

Jesus - The Example for All Mankind

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Introduction

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,” (Philippians 3:17).

All Christians are to live exemplary lives (Matthew 5:16). Especially those who are in leadership positions (1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8, 1 Peter 5:3, Hebrews 13:7). However, since all men are subject to sin, including Christians, they can and sometimes do sin (Romans 6:23, 1 John 1:8). Peter is a prime example. He didn't think he would ever betray the Lord even though Jesus told him that he would (Luke 22:31-34). Of course, he did. But even in his failure Peter still stands forth as an example to be imitated. After he had denied the Lord the scripture says, “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly,” (Luke 22:62). Instead of becoming discouraged and giving up Peter repented and became the main spokesman on the day of Pentecost when the church was established (Acts 2:14). Thus, Peter's life serves as an example for all.

There are some other lessons that can be learned from the life of Peter. We are only to imitate others inasmuch as they imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1) and we should put our faith and confidence in God and His Word not men (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

Despite the attempt of modernist to destroy the Deity and purity of Jesus, He still stands out as the sinless Son of God (1 Peter 2:21-25). In his book “The Da Vinci Code”, Dan Brown, tries to portray Jesus as an ordinary man who was married to Mary Magdalene and who fathered a child by her. His main source of evidence is the Gnostic Gospels (books that the early church rejected as scripture). National Geographic is certainly no friend to Christianity yet in their May 2006 edition it is said concerning Irenaeus (An Apologists who lived about 130-200 AD), “Irenaeus had plenty of heresies to contend with ... yet another sect, the Carpocratians, allegedly indulged in ritualized spouse swapping. Many of these groups were Gnostics, followers of the same strain of early Christianity reflected in the Judas Gospel,” (87). Where do men like Dan Brown go to try to erase the truth about Jesus Christ and the Bible? Spurious books written by immoral heretics. With these facts before us let us now consider the life of, “Jesus, The Example For All Mankind.”

An example is, “...one who or that which is proposed or is proper for imitation...” (Webster 341). Since an example serves as a model to be imitated we will look at the life of Jesus and then, from that, make some practical applications for us today.

Jesus, The Example In Purity

Time and again the scripture reminds us that Jesus lived a sinless life (1 Peter 1:21-25, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:14-15). He was able to accomplish what no other man could accomplish (Galatians 3:22). But how? What made His life so different than the life of every other person?

At an early age Jesus busied Himself with the work of the Father (Luke 2:42, 46-49). It was His custom to be found in the temple and synagogues listening to and teaching other men (Luke 4:16). And while Jesus associated with all men (Matthew 9:10-13) His main companionship was with His

disciples (Acts 1:21-22). Strong says the word “companied” in Acts 1:21 means “...cohabit...” (93). Thus, Jesus surrounded Himself with men of moral character and conduct. Since the major portion of His time was spent in spiritual activity, undoubtedly, He was drawn close to God and had less opportunity to entertain the desires of the flesh. Perhaps this helps to explain how He overcame sin.

There is much to be learned from this example. James said, “...Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. ...” (James 4:7-10). We, like Jesus, need to draw close to God. The first step is to put sin out of our lives. But this alone is not enough. Jesus said if we don’t replace the evil with good, the evil will return and our last state will be worse than the first (Matthew 12:43-45). In order to avoid this situation let’s follow in the steps of Jesus.

First, let’s surround ourselves with wholesome companionship. Paul wrote, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another,” (Romans 12:10). And again, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners,” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Secondly, let’s draw close to God by allowing Him to speak to us every day through His word. Paul penned, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,” (2 Timothy 2:15). This will both build us up and prepare us to teach others as well. One of the condemnations of the Hebrew brethren was their failure to have prepared themselves as teachers (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Finally, let’s be busy ministering unto others as Jesus did to those in His age. There is always someone who is in need of help. Their need may be food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, or some other physical necessity. If we busy ourselves tending to these good works perhaps it will remove the opportunity to sin and assist us in living a pure life before God.

Jesus, The Example of Love

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous,” (1John 5:3). Jesus kept the commandments of His Father (John 15:10). Even to the point of His death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). This illustrated His love for the Father.

He also loved His fellow man. He surrendered the glory of heaven to become the servant of man upon the earth (2 Corinthians 8:8-9, Philippians 2:5-8). By doing this He put His eternal existence in jeopardy. Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and Jesus was tempted in all points just like we are (Hebrews 4:15), this means He was subject to sin and could have committed sin. Had He done so He would have lost His eternal existence because the wages of sin is death. He willingly left heaven, risk His eternal nature, and died the death of the cross because He loved His creation (John 10:17-18). He could have summoned the angels to deliver Him from the cross but he chose to die there for you and me (Matthew 26:53-54). Through His example He has taught us how to love. John penned, “We love Him, because He first loved us,” (1John 4:19).

In order to imitate this love we must be willing to keep all of the commandments of God (John 14:15, James 2:10-12), even to the point of death (Revelation 2:10). Jesus gave up heaven (2

Corinthians 8:8-9), Abraham gave up his homeland (Hebrews 11:8-10), and we must be willing to lose our life in order to save it (Matthew 16:24-25).

We must also learn to love our fellow man as Jesus loved us. John wrote, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ...My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth," (1 John 3:16-18). This love isn't to be limited to brothers and sisters in Christ but is to be practiced toward all men (Galatians 6:9-10). He that would be great in the Kingdom of God must learn to humble himself and become servant to all, as did Jesus (Matthew 20:25-28).

Jesus, The Example In Teaching

Before we can become a teacher there are several things we must do. Jesus, Ezra, and Timothy, all three, had to prepare themselves to teach. Jesus continued in the temple after the feast of the Passover, "...sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," (Luke 2:46). As a result He, "...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," (Luke 2:52). "...Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord,..." (Ezra 7:10). And, Paul told Timothy to, "... give attendance to reading,... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;..." (1 Timothy 4:11-16). It amazes me that inspired men, such as Timothy, were exhorted to read and to study and yet uninspired men of today believe they are above such things.

Ezra, Timothy, and our Lord all realized that in order for a person to be an effective teacher he has to practice what he preaches (Romans 2:21-24). They became doers before they became teachers (Ezra 7:10, 1 Timothy 4:11-16, Acts 1:1).

Love was the motivating force, which moved Jesus to teach the lost (Matthew 9:36-38). Nevertheless, He always taught the truth without regard to man (Matthew 22:16). At times, this offended some and caused many to turn away from Him (John 6:61, 66). But Jesus remained faithful to the truth and never allowed these rejections to discourage Him.

In order to imitate Jesus' example as a teacher we must first purge our own life from sin (2 Timothy 2:19-21), dedicate ourselves to a thorough study of God's word (2 Timothy 2:15), learn to practice the things which we teach (Romans 2:21-24), and then teach (Matthew 28:18-20). May we always be true to the word (2 Timothy 4:1-2), preach with the proper motivation and attitude (Ephesians 4:15, 2 Timothy 2:24-26), and do so without regard to man (Galatians 1:10-12).

Jesus, The Example of Perseverance

Jesus is the perfect example of perseverance (Hebrews 12:1-4). There was never a persecution or trial so great that the Lord gave up or gave in to sin. When confronted with temptation, grief, discouragement, and death He turned to God in prayer (Matthew 4:1-4, John 11:41, Mark 14:50, Matthew 26:36). He talked to God and through the word the Father communicated with Him (Luke 4:16). This is undoubtedly why He persevered. He is truly an example worthy of imitation.

Trials and persecutions will come (2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 4:12). However, there is no temptation so great it can't be defeated (1 Corinthians 10:13). Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter

not into temptation:..." (Matthew 26:41). Prayer will go a long way in delivering us from temptation (Matthew 6:13). James said, "... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," (James 5:16). David and Daniel both prayed three times a day (Psalm 55:17, Daniel 6:10). The Jews were a praying people. We should be too (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Luke 18:1). These scriptures are not teaching us that we have to pray every second of every day but that we are to have regular prayer habits. We are to be constant and consistent in prayer, not sporadic.

There is no trial so severe it can't be endured. Paul told those at Thessalonica who were grieving over the death of their loved ones, "wherefore comfort one another with these words," (1 Thessalonians 4:18). To the Corinthians he said "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," (1 Corinthians 14:31). He also told them that God will comfort us in all of our tribulations (2 Corinthians 1:4). Through the word God promises and assures us of eternal things. May we learn to turn to that word in times of grief and persecution. Therein, we can find the comfort to persevere.

Conclusion

Jesus can serve as a pattern for all who would follow Him because He has been tried. He is a proven stone (Isaiah 28:16). Those who reject pattern theology are forced to reject Jesus as the perfect pattern for all mankind. This is why pattern theology is trustworthy and reliable. A pattern has God's stamp of approval. It has been tried and proven to be acceptable to God. This is why God has told us, "Prove all things..." (1 Thessalonians 5:21), "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord," (Ephesians 5:10), and "...that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:2). When we worship, are saved, live, and teach the same things as the church we read about in the Bible we know that we are pleasing and acceptable to the Lord because we have followed His proven example. Just like Jesus, it has God's stamp of approval on it.

Many today, however, are like those in Jeremiah's day. They ridicule pattern theology, the old path philosophy, to walk, as Jeremiah put it, "...in a way not cast up;" (Jeremiah 18:15). That is to say, in a way which has not been proven. Jeremiah said again, "Thus saith the Lord, ...ask for the old paths, ... and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein," (Jeremiah 6:16). The new paths are ways that have not been tried. They have not been proven. May we always walk in the proven path, after the proven pattern, especially when it comes to "Jesus, The Example For All Mankind."