

A Christ-Like Church

1 Peter 2:21-25

PROPOSITION: The church is to imitate Jesus Christ and take on some of His characteristics.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Peter said to the "elect exiles," "...you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).
 - a. For "example" Peter used a word that means, "a copy to write after."
 - b. In all matters, Jesus is the *pattern* for the church.
2. John said, "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6).
3. Paul wrote, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).
4. Since the church is made of individual souls who are to be Christ-like, then it must be Christ-like.

DISCUSSION: A Christ-like church is...

I. Crucified.

- A. The disciple of Jesus begins his life in Christ with crucifixion (cf. Luke 9:23).
- B. He is raised from baptism to walk "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4-6).
- C. The spiritual crucifixion by which one becomes a Christian is a painful death of self (Phil. 3:8, 9).
- D. Crucifixion means one is dead to sin, but alive to God (Rom. 6:11).

II. Single-minded.

- A. The focus of the church is the work of God.
- B. This was the emphasis of the Lord's life (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38).
- C. The church is concerned about souls like Jesus was.
 1. Those of the world (Mark 16:15)
 2. Those of the church (Matt. 18:12; James 5:19, 20)
- D. No one had a clearer grasp of his aim or purpose than did Jesus (cf. Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10; Matt. 26:28).
- E. One cannot claim to be serious about serving Christ and not be seriously concerned about the lost (Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:2).

III. Respectful of God's word.

- A. Believing the Bible to be from God, and, as such, true and accurate (John 17:17)
- B. Believing the Scriptures to be authoritative (Matt. 15:1-9; 19:17; Luke 10:26)
- C. Believing them to be worthy of remembering and applying (Matt. 4)
- D. Showing respect for the Bible in the way it is handled (Luke 4:16; Matt. 4:7)
- E. Believing it must be obeyed
- F. Sharing it with the world and teaching others to do the same (Luke 9:60; Matt. 5:19)

IV. Characterized by love.

- A. His sacrifice is the supreme declaration that God loves all men (Luke 23:34, 43; John 19:26, 27).
- B. Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another as He loves them (John 13:34).
- C. A Christ-like church is characterized by a sacrificial love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-6).

CONCLUSION:

1. The church is not sinless, but it does sin less. It is not the Christ, but it is Christ-like.
2. Will you be a living stone in the temple of God which is the body of Christ?