



Sermon Series Notes

“What Is God Really Like?” (Selected Scriptures)

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I. IDENTIFYING A CHRIST FOLLOWER

A. What Is Christ Really Like?

* Heb.1:3; John 14:7-9

* The representation of God by the religious leaders at Jesus’ first coming gave people a completely wrong view of what God is really like. If we based what God looks like on how the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law presented him, we would end up being extremely legalistic, manifest little or no joy in life, never hang out with “sinners,” become self-righteous, and be proud of being this way! Have you ever been around people who misrepresent the Lord?

* Examples: Everett Farris, Kevin Arthur; The group in Israel that demanded closed communion at the Garden Tomb.

* Jesus blew the minds of the religious establishment of the day, but He never compromised truth, never violated the holiness of His character. The Jews thought a kosher diet was one of the things that made them holy, but Jesus declared all foods clean. The religious leaders tithed meticulously, yet Jesus accused them of missing the more important matters of the Law – justice, mercy, & faithfulness. Their teaching had no real authority, though they studied the Scriptures diligently. And their lives reflected no real personal connection with God.

B. The Jesus People Need To Know

* Devotional Life - There was something about Jesus’ prayer/devotional life that made him different from the religious leaders of the day. His disciples knew he had a relationship with God by the way he prayed, and that is why they asked Him to teach them to how to pray. When God spoke to Saul of Tarsus about how hard it was for him to kick against the goads, I believe one of those goads was the

memory of listening to Stephen's prayer and witnessing how he faced persecution/death (See Acts 6:15;7:59-8:1a).

* Full of joy (Heb.1)

- See Phil.4:4

* Others-oriented; came to serve not to be served (antithesis of the Pharisees & Teachers of the law)...See '09 Merritt Island Pastor's Conf. Message, esp last part

* Friend of publicans & sinners ; Jesus had a way of befriending sinners without compromising truth.

* Full of mercy/grace

- Examples of His unmerited favor, the poor, blind lame, lepers, a woman caught in the act of adultery...

C. Character Qualities Of Christ-Like Leaders

1. Humility

* Matt.11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart...

* Matt.12:19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.

* Jesus would many times tell people He had miraculously touched not to tell anyone. I believe this was not only because of the Spirit arranging the perfect timing for Him to endure the cross, but also because it was part of His nature. Can you imagine Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, then saying "Who's da man?"

2. No Hypocrisy

* Luke 12:1...Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

* See Matthew 23:25-28

* Hidden sin is foolish (Heb.4:13), and yet man has a tendency to try and hide sin (Gen.3:8-10; Achan; II Kings 5:19-27; The beginning of Samson's ultimate downfall was when he kept hidden the sin of eating the honey out

of the lion's carcass. And of course Ananias & Sappira's attempt to hide their sin brought about deadly consequences.

* See Prov.28:13

3. Head In The Clouds/Heavenly Mindset

* Jesus never became attached to the things of this present world. Admittedly, He had an advantage on us, because he came from glory (See John 17:5). Remember how frustrated he became in His desire to go home (see Matt.17:1-17).

* See Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15-16; 9:58; John 8:23; 18:36

* These are people who talk about more than baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie! Their lives are not consumed with the things of this world but the things of heaven...

II. BECOMING A CHRIST FOLLOWER

A. Humility

* Those who were humble: David, Samuel,

* Those who had to be humbled: Moses, Peter, Saul of Tarsus

* Saul of Tarsus had to be stripped of his pride. And what did he have to be proud of? See Phil.3:4-6. Imagine what it was like to learn the truth about his wretched heart (Rom.4:24; I Tim.1:15). How hard it must have been to realize his circumcision, kosher diet, even his zeal for God were all worthless in God's sight...

* Humility begins at home

- Dennis Bender: Are you a humble man?

- Gideon

- My testimony of leading devotional time with my family

- "Learning To Love by Faith"

B. Integrity/No Hypocrisy

- * See messages on hidden sin, hypocrisy
- * John 3:16-21; The call went out to Achan...Ananias & Sapphira were given the opportunity to come clean...
- * Matt White (read statement?); What Matt's situation has done for our staff/congregation.
- * My recent statement at communion (read?)

C. Heavenly Mindset

- * Follow the trail of your time, energy, affections, and money...
- * Jesus came from glory, so He could envision his home above, and that enabled Him to live life here without becoming engrossed with the things of this world. (Phil.2:5 Let this mind be in you...)
- * Phil.4:8; The verb translated to "think" is *logizomai*. It's an imperative which means it's a command. And it means not just to think in the simple one-dimensional sense, it means to evaluate, it means to ascertain. It means to develop thinking habits that involve these things.
- * Our thinking and our hearts are inseparably linked. Gen.6: 5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the **thoughts** of his **heart** was only evil all the time.
- * See Eph.4:17-24?
- * Rom.1: 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.
- * Eph.2: 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
- * Col.1: 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.
- * See Philippians 3:18-19

D. How To Win The battle For My Mind

1. Renew my mind (Eph.4:23; Rom.12:2)

- To hear something once for most of us is not enough. To briefly ponder something profound for most of us does not allow enough time to grasp and fully understand its significance. This proves to be most true with God's mind in Scripture. The idea of meditating sometimes lends itself to misunderstanding, so let me illustrate its meaning.... For me, the most vivid picture comes from a coffee percolator. The water goes up a small tube and drains down through the coffee grounds. After enough cycles, the flavor of the coffee beans has been transferred to the water which we then call coffee. So it is that we need to cycle our thoughts through the 'grounds' of God's Word until we start to think like God" ([Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1990], pp. 46-47). Renew your mind by regularly meditating on God's Word. Doing so will bring into your mind what is spiritually healthy and lead you away from what is harmful.

2. "Set" my mind (Rom.8:5; Col.3:2; I Peter 1:13)

- Phil.2:5 (**Let** this mind be in you); 5426. phroneo, fron-eh'-o; from G5424; **to exercise the mind**, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by impl. to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intens. to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience):--set the affection on, (be) care (-ful), (be like-, + be of one, + be of the same, + let this) mind (-ed, regard, savour, think.

- I control what I read, watch, listen to, etc. So I am to set (direct) my mind...

- "Whatever" is true = 227. alethes, al-ay-thace'; from G1 (as a neg. particle) and G2990; true (as not concealing):--true, truly, truth.

- Can be a person who is "true." See John 7:18; Matt.22:16; Heb.12:2-3; "Looking unto & consider" = 872. aphorao, af-or-ah'-o; from G575 and G3708; to consider attentively:--look. & 357. analogizomai, an-al-og-id'-zom-ah-ee; mid. from G356; to estimate, i.e. (fig.) contemplate:--consider. Heb.3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess; 2657. katanoeo, kat-an-o-eh'-o; from G2596 and G3539; to observe fully:--behold, consider, discover, perceive.

- John 17: 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (225. aletheia, al-ay'-thi-a; from G227; truth:--true, X truly, truth, verity.

- It's no problem for me to suggest that the top two "whatever" I should think about are Jesus and the Word of God.

- Noble (KJV = honest); 4586. semnos, sem-nos'; from G4576; venerable, i.e. honorable:--grave, honest. See I Tim.3:8, 11; Titus 2:11

- Right (KJV = just); 1342. dikaios, dik'-ah-yos; from G1349; equitable (in character or act); by impl. innocent, holy (absol. or rel.):--just, meet, right (-eous). In conformity to God's standards. This takes me back to the Word of God, seeking what God says is right and what God says is wrong.

- Pure = 53. hagnos, hag-nos'; from the same as G40; prop. clean, i.e. (fig.) innocent, modest, perfect:--chaste, clean, pure.

- Lovely = 4375. prosphiles, pros-fee-lace'; from a presumed comp. of G4314 and G5368; friendly towards, i.e. acceptable:--lovely. Think about what promotes peace rather than conflict.

- Psalm 84:1 For the director of music. According to gittith. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! 2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

- Admirable (KJV = of good report); 2163. eufemos, yoo'-fay-mos; from G2095 and G5345; well spoken of, i.e. reputable:--of good report.

- Among other possibilities, this involves focusing my attention on people who heaven speaks well of...all the godly characters in the Bible (Heb.11, and all the godly characters of history...

- Gen.1: 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (6 times before this, as God is creating the world we know, He said that it was good).

- Psalm 8: 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him...

- Excellent (KJV = virtue); 703. arete, ar-et'-ay; from the same as G730; prop. manliness (valor), i.e. excellence (intrinsic or attributed):--praise, virtue; II Peter 1: 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (NIV = goodness); and to virtue knowledge; Virtue here has to do with moral excellence, and of course the standard of that excellence is based on the Bible's standards of morality, not our own opinions, or the standard of the culture in which we live.

- Praiseworthy = 1868. epainos, ep'-ahee-nos; from G1909 and the base of G134; laudation; concr. a commendable thing:--praise; For example, as we learn more about the nature of God, we are to praise Him for His attributes (all of which are commendable). Also, as we learn of things are commendable to him, we are to think about and seek to live out those things as well. For example, Rom.13:1-3 tells us that we will be commended if we submit to God ordained authorities. And I Peter 2:19-20 says that it is commendable to endure unjust suffering in the will of God.

- Summary: My thought life needs to be filled with Jesus, the Word of God, leaders and mature believers in the church who heaven considers worthy of respect, things in life that conform to God's standard of righteousness, relationships that promote moral purity, things that promote peace rather than conflict, godly characters in the Bible that God calls admirable, and daily contemplation of the God of all creation.

3. Take captive every thought

- As I "set" my mind on the things previously mentioned, there are other thoughts that battle for my attention. And so there is a third necessary element to having a victorious thought life. See II Cor.10:5.

- I must grab the thought before the thought grabs me; Refer back to Rom.1:21-22. My thinking becomes futile when I do not incorporate God and the things of God in my thinking...

- Tammy Pageant, the picture

- Facebook, TV, movies, pornography, music, etc. all have an effect on my thinking...garbage in, garbage out.

- Psalm 19: 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

III. REMAINING A CHRIST FOLLOWER

* Progression, as opposed to digression (definition)

* How many great leaders did not remain great leaders (Gideon, Uzziah, King Saul, etc.).

How many followers of great leaders never became leaders themselves (Gehazi, Joab, who did not follow the example of his king, who followed the example of THE KING, etc.)