinguish them. That's what would differentiate them. They would live differently. They would live distinctly as a nation from all the other nations of the world.

[ 28 : 32 ] And we'll see that in the following chapter when we come to the Ten Commandments. Because the Ten Commandments, they call us to obey the Lord and observe His law. The Ten Commandments call us to live lives that are distinct and different from the world around us. The Ten Commandments call us to witness and to worship the Lord because we've been saved and set apart. That's what it means to be holy. It's to be set apart. It's to be different and distinct from the world around you because of your Christian character, conduct, and conversation. You know, that's why Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, a sermon that's directed to the Christian, to the Christian life.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Christian, you are the light of the world and you are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. So a Christian is to fill people's lives with light. They are a light surrounded by darkness. But as we were saying to the children, as the salt of the earth, you are to mix with people and show them Jesus. You are to add flavor to their life by mixing with them and showing them Jesus. A Christian is to fill people's lives with light and to add flavor to people's lives by mixing with them and showing them Jesus.

And so we come to this Old Testament passage. And it's asking us the question, what is a Christian? What is a Christian? A Christian is someone who loves Jesus, looks to Jesus, listens to Jesus, learns from Jesus, leans upon Jesus. A Christian is someone who believes in their heart, confesses with their mouth that Jesus is the only Savior of sinners and their Lord. A Christian is camping because they're only passing through. A Christian is called from darkness to light. A Christian is chosen because they're loved by God. A Christian is committed because they're saved to serve.

My friend, are you a Christian? Are you a Christian? That's why are you here? If you don't want to be a Christian, why are you here? Are you a Christian? Because I can tell you this morning, it is the best life. Grace by the way, glory in the end. Are you a Christian? Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word, Thy Word that is so full and so filling. We give thanks, O Lord, that we're able to come to it and even come with questions and knowing that Thy Word seeks to answer them and answer them in ways that are beyond our asking and even beyond our thinking. And Lord, we pray that we would respond to Thy Word. We would respond in faith and obedience, that we would see the Christian life as a wilderness journey, journeying towards the promised land, the celestial city, the many mansions that Jesus has prepared for His people. And Lord, we pray that we would all be in that number, that none of us would be left out, but that we would all seek the Lord while He's to be found and call upon Him while He is near. O Lord, bless Thy truth to us, we ask. Speak to us, we pray, and go before us, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing the words of Psalm 62. Psalm 62, it's in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 62, it's on page 294, if you have a pew Bible, a blue psalm book.

[ 33 : 04 ] Psalm 62, we're singing from verse 5 down to the verse Mark 8. As we were saying earlier on, we're asking the question, what is a Christian? We sang Psalm 23, a Christian confesses, the Lord is my shepherd. What is a Christian?

Psalm 40, he took me from a fearful pit, and from the mighty clay, he set my feet on rock, he put a new song in my mouth. And then Psalm 62, what is a Christian? A Christian confesses, as it is in verse 6, he only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defense, I shall not moved be. This is David telling his testimony again. He's talking about what the Lord means to him. And then he says in verse 8, and this is for all the unconverted friends or the uncommitted friends. You people, place your confidence in Him continually. Before Him pour you out your heart. God is our refuge high. So we're seeing Psalm 62 from verse 5 down to the verse Mark 8. We'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise.

Psalm 63, verse 6. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone. On Him dependeth all my heart.

God bless you. Lord, God bless you.

God bless you. My glory is my sure defense, I shall not covet thee. In God my glory place it is.

[ 35 : 45 ] And my salvation sure In God the rock is of my strength My refuge most secure Ye people place your confidence In Him continually Before Him bore Ye out your heart God is our refuge

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen Amen