

BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUTH: CHRISTIAN, THE OFFICE OF BELIEVER

- Intro:** - Our instructor asks, "But why art thou called a Christian?" Christian is the most beautiful name of God's people. Our best name.
- We are called "Abraham's seed" because we are partakers of Abraham's faith, and "disciples" because we are followers of Christ.
 - In Isa. 61 we are called "trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD" (vs.3) and "Priests of the LORD" (vs.6).
 - We have many more names, but "Christian" is the most precious!

I. HOW WE GOT THE NAME. At Antioch.

- A. A name of ridicule.
1. The name Christian did not originate with believers themselves, but by their enemies, meant as a name of reproach.
 2. Probably not from the Jewish enemies. They would call them Nazarenes, a derogatory term (Acts 24:5).
 3. Most likely coined by the unbelieving Greeks, to distinguish Jesus' followers from the Jews.
 4. Here we see the folly of Satan intending to abuse God's people with this term, but God meant it for good.
- B. A name claimed and loved.
1. It is a name that identified these believers with him who was plainly the central figure in their message.
 2. It was a name too beautiful to be allowed to die.
 3. It is a name claimed; a noble testimony to the high regard, love and honor we have for Christ: dwelling on his name.
 4. As it is an honor for a child to be named after a loved one, what an honor to be named after our Savior!
- C. Blessedness of the name:
1. Unity with Christ: his life is our life, his goods are our goods, his honor is our honor, his name is our name.
 2. We are by grace those who hear and love the good tidings to the meek:
 3. We are those who receive beauty for ashes, oil for mourning, a garment of praise for a garment of heaviness.
 4. Do you, do I love and rejoice in our name: Christians?

II. WHAT THE NAME MEANS.

- A. Christian: a name that not only is beautiful, but significant: means that we have been anointed and are the anointed ones.
1. We share the anointing of Christ.
 2. As we read in Ps. 133 of the oil upon the head runs down upon the beard and garments, so Christ's anointing is ours.
 3. You will remember that it is not the symbol but the reality: the ointment of the Holy Spirit. (I John 2:20,27)
 4. It is an anointing to an office: the office of believer. Young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile hold this office.
- B. When were we anointed?
1. We were elected to this office: In eternity God chose us and gave us to Christ to be saved.
 2. In our regeneration, we became living members of Christ: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal.2:20)."
 3. The symbol of that anointing is given to us in our baptism.
 4. Ministers of the Gospel administer the external sign, it is Christ alone effects the reality through the power of the HS.
 5. This was decisive in the work of Peter, and opened the door to a rapid advance of the Gospel among the Gentiles.
 6. God calls his people to this office and strengthens them for this office in the preaching of the Word. Acts 11:20,21).
- C. Sharing Christ's anointing means:
1. First: that we have the **right** to hold this office of believer. God has chosen us and appointed us in his sov. grace.
 2. Second: that we have the **might** to carry out this difficult office. He strengthens us with his Word and Spirit
 3. It means that we are placed as visible representatives of God's covenant and Christ's kingdom.
 4. It means that we must be obedient servants of God, workers of his work and kingdom. Office means work!

III. THE WORK THAT IT ENTAILS.

- A. The office of believer:
1. We must believe and must continue to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 2. As office-bearers, we have the calling to confess Jesus Christ, call on his name.
 3. As office-bearers, we must consecrate ourselves to holy service and life..
 4. As office-bearers, we must rule over our bodies, sighting sin and Satan. Life is not a playground, but a battlefield!
- B. The purpose of our service, our work is to bring glory to God our Redeemer.
1. We honor Christ in the office of believer in which we are called to a three-fold function as prophet, priest, and king.
 2. To bring glory to God must be our goal, our aim in all that we say and do. Servants of **the servant** (Phil. 2:7).
 3. In all this we must say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10)."
 4. We desire to hear him say, "Well done good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of thy Master (Matt. 25:21)."
- C. The question: "Why art thou called Christian?"
1. Alas, many bear the name but lack the fact: nominal Christians, Sunday Christians.
 2. How awful to have borne the name because baptized in his name, but never knowing ever the living reality.
 3. O Spirit, unite us to Christ and cause his anointing oil to flow over us too. Christians: Anointed ones to office!
 4. May we be found faithful.