

## He Lives On In Me?

Faith is described in Merriam-Webster Dictionary as being a belief and trust in and loyalty to God; belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion; firm belief in something for which there is no proof; complete trust; and something that is believed especially with strong conviction.

According to the Bible, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Faith is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. Faith is our handle on what we cannot see. (Heb.11:1-3, MSG)

A belief in evolution or creation story of the universe as we know it is an act of faith. The scientific perspective holds onto a 'Big Bang' Theory about the formation of the universe that has not been proven. I am yet to see a monkey or an ape become a man. It is written that by faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was made out of what cannot be seen. (Heb.11:3) Belief in evolution as an act of faith shows that faith is already in the workplace only that it is not always the Christian faith.

The faith that we hold onto as Christians is based on John 3:16-21 (NIV). We know that God exists and loves the world and not just Christians in it. We know that those who believe in Jesus Christ as Son of God will have eternal life with God. We attest to the fact that Jesus Christ was physically upon the face of the earth and did not come to condemn the world but to be its saviour.

A disciple is a believer who lives out his or her beliefs in such a manner that observers recognize the similarity of his or her life with that of her/his Master or Discipler. Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26, NIV). In the passage, it was stated that disciples who had been persecuted in Jerusalem were dispersed into different parts of the Roman Empire. Instead of cowering in fear in cities where they ran to, they became bold to witness to people of same race or cultural background as themselves about Jesus Christ. The Lord's hand was with them and they saw many people come to believe in Jesus Christ through their witness. We read from this passage that God's grace becomes evident in lives of disciples who witness to others about Jesus Christ. The passage records that Barnabas and Paul were in Antioch for a year before the disciples were called Christians. Cindy Hess Kasper writing in *Our Daily Bread* states: "people were not drawn to Jesus because he had a regal appearance but because of what He said and did and because of the message of love he came to give." This means the people in Antioch saw the disciples as people whose behaviour over a period of time was similar to that of Jesus Christ or reminded them of Jesus Christ. So they were called Christians meaning followers of Christ.

Do people living or working with me have evidence that can lead them to brand you a Christian?

The Acts 11:19-26 passage brings up the issue of who is a Christian. From this passage, we can state that mere attendance of worship service in Church; been water baptised when a person does not have a conscious understanding of meaning of water baptism; membership of a Church; and just confessing Christ as Saviour not Lord does not make a person a Christian. A Christian from this passage is a disciple who lives out his faith and commitment to Christ in a way that people

see a picture of Christ in what she says and does; how he relates to others; and responds to issues and situations in life. Such an individual's presence brings a remembrance of Jesus Christ into the minds and hearts of people she interacts with at work or in community.

We can state that a Christian is an individual who is perceived by another individual as being Christ-like in speech, action and one who demonstrates love in day-to-day interactions and relationships. The question then arises, "Am I bringing a remembrance of Jesus Christ into the minds and hearts of people when I interact with them?" "Christians" is not what we as followers of Christ call ourselves but what other people call us based on what they observe. The word "Christian" is an indication of an outward behaviour linked to that of another person (Jesus Christ). This means we are not to keep our faith private. We are to live it out with the goal of bringing glory to God with the hope that others will accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Thus we regard ourselves as Disciples of Christ because that is what God has called us to be and God gave us the mandate to make disciples of others as we come into contact with them.

An acceptance of Christian faith is a call to care about the state of others especially their spiritual state. We are thus called to stretch out hands of God to a lonely, needy world. The Christian faith encourages us to be many things to different people peradventure we can win them to Christ like Paul stated in 1 Cor. 9:19-23 (The Message). Paul stated that he voluntarily became a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people. In seeking to reach the different individuals, Paul stated that he did not take on their way of life but kept his bearings in Christ. Paul sought to experience things from their point of view by entering their world.

The above raises the issue of Christ being alive in an individual in a visible way that others will acknowledge and be drawn to Christ. This is what it means to have Christian faith. Is Christ alive and living visibly to others through me?

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