

## *Smoky Mountain Reflections #180*

I grow so tired of listening to and reading condemnations of what Christianity is not by folks who blame Christianity for whatever straw man they just set ablaze.

Christianity is not: hateful, spiteful, ignorant, mean spirited, intolerant, unreasonable, unkind, unfriendly, disrespectful, a political system, license to harm, mistreat, molest, or any other of the myriad of crazy things I have heard people say and write about Christianity. Anyone who thinks or says these things is either ignorant of what Holy Scripture teaches or just plain dishonest. Have Christians misrepresented who and what Christianity is in the past and still do today by doing many of the things listed above? YES! But God's word does not say 'read' Christians to understand what Christianity is, it says to read God's word.

Christianity is not a system of faith that is bound to the civil laws and customs of ancient Israel.

Christianity is not a system of faith that is bound to the ceremonial laws of ancient civilizations.

Christianity is not a license to do sinful acts that Scripture records and condemns.

Christianity is not Mormonism AKA the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Christianity is not the Jehovah's witnesses.

Christianity is not any group that does not agree and confess the historic creeds.

Christianity is not like all other religions, a list of how to get to God rules.

Christianity is not one of many paths to the same place.

It is and claims to be the one and only exclusive narrow path to the one true God.

And that narrow path is Jesus! Who comes to us.

So, what is Christianity? It is the house of living stones that tries and fails daily to live up to the exacting call to perfection of her Lord and Savior. And while we are poor reflections of what our Lord would have us to be, we struggle daily trying to be just that.

Christianity is the body of Christ on earth seeking to love God and our neighbors as He would have us do it. We do the best we can (with His help) following His Holy Moral Law summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Christianity is the body of Christ on earth seeking to share with the world the value of believing, teaching and confessing who and what the one and only Holy Triune God is, as revealed to us in His word. More importantly we share that he sent His only begotten Son into human flesh to redeem all mankind. God desires that none should perish.

Christianity is the body of Christ on earth seeking to live lives of prayer with the one and only Holy Triune God, praying for help while loving God and neighbor, praying for all people, places and things around us both near and far, seeking His will in all things. He created everything and is the source of everything. All pain, suffering and evil are the result of rebellion against Him.

Christianity is the body of Christ on earth gathering around God's gifts of Word, Baptism, Absolution and Holy Supper to receive the promises of forgiveness and assurance of eternal salvation with and through the means He established in His word to deliver these gifts.

In grateful response to God's great kindness and gift of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, Christianity is: loving, agreeable, informed, kind, tolerant, reasonable, friendly and respectful. It is a system that promotes good citizenship in any political system, license to help, entreat, nurture, or any other of the myriad of wonderful things we as the body of Christ have done and promoted for two thousand years. Selflessness, putting God and our neighbor first, is what Holy Scripture teaches. I repeat - Have Christians misrepresented who and what Christianity is in the past and still do today by doing many of the bad things previously listed above? YES! But God's word does not say 'read' Christians, to understand what Christianity is, it says to read God's word.

In Christ  
Pastor Portier