

BE LIKE CHRIST

Galatians 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

August 21, 2016

Introduction

What is in a name? Acts 11:26 we find the enemies of the early church designate the followers of Jesus as; “*And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*” It is very interesting that the writers in the New Testament never use the term Christian to designate the followers of Christ; well, that is except for Peter in 1Peter 4:16 when he wrote; *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

In our text today, Paul was writing “*unto the churches of Galatia*”, which is central Turkey. (Galatians 1:2). In today’s passage, in the fourth chapter, Paul continues his teaching on suffering for Christ and our duties as followers of Christ. In the 19th verse, he made this amazing statement, “*until Christ be formed in you.*”

Look at this verse with me.

My little children...

This is the language of affection as a parent would give to their own children. Paul’s language use leads us to feel the position of a father to these congregations. Pastor/congregation

...of whom I travail in birth again...

We can hear a deep anguish in Paul’s voice as he shares his concern for these congregations. It is like a mother in pain until the birth of her child.

Paul means that he is, for the second time, laboring and distressed for the Galatians converts, with the same anguish which attended his first efforts for their conversion. The metaphor of begetting children in the gospel is found in 1 Cor. 4:15; Philemon 10. It was a Jewish saying: “If one teaches the son of his neighbour the law, the Scripture reckons this the same as though he had begotten him.”

This is Discipleship. In my opinion, this is the point at which most churches fail. We plant the seed, water and then see the harvest of soles, but we don’t disciple the new converts properly.

...until Christ be formed in you.

This means that you may live nothing but Christ, and think nothing but Christ (Galatians 2:20), and glory in nothing but Him, and His death, resurrection, and righteousness (Philippians 3:8–10; Colossians 1:27).¹

The forming of Christ in them, their attainment of the complete inner life of Christians, is the object of the new birth. By their relapse they stunted their growth and the growth of the Gospel. This is cause of Paul's spiritual travail.²

This statement is the focus of this sermon. It is no surprise that Paul uses the title of Christ in this passage rather than the name of Jesus. Christ is the Greek name of the OT Messiah. This title denotes the office of the Messiah; His religion, or the principles of his gospel.

The point of Paul's teaching is that we must accept that we are to be Christ on this earth. We must embrace being Christ in our daily walk, in our relationship to our Father. We must take on every attribute of Christ.

That is the goal, not just becoming a Christian, but to BE LIKE CHRIST.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

A Crucified man;

Does not hang onto things

Looks only in one direction

Has no future plans

Is not coming back

This is the main point today, don't be like the world: BE LIKE CHRIST

ILLUSTRATION

W. T. STEAD was a great figure in the journalistic business. He was one of the notable persons who perished at sea when the Titanic went down on that April night in 1912. Stead was a courageous reformer, and in one of his campaigns in London to protect young girls and to raise the "age of consent," he was arrested and convicted on some technical charge, and was sentenced to prison.

On Christmas day he had been writing a letter to a reclaimed girl encouraging her to stand fast and be a Christian. He was in the organ loft of the chapel prison and was looking down on the 600 prisoners the thought came to him, "Why are you telling that girl to be Christian? Never tell anyone again to be a Christian. Always tell them to BE LIKE CHRIST."

At first blush, how could we tell anyone to BE LIKE CHRIST! For He is;

The Creator

the Son of Man

¹ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Ga 4:19). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

² Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Ga 4:19). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

the Son of God
 our Mediator
 Savior
 Redeemer

our Judge
 and our King, and King of Kings
 Christ is the ancient of Days

If might seem to be absurd, to even entertain the idea, “Be Like Christ!” For, the best we can be is “filthy rags”. To take up our cross and follow him is a command. But we are unprofitable servants that need and must have the redeeming work of our Lord and Saviour for ourselves. When I consider the truths about the person of Christ, His Deity, His Priesthood, and His Kingship, how can I then BE LIKE CHRIST?

Be Like Christ

Paul was in great distress because of a threatened decline from the faith among the congregations in Galatia. We find this in the opening chapter of Galatians 1:6-9

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”

BE LIKE CHRIST

What is it to BE LIKE CHRIST?

To BE LIKE CHRIST would be to exhibit all the attributes of Jesus. We use words like “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

There is a great difference between being A Christian and Being Like Christ

Associated with “Christ” compared to being “Christ Like.”

Illustration

When I was a boy I wanted to be like my dad. I wanted to emulate him in every way. I wore my hair like him. I dressed like him. I tried to imitate his southern drawl. There was a time where I even tried to laugh like my dad. I even tried using his hair tonic and after shave. I wanted to be like my dad. But there is a difference in trying to be like my dad and being my dad.

Being my dad meant that I would have to have his heart and carry his burdens. I would have to see the world through his eyes and to have suffered like he suffered.

As hard as I would try, I could not be my dad. But, my trying to emulate him would cause me to take some of his attributes. People have said that they see my dad in me,

considering my physical make up. But if they told me that they see my dad in me by my actions that would be the greatest compliment you could give a son.

Illustration

About the turn of the century, a Kansas preacher wrote a book which was an immediate sensation, and had an almost unprecedented circulation. The title of the book was this, *What Would Jesus Do?* The book purported to describe the attempt of a man to do in every circumstance and condition of life, what he thought Jesus would do under like circumstances. This attempt, of course, led the man into some beautiful and difficult and dangerous experiences. There may be times when the path of Christian duty is not clear.

But suppose today, that every person in this audience would **BE LIKE CHRIST**. You would take on the challenge to ask the question of everything you did; “What would Jesus do?” What if you took this challenge for the remainder of your life?

Would your family, friends and coworkers see someone they have always known or would they see a “new creature?”

What if in our personal relationships and our daily routines would change to that of the life of Christ?

What if “**BE LIKE CHRIST**” took root in your life and every decision was “weighed and measured” with on this ideal, **Be Like Christ**.

What Would Jesus Do?

BE LIKE CHRIST!

Today I am sorry to say that today I see more weak Christians than ever before. You may know them. You may see them. You may even be one of the. Everywhere I look in Christianity today I see apathy. I see the world penetrating our lives and churches. Paul had this problem in the early churches and he had to contend with them. In the Epistle to the Church at Ephesus he wrote;

“Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”

- They don't know doctrine – they are led away
- They don't read the Bible – TV fills their heads
- They don't meditate on His word – they don't spend the time to hear the message of God
- They don't have power in their prayer closet – so when they don't get the answers they are looking for they blame God
- They don't have the Holy Ghost power in their life – We have a generation of weak and ineffective people trying to do the mission of God
- They have to be fed milk when they should be chewing on the meat of the Word, the staple of a strong spiritual life.
- They are quick to buy every new book in the “Christian” book store to learn about the Bible.

GET IN THE WORD, let the greatest teacher, the Holy Ghost, be your guide.

And sadly I must confess that they closely resemble the world than being like Christ

Conclusion

Jesus said the words, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Albert Barnes, Notes on the Bible, make this statement:

“This is the only proper evidence of love to Jesus, for mere profession is no proof of love; but that love for him which leads us to do all his will, to love each other, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow him through evil report and through good report, is true attachment. The evidence which we have that a child loves its parents is when that child is willing, without hesitation, gainsaying, or murmuring, to do all that the parent requires him to do. So the disciples of Christ are required to show that they are attached to him supremely by yielding to all his requirements, and by patiently doing his will in the face of ridicule and opposition.”³

Illustration

There is the story of a French soldier in the wars of Napoleon. The soldier had been wounded in the breast, and in the field hospital the surgeons were probing for the bullet. There was no chloroform then, but the wounded man was watching the surgeons as they cut closer and closer to his heart. When the region about the heart was entered and opened, the suffering soldier said, “Surgeon, if you cut much further you will touch — the emperor.” He had his Napoleon in his heart! If people could dig down deep into your heart, who would they find that possessed your heart?

Does Christ have preeminence in your life?

Does he have your complete control 24x7?

Oh my plea for you today is to give Jesus the preeminence in your heart and life.

You can have an impact on this world, just like Jesus did when He walked this earth.

Mt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

We all want the truth. However, what good is knowing the truth if it doesn't transform us?⁴

You too can be about your Father's business....BE LIKE CHRIST

Last sermon preached at Keys Valley Baptist Church as their pastor

³ Albert Barnes, Notes on the Bible, SwordSearcher ; Study Lamp Software LLC

⁴ <http://bit.ly/1LeojCP>