

## Real Christianity

**“And he said to them all, If any man wants to be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23**

Recently, I was amazed and saddened to see on the news that there was an uproar among some “Christians” (and I use that term loosely) over some cups...not communion cups but Starbucks cups. Yes. You read that right. This year, Starbucks decided to remove the reindeer, snowflakes, and other Christmas holiday symbols from their holiday season cups and some religious folks had a fit. These folks believed that the removal of those decorative images was an attack on Christmas and, hence, an attack on Christianity. Wow! Since when did reindeer, snowflakes, snowmen and Christmas trees come to represent Christianity or Christ??? Never!!! As I struggled to understand this “controversy”, I realized many of us “Christians” do not understand what it really means to be a disciple of Christ.

For many, Christianity has become nothing more than keeping man-made traditions that have no spiritual meaning, going into a church building every Sunday, and wearing crosses and other religious paraphernalia. However, when we look at the life and teachings of Christ, we see that God had something much deeper and meaningful in mind for those who would be followers of Christ and it has nothing to do with Christmas. When we consider verses like Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 2:1-17; Luke 4:18; and John 3:16-17, I believe it is clear to see that “real” Christianity, according to Jesus, is about sacrifice (not Christmas cups). Real Christianity is about a people who, because of their love for God and others, are committed to impacting the world for Him, by the sacrificing of their desires, wants and even their own lives for the salvation, deliverance and empowerment of others and the glory of God. Just look at what Christ taught in Matthew 5:13-16 and you will discover what being a disciple of Christ is all about.

It is a disgrace and mockery of the life and sacrifice of Christ for so-called Christians to be upset about petty things related to a man-made holiday when there are poor people who need food, homeless who need shelter and souls that need salvation. Instead of talking about putting Christ back into Christmas, the focus ought to be on putting Christ back into Christians and Christianity. Real Christianity is not about man-made traditions, celebrating or not celebrating man-made holidays and the wearing of Christian paraphernalia (Colossians 2:6-10). Church, let us look out for and avoid judgmental carnal Christianity. True Christianity is about having a devoted relationship with God through Christ and a willingness to sacrifice one’s own will so that His will can be done in your life and in the lives of others.