

VISION FORWARD

What is the church's main task?

May 6, 2018

Jesus did not call us to be Christians

"Christian" was a term initiated by those outside of the church.

A "Christian" is not defined in the New Testament.

Acts 11: 25, 26 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

Acts 26: 28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

I Peter 4: 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called 'Christians' by the populace."

Cornelius Tacitus

Jesus calls us to be Disciples

Followers of Jesus called themselves "disciples."

Acts 6: 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 9: 26 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

Acts 9:36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.

Jesus clearly defines a "disciple."

John 13: 33-37 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." ³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." ³⁷ Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Jesus clearly defines the task of the church – making "disciples."

Matthew 28: 18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."