

Imitators of Christ (Part 2)

I Peter 2: 21-25

Last week we began to look at this passage and tonight I want to continue with the same thought: **Imitators of Christ**. Surely as children growing up, we had a hero in life; someone that we watched very closely and hoped to be like when we grew up.

Heroes are great, and there is nothing wrong with admiring the character and integrity of others, but we need to focus our attention on the greatest Hero of them all, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is that idea that Peter portrays for believers in this passage. We are encouraged to look unto Jesus and follow after Him, imitating His life through ours. So, let's take just a moment to review and then we will continue in our study.

I. The Priority of the Saints (21) – For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

A. We are Called – For even hereunto were ye called.

B. We are Confronted – because Christ also suffered for us.

C. We are Charged – This is actually two-fold.

1. The Example – because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example. Remember that **example** means “*writing under.*”

2. The Expectation – that ye should follow his steps. “*To tread in the foot-steps of another.*”

II. The Purity of the Savior (22-23) – Last week we considered the suffering that Jesus endured while walking here upon the earth and these verses reveal the purity that He displayed for all to see.

A. His Character (22a) – **Who did no sin**. Humanity had never witnessed prior to Christ, nor since anyone who lived life in its entirety free of sin. Man was created in the image and likeness of God. While Adam enjoyed life in the Garden of Eden, he walked in close fellowship with God in the cool of the day. This was the desire of the Lord in creating man that He might fellowship with Him. When Adam fell in sin, that fellowship was broken and the curse of sin was passed on to every succeeding generation.

▪ Sadly each of us present tonight were born under the curse of sin and separated from God because of it. God is holy and righteous and He cannot condone or approve of sin. His holiness demands that sin be atoned and reconciliation be made. Mankind was and remains

helpless to provide atonement for sin. We are all sinners in need of salvation. None of us have lived one day free of sin.

- We are all familiar with sin and have heard it preached and taught about many times. Often familiarity brings about complacency and lack of urgency. Sin literally means “*to be without a share in.*” Because of sin, we were all without a share in God’s holiness and inheritance. Unless sin is atoned we remain without a share in God’s economy. It also means “*to err or miss the mark; to wander from the path of righteousness and violate God’s law.*” All who are born in sin, that includes all of us, have erred from the ways of God; we have wandered from His path and violated His holy law. In essence, we all stood condemned because of sin.
- Our text reveals that Jesus **did no sin**. He lived His life free of sin. He never once knew what it was like to wander from the ways of God or violate His holy ordinances. He never once had to seek forgiveness because He had missed the mark. Jesus lived a life free from sin. He lived the life that God demanded that we never could.
- Just let that sink in for a moment. We know that Jesus lived free from sin, but that is an awesome thought. Jesus lived His entire life without sin! We will never achieve that level of perfection, but we can strive for it!

B. His Communication (22b) – **Neither was guile found in His mouth**. Never once was there any guile found in the mouth of Jesus. This means that there was “*no deceit observed, detected, or discovered*” in the communication of Jesus.

- He never spoke anything that was sinful or vile. He never spoke a word that was contrary to the will of God. Jesus never promoted His own agenda or desires, only those of God. All of His conversation revealed the Father and promoted His will.
- Now that may not seem very compelling, but think of the conversation that we have many times. Consider the words that we speak. Much of what we speak is geared toward promoting ourselves or our agenda. Many speak harsh words toward or about others in order to make themselves feel better. Even within the church people are often critical or judgmental of others. Jesus set the example for our conversation. The next time that we are tempted to complain, belittle, boast, pass judgment, or just speak things we shouldn’t, we ought to consider the example of our Lord.
- The Bible has much to say about our conversation. Let’s consider a couple of those verses. **Ps.59:12 – For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.** **Mat.12:34 – O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.** **Mat.12:36 – But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** **Col.4:6 – Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.** May our conversation always edify the Lord and His church.

- The conversation we have will either be a blessing or a hindrance to the work of God. No doubt many have fallen by the wayside due to the words and conversation of those who identified with the church. This is one of the greatest needs in our day. May God's people speak like we belong to Him!

C. His Conduct (23a) – *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.* This verse speaks of the pristine character of our blessed Lord. When He was reproached and mocked, He did not return their mockery or reproach. He was falsely accused and treated as a common criminal and yet He never opened His mouth against His accusers. *Is.53:7 – He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* When He was scourged, beaten, and crucified, He bore the pain and suffering with grace and mercy. Rather than speaking the word and bringing judgment upon those who crucified Him, Jesus asked the Father to forgive them.

- Jesus knew that this was God's will and His plan for redemption, but we must remember that Jesus was in a body of flesh. He felt the same hurt and anger that we do and yet He suppressed the temptation of retaliation.
- What an example we find in the life of our Lord. To behave in such a manner is contrary to the flesh. When someone speaks a harsh or critical word we want to lash out in return. When someone hurts or wrongs us, we dwell on getting our opportunity to "return the favor." If we aren't careful we may find ourselves being the one who is mocking or belittling others.
- Jesus set the example for Christian conduct. It is not our obligation to return vengeance upon those who have wronged us. *Lu.6:31 – And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Mat.5:38-39 – Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Rom.12:19-20 – Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

D. His Commitment (23b) – *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* This speaks of an admirable quality of our Lord. Consider the life that He lived, all the miracles that He performed, the compassion that He showed, and the mercy that He extended. Now, consider all that Jesus endured as He lived here upon the earth. He was despised and rejected of His own. He was accused of demon possession. He was arrested and tried for crimes that He did not commit.

- He stood accused before the Sanhedrin, the religious elite of that day. He was taken and tried before Pilate, the Roman governor over Jerusalem. Upon being declared innocent,

Pilate agreed to His scourging and crucifixion. Jesus was condemned while a murderer and thief was released. He was led away and crucified upon a Roman cross. It was there that He experienced agony that is beyond human comprehension; the worst of which was being forsaken of God the Father because He could not look upon sin. He bore in His body the judgment of God for the sins of all humanity, past, present, and future.

- Now consider that Jesus understood all of that prior to that hour. He knew when He left the glory of heaven that Calvary was in view. He knew that His own would reject Him. He knew that His closest friends would deny Him. He knew that He would suffer as no man has ever suffered, and yet He was committed to that. He [committed himself to him that judgeth righteously](#). He committed Himself to the will of God. The word [committed](#) in our text means “*to give into the hands of another*.” Jesus gave Himself to the hand of God to become the sacrifice for sin. He fully submitted Himself to another as He died on the cross.
- Surely if Christ was committed to the death of the cross, we could be committed to a life lived for Him. I wonder how many of us are actually committed to the Lord. How many of us have given our lives into the hands of another? How many of us have resigned to give our lives solely for the use and edifying of our precious Lord? It is a sobering thought, but if our lives are to imitate the life of Christ, we must be willing to commit ourselves to the One who judgeth righteously.

Our Lord set a high standard for living. I am convinced none of us have achieved His level of perfection, nor can we, but we must strive for that perfection on a daily basis. Do our lives reflect the life of Christ? Is He evident in our lives for the world to see? Does our character, communication, conduct, and commitment following the example that Jesus left? If not, then it is time to seek the Lord. If the Lord has spoken to you about specific areas in your life, why not come and get those things settled before Him.