

If you were put on trial, charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

For the last few months now, we've been learning about the long anticipated return of Jesus, and today we learn some more:

When Jesus returns, He's not only coming as our saviour – He's also coming as judge. And if you think about how a judge operates, there's a whole bunch of stuff that a Judge has to consider, and it includes things like confession and evidence.

Someone on trial may very well profess their innocence, or they may confess their guilt... And for us, it's important for us to proclaim, and confess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (don't ever forget to do that – it's important). Jesus said, ^{Matthew 10: 32} ... **everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**

Don't think for a moment, that your faith is a private thing.. It's **very** important, for us to confess our faith in Christ. It's something that it's OK to be proud about, and the name of Jesus, should always be on our lips....

So what we confess – what we ‘own up’ to believing, is important...

But the physical evidence is also important.... *If you were charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?*

True disciples of Jesus Christ – citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, live by Kingdom values, and that’s the evidence.

Over the last few years, there’s been a fair bit of talk over what it means to be Australian (we are a nation who really struggle with our identity)... And so there’s been a fair bit of discussion about what it means to be Australian, and around who should be allowed to become an Australian citizen. And they’ve talked about ‘Australian values’.

*If I were to ask you, “What **are** the Australian values?”, what would you say?*

What would the politicians have us believe are “the Australian values”¹.

Mateship; a fair go; equality; loyalty;

You know, I almost laugh, every time I hear politicians talk about the Australian values of ‘mateship’;

‘equality’ and ‘a fair go’, because how many of us Australians actually model these? And the politicians themselves, very often, are the **least** likely to model them...

And I’d say these ‘so-called’ Australian values (of mateship; equality; a fair go), are nothing more than wishful thinking, or maybe an ideal that we as a nation would **like** to think was a part of who we are...

- They will know we are Australians by our mateship
- They will know we are Australians by our equality.
- They will know we are Australians because we give each other a ‘fair go’...

What a load of rot.... What we are, is a bunch of hypocrites.... That’s what we’d **like** our nation to be... That’s the way we’d **like** the world to see us, but **is** that how we really are???

- Yep, we’re all about mateship (as long as I don’t have to be mates with someone I don’t like)
- We’re all for equality. (as long as you don’t want me to be equal with the person who’s got less than me)
- We always give somebody a ‘fair go’... (as long as no one gets in **my** way)

So much for Australian values... But we have a citizenship that’s far more important than our Australian

citizenship (although that's important too): Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, are Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven...

Now, what values define, the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Tell me.... : "What values, are values of the Kingdom of Heaven? What values define the disciples of Jesus Christ?

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Jesus said: ^{John 13:35} **By this all people will know that you are my disciples,** (if you tell them you're a Christian? If you have a fish sticker on the back of your car? If you wear a cross around your neck and carry a big black bible around with you everywhere you go?)
³⁵ **By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."**

Galatians 5: ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

verse²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step **with** the Spirit.

If you understand this, then you understand the example of the sheep and the goats.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

It's OK for a bunch of Australians to be a bunch of hypocrites... It's **not** OK for a bunch of Christians to be a bunch of hypocrites... Because:

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

You see, disciples of Jesus Christ don't only share with Jesus in His eternal glory... Disciples of Jesus Christ, also share with Him, in His Suffering, in His love, in His compassion for all Humanity, and especially in love and compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ. And this love and compassion, **must** (not maybe) **Must** translate into action...

When Jesus returns, He's going to draft us up....

And any of you who've done any sheep work, know very well what I'm talking about. I know some of you

haven't, so here's a little video clip (courtesy of YouTube). This is what drafting sheep looks like: ...

Show video clip of sheep drafting

That's like what Jesus is going to do. He'll put some on His left. He'll put some on His right. The video clip was a 3-way drafting race, and a lot of us like to think that there's always a third option, but there is no 3rd option – (light / darkness; sheep / goats; inside / outside; life / death; heaven / Hell) It's a 2-way draft: The righteous will be blessed and inherit the Kingdom of God; and all the rest are cursed and go **into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**

It cannot be any more stark than that – it's a 2-way draft (heaven or hell)..... And it's **very** important (don't you think), that we get drafted the right way????

So, what does it mean??? On what basis does this draft take place????

Well, I can tell ya, a lot of scholarly ink has been spilled over this one . There's a lot of people who **do not like** this passage of Scripture, because it messes with their theology – it messes with their nice, little neat picture of how they think God is going to act.

Strong protestants – strong Calvinists don't like it, because it hints at being "Saved by works", and when the great cry of the reformation was "Saved by grace alone; Saved by faith alone", well this really messes with their theology, doesn't it??? Because it is painfully obvious, that it also depends on what we do....

And then there's the modern liberals who you think should love it, because it's strongly about social action, and doing good works... Well they don't like it either, because it's got a lot to say about judgment and Hell, and they cannot believe in a God who could ever send somebody to Hell...

Do you know how to tell when somebody doesn't like what the Bible says???

If they're liberals, they'll just ignore it. When they read the Bible, they'll have a pair of scissors in their hands, and cut out the bits they don't like.

But if we consider ourselves "Good, Bible-believing Christians", do you know what we do??? We come up with some kind of complex argument, to explain away, what the Bible is actually very clearly saying...

But if we truly love God, and if we truly love His word, then we'll allow ourselves to be changed by Him and by His word.

Never let your theology get in the way of what God is saying in the Bible. Rather, let the Bible, shape your theology. Let the Bible, shape your understanding about God. Forget about all your pre-conceived ideas of how you think God operates. What does Jesus Christ clearly say here?

It's not difficult... The only difficulty is, if we have a wrong idea about God and grace and salvation. The only difficulty is, if we have trouble accepting what the Bible is very clearly saying...

So let's not explain it away. Let's accept the challenge that Christ is throwing down to us:.... On judgment day, there **will** be a separation, (And we know this is a separation, based primarily on our faith in Christ), but it's also strongly linked to what we do. There are going to be goats in the sheep paddock. They probably think they're sheep, but they're not sheep.

There will be people in the church, who claim to be Christians,,,, but they're not.... They're not disciples of Jesus Christ, because they are not following Jesus Christ. Disciples follow... Disciples take on the nature of their master.

I've said this before, but I'm saying it again because it's worth repeating:

The teaching of the church, in so many areas, can be like a pendulum.

Most people (particularly people who are not Christians), don't understand the concept of being saved by grace. I hope you do, because we've talked about it a lot. You see, most people think "If I'm good enough, then I'll get to heaven"... And some will feel, "I can never be good enough – I'm not a good enough person to become a Christian"... (that's an idea of being saved by works – I'm saved by what I do)

And so their understanding is way over here.

And so we Bible teachers bring the pendulum right over here, and we concentrate our teaching on being saved by grace alone. I can never be good enough. Christ died for sinners.... And this is true. I believe this.

The only way I can be saved, is to receive Jesus Christ as my saviour... But by bringing the pendulum right over here, and saying "It's not by what I do – it's entirely about what Christ does", I'm missing something, and that something is the word, "repent". And repentance, is an active thing. We do actually do something.

When John the Baptist preached "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand", the people came to him, and asked "What does this repentance look like?"

Luke 3:11 And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

Repentance, is an active thing.

We are not **saved** by doing good works, but we are saved, to **do** good works. We are saved, away from what we were, to become like Christ.

- When you feed the hungry, you feed Christ
- When you give drink to the thirsty, you do it to Christ.
- When you give clothes to the naked, you clothe Christ.
- When you visit the sick, or the prisoner, you visit Christ.

And these are not a checklist that we have to tick off on our 'bucket list' – these are examples of a new way of life. These are examples of living a life of repentance. These are examples of living **in** the grace that God has given us... and it goes way beyond these few examples. We could just as easily say:

- When you spend time with the lonely
- When you house the homeless
- When you transport the cripple
- When you teach the illiterate to read, or
- When you provide for the orphan

You do these things for Christ.

And when you don't do them:

- When you ignore the hungry
- When you ignore the thirsty
- When you ignore the needy
- When you ignore the sick or the prisoner
- The homeless or the cripple
- When you shun the lonely...

You've done it to Christ.

Disciples of Jesus, follow Him in His ways. We are not saved by doing these good things, but once we are saved, we are saved to do good things.

I've got a friend who restores old tractors. And he travels all over Australia, looking for certain old tractors. And when he finds one, sitting out in the paddock somewhere, gathering rust, (probably with a

Wilga tree growing up through the middle of it), he buys it, puts it on his truck and takes it home, and then he puts it in his shed. Now, for some of us, that's our idea of what Christ does for us. He buys us back, out of our sin, and then brings us into grace... and we think the job's done, but the job's not done.

Do you think my mate is content for that old tractor to be rusty and broken down? Of course not. He strips it down. Some parts need to be thrown away. Some parts need to be modified and rebuilt. Some parts are replaced. The whole thing gets taken back to bear metal, and it gets a fresh, new shiny, coat of paint. And he gets it running, and tunes it up... And the project never seems to end. There's always some little adjustment or a bit of a tune up, to keep it running sweet.

On judgment day, there's going to be a lot of people who say "Hey, we've said the sinners prayer, but you put us on the wrong side of the draft..." and Jesus will say, "You weren't changed. I couldn't see any evidence of me in you.." Your faith was not accompanied by my works.

James 2: ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily

food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Works alone, will not save you.... But faith without works, is dead.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Friends, there's something I can promise you – that is never going to go away (not this side of glory, anyway). And that's the battle that rages within. Before you became a Christian, it was easy – the flesh ruled your life – there was no argument about it. But when you gave your life to Christ, and the Holy Spirit made His home in you – it's like you've got 2 arguing room-mates living inside of you – two residents that just don't get on. The apostle Paul calls it the opposition between the flesh, and the Spirit.

Every day, and in almost every situation, there is a choice set before us – to be led by the flesh, or to be led by the Spirit. The Spirit will be urging you, to give to the needy; to care for the oppressed; to love the unlovely... and the flesh will say "Na... Stick your fingers in your ears, and go la la la la la."

But the Spirit is saying, “Love; Care; give; share”

Be transformed. Live by faith, and act in faith.

Questions?

ⁱ <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/values/statement/long/index.htm>

Department of immigration website

I understand:

- Australian society values respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good
- Australian society values equality of opportunity for individuals, regardless of their race, religion or ethnic background
- the English language, as the national language, is an important unifying element of Australian society.