

**Text:** Various

**Title:** Lord's Table: Christ-likeness

**Date/Location:** Sunday evening July 5, 2020 at FBC

## **I. Mire of Sin**

Have you ever been in a vehicle—car, truck, tractor, golf cart, four-wheeler, etc. which has gotten stuck in mud or snow or ice? Have you attempted to remove yourself by gunning the engine to get the wheels to spin faster, thinking you will beat the slipperiness with speed? You may have found that you create slicker conditions under the wheels and get nowhere even faster.

Sometimes you need a tow truck to pull you out, like I did a few years ago when I was stuck in the snow at the bottom of Exmoor drive not a half mile from the church. Actually, it was a bit worse than that...

Life is like that. Everyone starts out stuck in sin. You can try hard to escape the sin with more effort. But that never works—you tend to get nowhere faster that way. It cannot work. You need Someone to pull you out.

Psalm 40:2-4 — 1 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. 3 He has put a new song in my mouth-- Praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD. 4 Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust...

I am grateful that God sent His Son to pull me out of the horrible pit of sin, with all its filth and guilt and wages and consequences.

My hope is that we all listening to this message are not spinning our wheels in sin, but rather growing like Christ individually, and corporately as a church.

## **II. Moving Out of the Miry Swamp**

To think about our sin is necessary, and it is good to think about God's provision for us. Such is unavoidable at a Lord's Table service. But we need to spend a lot of time moving forward out of swamp lifestyle to the kind of life that Jesus Christ wants us to live.

In my email to the church on Friday morning, I asked this question: "What is one area in my life where God would have me to be more like Christ?"

The Lord said these words in Matthew 5:48: "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." This is a super high calling, but there is no better model than Christ Himself. You cannot get any more perfect than Christ. Christ is perfectly God-like in His humanity. So if we are to be perfect like God—and we mean morally perfect, that which is attainable for finite humanity—then we would have to be like Christ.

And that is exactly what Paul teaches in Romans 8:29: For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is seeing to that transformation in us:

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

As we work diligently with the Spirit in the Word in the circumstances God allots to us, we will naturally make faster and farther progress in becoming like Christ. And in the end, we will experience a real bump in the process as God speeds us along to final sanctification where we will be like Jesus in spirit and body.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

### **III. Modeling our Life on Christ's Life**

Because our divinely-ordained pattern has been "brought down" to human level, we can understand what our lives should look like. We can look in the gospels and see what the Lord taught and how he conducted himself. We obviously have to entirely set aside the miraculous things he did since those are not within our reach. But there is enough beside that to keep us busy.

Notice how the Lord conducted himself and ask yourself if there are any areas in your life that could look more like this:

1. He was full of wisdom. Luke 2:40
2. He was concerned and active about spiritual things. Luke 2:41-49.
3. He faced temptation with God's word. Luke 4:1-13

4. He worked closely in the spiritual development of a small group of individuals. John 1:35-51, Mark 15:40-41. He led them to become fishers of men, Matt. 4:18-22.
  5. Jesus was concerned about the holiness and reputation of God, for instance, when he cleaned out the temple. John 2:13-22, Luke 19:46.
  6. Taught spiritual truth at every opportunity. John 3:1-21, for example with Nicodemus, so much so that he and the disciples had to take some time to rest. Another example are all the sermons he preached. We might not be preachers, but we can emulate that by sharing truth with all those in our sphere.
  7. He ministered to outcast-type people, like the Samaritans were considered. John 4:5ff.
  8. He cared for people deeply. Many times this care ended with a miraculous healing, which we cannot do, but we can at least emulate the Lord's care! Matt. 9:27-29, 20:34, Mark 5:19. Other times, his care yielded an explanation, such as to John who had fallen victim to doubt. Matt. 11:2-6.
  9. Jesus cared for those who lost loved ones. John 11:1-36, Luke 7:11-13.
  10. He prayed constantly. Luke 3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29, 10:2, 11:1, 22:41, 44; John 17. He prayed in intercession for Peter, Luke 22:32, and doubtless the other disciples as well.
  11. He was deeply concerned about a harvest of souls who needed help, as well as the shortage of laborers. Matt 9:36-38, John 4:35.
  12. He told people that they needed salvation because they were sinners. John 8:21, 24.
  13. Jesus demonstrated greatness through serving others. Matt. 20:28, John 13:4-15.
  14. He was silent in the face of harsh criticism and false accusations, an expression of His trust in God. Mark 14:61, 15:5, Isa 53:7, 1 Peter 2:23.
- 1 Peter 2:20-21 instructs us to do good, even if we suffer for it, for by so doing we will follow in the footsteps of Christ.

#### **IV. Following Christ's Doctrine**

Not only do we have the example of Christ's life, but we have his explicit teaching.

1. To be continued...

## Conclusion

### **I Want to Be Like Jesus**

Words: Thomas Obediah Chisholm (b. July 29, 1866; d. Feb. 29, 1960)

Music: David Livingstone Ives (b. \_\_\_\_\_, 1921)

1) I have one deep, supreme desire,

That I may be like Jesus.

To this I fervently aspire,

That I may be like Jesus.

I want my heart His throne to be,

So that a watching world may see

His likeness shining forth in me.

I want to be like Jesus.

4) O perfect life of Christ, my Lord!

I want to be like Jesus.

My recompense and my reward,

That I may be like Jesus.

His Spirit fill my hung'ring soul,

His power all my life control;

My deepest prayer, my highest goal,

That I may be like Jesus.

### **Or Take Time to Be Holy**

2) Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;

Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.

By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;

Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

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