

Going to church does not make a Christian; baptism does not make a Christian; doing charitable works does not make a Christian; belief in God does not make a Christian (even the Devil believes in God!). Important as these things are, these things do not make you a Christian. What is it then that Christians believe?

We believe that God made the universe with all its incredible mathematical order, design and immensity - so that he could share his love with us. However, God does not force us to love him. God gave us free-will to accept or reject his love.

Unfortunately, the Bible teaches (and our experience confirms it) that there is no one who is perfect enough or worthy enough to live life with a holy God. All of us have been ruined by sin to some extent and feel unworthy or awkward in the presence of God.

The good news of Christianity is that God loved us so much that he solved our sin problem by coming to us as the man Christ Jesus to die on a cross and pay the penalty for our sins.

Our sin problem which made us ineligible for life with God has therefore been solved by Jesus. Christians are those who gratefully accept what Jesus has done for them in exchanging their sinfulness for Jesus' holiness.

Christians are those who have accepted Christ as Lord of their lives. God's will has first and total priority. Christianity is therefore no easy option. It is tough. We are called to live the same radical life of sacrificial love as Jesus did. Fortunately, God promises to help us do this by giving us his Spirit (the empowering presence of God). God also invites us to repent when we fail so that we can receive God's forgiveness, get up and keep going.

Christians are a people of hope. God has promised that those who have accepted his invitation of life with him will share a special life with God, both now and eternally.

Christians are therefore those who have accepted a loving personal friendship with God and who respond to God's love by seeking to do his will.

Why is the Bible important?

The Bible, written over a 1,500 year period, is a record of how people have grown to understand their God through God revealing himself in their history. The fact that writings begun in the bronze age should continue to be so relevant to us in the space age is testimony to their special status as Scripture.

Christians believe that although the Bible reflects the world-view and culture of its time, the consistent principles contained within it are those things God wants us to know. It particularly contains the witness of events upon which our faith is founded - most importantly, the life, works and teaching of Jesus Christ. As such, Christians love the Bible. They study it and measure everything they do against its principles.

Why go to church?

God is a God of relationships. Christians therefore care for each other (as well as those who are not Christians) and seek to develop loving friendships. They meet together to worship, to encourage each other, to grow their faith, and to co-ordinate their Christian work in the community.