

What does it mean to be a Christian?

It means, quite simply—as the saying has it—to “take Jesus as one’s personal savior,” as the one through whom the gift and demand of God’s love are decisively re-presented, so as to save one from sin and death and for faith and life, which is to say, for a life of unreserved trust in God’s love for oneself and for all and for unqualified loyalty to God and to all to whom God is loyal.

Jesus may be taken in this way—as the decisive re-presentation of the gift and demand of God’s love—either immediately, as he was in the unique case of the apostles, or mediately, as he must be in the case of every other Christian, whose encounter with Jesus is mediated, directly or indirectly, through the apostles’ witness to Jesus as the decisive re-presentation of God’s love in its meaning for us.

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