

True Christianity

Teague McKamey

True Christianity...where can it be found? This is a question that concerns every believer, for everyone wants to experience Christ in the most authentic way possible. Among Christians, there are many recipes for authentic Christianity, and each person's choice of church or denomination probably reflects their convictions about what ingredients are essential to faith in Christ. Some hold that true Christianity is the most traditional, while others follow the current move of God. Some say true Christianity is found where the miracles are happening, while others say it is where they are not happening. Some put stock in rituals, some do not. Some say we should meet in church buildings, some in houses. There are proponents of contemporary, pop-style worship, and proponents of choral worship. Prosperity is preached by some, poverty by others. Variations of belief and practice are manifold. These days, true Christianity may come dressed in shorts and a t-shirt, or wearing a suit and tie.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul prayed "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17). True Christianity, according to Paul, is found in the heart, where Christ dwells through faith, not in the outward appearances faith may take. When questioned about differences between Himself and John the Baptist, Jesus replied, "Wisdom is proved right by all her children" (Luke 7:25). In other words, being a child of God is not a matter of religious practice. Likewise, when discussing differences between Samaritan and Jewish worship, Jesus said, "[A] time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23). Again, true worship of God is not a matter of "how" or "where" but Whom.

In light of these things, perhaps the question needs to be framed in another way all together. Does God want us all to conform to one "true Christianity," or is He more concerned that our Christianity be true, regardless of what persuasion it is? Whatever convictions each of us have about tradition, miracles, rituals, worship, doctrine, and a thousand other things, it is possible to pursue our convictions with hearts full of faith, and to live our lives before God in spirit and truth.

The recipe, then, for true Christianity is, "And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17). We cannot say the kingdom of God is here or there, in one outward expression of faith or another, "because the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). If we live by faith, Christ will dwell in our hearts, and where He is, true Christianity is.