***WHY DO YOU NEED TO BE A CHRISTIAN? April 22, 2013***

 ***Gospel Meeting: Real Life For Everyone Northwest Church, New Hope, MN—Max Dawson***

***Introduction****:*

1. There are lots of reasons to be a Christian, but what is the most important reason? The world may discourage us by saying, “You are not benefited all that much by being a Christian.” Is that true?

2. If I were to ask you to make a list of reasons for being a Christian, what would you list?

*The Lesson:*

1. **Some valid reasons for being a Christian.**
	1. It is the right thing to do. It is always right to listen to God and to do His will, Matthew 7:24.
		1. There is value in doing the right things in life. They are the best things and wisest things.
		2. Nothing is more right or wise than a man obeying God. That’s a reason to be a Christian.
	2. It is the true way in life. Christianity is the truth about religion, 2 John 4.
		1. There is plenty of error and falsehood in the world. There are multiple wrong paths.
		2. Christianity is the truth. It is the one path that is free from error. It is the path to be on.
	3. It can make me a better person. The quality of our lives is lifted by the gospel, Galatians 6:10.
		1. Nearly all of mankind acknowledges that we should strive to be better people.
		2. Being a Christian means I am truthful, honest, and kind to others.
	4. It can help my family. The gospel makes for better home life, Ephesians 6:1-4.
		1. People everywhere are looking for better families—but no book helps like the Bible.
		2. Christians who follow the Bible have the potential to have the greatest family life on earth.
	5. It can bring success in life. Being a Christian potentially gives a man the best possible life in his community, among friends and in business, 2 Corinthians 8:21 (“Honest things” – KJV).
		1. Honesty is the best policy, in business, in personal relationships and in all of life.
		2. People who follow Bible principles in life are often healthier, happier and more successful.
	6. It can make me an influence for good. Jesus wants us to influence others, Matthew 5:16.
		1. It is a good and noble thing to help others see the right way in life.
		2. We can’t be much help to others if we are not living right. This is reason to be a Christian.
	7. It can bring strength in trials. Christians have God as their help and comfort, 2 Corinthians 1:3.
		1. Everybody is going to have trouble in life. It comes to all men sooner or later.
		2. Only the Christian truly has God on his side in the midst of trouble.
	8. Would you agree that all these are valid reasons for being a Christian? This is but a short list; more could be added. Everything on this list has merit and value.
		1. But the world says, “Sure, these are good things, but most of these you can get without being a Christian. Some of these can be achieved through psychology and a positive attitude—without the gospel! Any religion or no religion could give you most of these things.”
		2. And the world is right when it says that, but there is more to the picture. None of these really address the most important reason!
2. **The most important reason for being a Christian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
	1. What will happen to you then? While these other seven reasons deserve notice, none touches the ultimate event we must face: death, followed by judgment.
		1. There must be something more profound than the seven things listed above.
		2. Christianity provides something else: *It provides the only hope when we die.*
	2. I fear that Christians have similar attitudes about death as the people of the world. Our thinking must be different; the Bible says, 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff. Others have no hope; we have hope.
		1. Do we sometimes deny the reality of death? That’s what people in our culture do.
			1. Our culture doesn’t like to think about death or even speak of it. Like it or not, death is real, Hebrews 9:27; Job 30:23; Psalm 89:48; Ecclesiastes 8:8; Genesis 5:5-31. Let us not be a death-denying people. Let us face reality—ultimate reality.
		2. Do we always consider death a loss? Our culture does. Do we speak of it that way?
			1. We speak of growing old as “better than the alternative.” But death for the Christian is better than growing old, Philippians 1:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 14:13.
			2. Let us not speak of death in a way that we shouldn’t.
		3. Do we morbidly fear death? Is death some terrible thing that happens to a Christian?
			1. We are sad only because they are no longer with us, 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff.
			2. We don’t have to be afraid of death, 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, Revelation 1:18.
			3. Because of Jesus we don’t need to be afraid. It’s OK to die, Hebrews 2:14-15.
			4. Are you a Christian—hoping God won’t let you die—or because you must die?
	3. The big question is: Are you ready to die? You had better be ready, because it will happen!
		1. If a man is not ready, it is easy to understand the three things above! He should fear!
		2. Being ready to die—this is the foremost motive of a sound mind for becoming a Christian.
			1. All of that stuff about being a better citizen, having success in life, it being the right thing to do—all of that stuff is OK, but it is not what our faith is ultimately about!
			2. The truth is all of us—you, me and everybody else—will die. We had better be ready.
		3. Jesus lived and died to make us ready, John 11:25-26; Luke 19:10; Revelation 14:13. The blessing is only for those who die in the Lord. That’s why we need to…
			1. Hear the gospel—the teaching of Jesus, Matthew 17:5.
			2. Believe the gospel (or be condemned), Mark 16:15-16.
			3. Repent of our sins, Acts 3:19.
			4. Confess Christ, Acts 8:37.
			5. Be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.
			6. Be faithful to Jesus, 1 Corinthians 4:2.

*Conclusion:*

1. What is your reason for being a Christian? You need to be a Christian because you will die!

2. Christianity is the only religion that can take care of you when you die and keep you out of hell!