



# ***BECOMING CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE***

*- A Journey Toward Christlikeness -*

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# **“BECOMING CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE”**

- A Journey Toward Christlikeness -

**Intro ...** This morning we begin something new – something essential for our spiritual well-being – something intrinsically linked to what we have just done but something that will stretch us beyond where we have previously been.

This morning we begin the true journey that ‘*Pneuma*’ has us on – the journey that we have hinted at but not yet thoroughly examined.

This journey’s destination we already know and yet the pathway to that destination is lengthy and (sad to say) not much traveled.

That destination is clearly stated in one of the featured verses of our just completed series “*Walking with Pneuma*” (Our Heaven-Sent Companion) ...

*“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory,  
are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory,  
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)*

“We ...are being transformed into Christ’s Likeness” ...

That’s what the Scripture says. That’s what ‘*Pneuma*’ intends.  
That’s what we should desire more than anything else.

So that when ‘*Pneuma*’ finally places our hands in the hand of our Savior in that ‘*most magnificent moment*’ we spoke of last week, Jesus Christ, our Exalted, Glorified Lord, can say (much like Adam said of Eve in Eden) ...

*“Here are others like myself – bone of my bone – flesh of my flesh –  
Spirit of my Spirit – they shall indeed be called ‘Christian’  
for they have become ‘Mirror Images’ of me.”*

What a statement – what a profound declaration – what a magnificent moment that will be!

I want to be one of those about whom that can be said.

I want all of us to be such.

'Pneuma' wants that for all those to whom He has provided 'new birth' through faith in Jesus Christ.

That's what 'Christlikeness' means – It means to become 'Christ's Mirror Image' ... to become so 'like him' that we might even at times be confused 'for him.'

That provocative statement leads directly to **Two Key Concepts** that underlie this new Series of Messages.

Here they are:

**KEY SERIES CONCEPT ONE:**

Becoming Christ's **MIRROR IMAGE**  
is **EVERY** believer's **CALLING**.

**KEY SERIES CONCEPT TWO:**

**TRANSFORMING** us into Christ's Mirror Image is  
'Pneuma's **PASSION** and **PURPOSE**.

You see, this Christian Life is about so much more than just 'getting saved.' This 'Christian' Life is all about Christ and about being Christ's People and about becoming Christ's Person.

As we said in the very first 'Walking with Pneuma' message ...

"For 'Pneuma' - the one sent to 'Companion' us  
through this earthly life - 'It's all about Jesus.'"

And there is no greater joy for 'Pneuma' as He 'Companions us' through life than to say ...

'You are getting more and more like Him every day!'

Here then is ...

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...**

But what does that **MEAN** –  
To be **LIKE** Christ – to **BECOME** His Mirror Image?

That, my dear friends, is the question that we will be answering throughout this entire series of messages.

And the way we are going to seek to answer it is by taking perhaps the most extensive study of the life of Christ that we have ever engaged in for we can never become 'Christ-Like' until we thoroughly understand '**What** Christ was, in fact, **like**' as He walked upon this earth.

We are going to engage in this study from bottom up – from the elementary to the advanced ...

We are not going to engage ourselves (as it were) in '*spiritual calculus*' until we have mastered basic '*spiritual math.*'

We are going to '*take our time*' – we might have to initially '*break down a bit of resistance*' (as in, I'm fine with my Christian Life just as it is – I'm saved and that's plenty for me.)

We might have to '*embrace*' some new ideas and some new understandings of what Jesus had in mind when He issued His Call ...  
**"Come, follow me."**

This journey toward understanding and transformation will progress through **Four Distinct Stages:**

The **First Stage** which we will begin next Sunday will be called  
**"THE IDENTIFICATION STAGE."**

In this stage, we will approach Christ through the eyes of an unbeliever.

We will once again ask the dual **Question:**

**"Who is He and how does that relate to me?"**

It may be that some in this room will make a complete surrender of their lives to Christ during those weeks.

If you have unsaved family and friends, seek to bring them with you as we answer these fundamental questions.

Identifying who Jesus is and identifying ourselves with Him is, of course, the first step in 'Becoming Like Him.'

We will be brought back to the straight-forward question:

*"What will you do (what have you done) with this man, Jesus?"*

The **Second Stage** in this process will be called  
**"THE IMITATION STAGE."**

In this stage, we will zero in on specific behaviors of Jesus – especially those where He said we should ...

*'Do it like you have seen me do it.'*

He is our "Master" and we are his "Disciples" – like a child with a parent, we will seek to 'Walk like He Walked' and 'Talk like He Talked.' This stage will be at least 8 weeks long.

This stage (though it is but the second) will provide plenty of challenges for us, for the 'Commands of Christ' are challenging indeed.

We will need to be sure that our will is surrendered to Him and that 'Pneuma' has us firmly by the hand.

Great growth in grace comes to those who faithfully and fervently seek to 'Imitate Christ' in all the circumstances of life.

The **Third Stage** in this Journey toward Christlikeness will be called  
**"THE CONFORMATION STAGE."**

During this stage of the journey, we will discover 'WHY' Jesus did what he did and 'HOW' it was that He did it.

We will move beyond just 'Mimicking His Behavior' and will actually begin 'Embracing His Character.' Much more mature sensitivities and perspectives and motivations will begin to emerge.

'Pneuma' will be frequently telling us that we are ...

*'Looking and feeling and living  
more and more like Jesus all the time.'*

How encouraging will that be!

The **Fourth** (and final) **Stage** (which represents the highest level of Christlikeness) is what I would call (with a considerable degree of trepidation) ...

### **"THE RE-INCARNATION STAGE."**

In this stage, we will reflect upon the possibility that the life of Jesus Christ can indeed 'Be expressed' *through* those who belong to Him as they "Walk in Step" with the One ('Pneuma') whom He has sent.

We will ponder what it means to be fully 'Christ-Like – to 'flesh-out' that godly life once again in this fallen world - to draw people into Christ's Presence every time they are drawn into ours.

This is the 'Spiritual Calculus' I mentioned earlier.

This is PhD Level Christianity.

This is the course that Professor 'Pneuma' was sent to teach.

I'm ready for Him to teach us ... I'm ready for Him to take us step by step into a deeper understanding of the Call of Christ and a hotter passion for the Person of Christ than we have ever had before.

I'm ready to take my seat in his lecture hall ... Are you?

Next Sunday we begin.

On this Introductory Sunday, let me now share some **Key Scriptures** that I know can indeed 'Ready Us' for this extensive study - **Key Scriptures** designed to motivate us to 'Throw ourselves into this process.'

The first two come from the Apostle Peter, that 'Rock' of the Early Church.

**2 Peter 3:18 ...**

**“GROW** in the **GRACE** and **KNOWLEDGE**  
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Now you know that this directive was given to believers. All of them had heard the Gospel and had responded to it. They had placed their faith in Jesus Christ; they had organized themselves into local congregations for fellowship and nurture. They were as saved as you and I are. They had ‘*Pneuma*’ as their earthly companion just like you and I do.

And yet Peter urges them to ‘Grow’ (to develop themselves – to advance themselves – to mature themselves) in the grace and knowledge of the Person of Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior.

Some months ago, we invested a good period of time in ‘*Growing our Knowledge of our Risen, Exalted Savior*’ – “*Looking Unto Jesus*” we called that series and we amazed ourselves as we discovered twelve incredible ministries that He is this very moment carrying out on our behalf in heaven itself.

During these months that lie ahead of us, we will be investing ourselves in gaining a more complete understanding of Jesus’ Earthly Life – the life that we are called upon to emulate.

Consider now this directive also given by the Apostle Peter ...

**2 Peter 1:5 ...**

“Make every **EFFORT** to add to your **FAITH** ...”

**Faith** (that is, faith in the Sacrificial Work of Jesus Christ) is, of course, the starting point for the Christian Life. We trust ourselves to Him and we receive God’s Forgiveness for our sins and we are granted Eternal Life and new Spiritual Life is placed within us. We are ‘Born-Again’ through **faith**.

Sad to say, in recent years there has been such an emphasis in the United States especially on ‘*getting people saved*’ that the impression has been given that ‘*Salvation from Hell is the whole story.*’ For many churches the message simply has been “*Get saved and then get others saved who will in turn get others saved.*’ Some people have been ‘saved’ for years and are still (as it were) in ‘*spiritual diapers.*’

Peter clearly told the believers in his day that there was much more to the Christian Life than just 'Getting Saved.'

In that first chapter of his Second Epistle, Peter identified seven specific things that believers should be seeking to 'add to their faith.'

These are things that don't come easily or automatically thus His admonition to 'make every effort.' All seven of the things that Peter identifies as worthy 'Additions to faith' are things that we will discover over the next few months to be 'Characteristics of Jesus' Earthly Life.'

All of them will be added to 'our' faith automatically as we are more and more 'Transformed into His Likeness.'

Here's now a verse that pictures the 'educational image' that I shared earlier about advancing from 'Basic Spiritual Math' to 'Spiritual Calculus.'

**Hebrews 6:1...**

"Let us leave the **ELEMENTARY** teachings and go on to **MATURITY.**"

You see, there is an 'elementary' (the 'just saved') level in the Christian Faith and there is a 'mature' (arrived at Christ-likeness) level.

The writer of this Epistle to the Hebrew believers points out that that progression from the 'elementary' to the 'mature' is expected and should be pursued.

To use the image found in Revelation 19:7, the 'Bride who has made herself ready' for Her Exalted Savior is a bride who has 'Become Mature.'

'Baby Christians' are no more ready to enter into Marriage with Christ than babies on this earth are ready to enter into earthly marriage.

Here's the final motivational verse that I would share this morning ...

**Ephesians 4:15 ...**

"**GROW** up into Him who is the **HEAD**, even **CHRIST.**"

Here the Apostle Paul blends together the 'growing' idea with the focus of this series of messages.

It's growing to become **like** Jesus – to be one who identifies **with** Jesus – one who patterns their behavior **after** Jesus – one who increasingly understands and embraces the very character **of** Jesus – one who ultimately is fully consumed **by** Jesus and thus is a '**Mirror Image**' of Jesus.

Can it be done?

Can 'earth-bound' (though 'born-again') believers rise to such heights?

Can you and I actually become '*Mirror Images of Christ*'?

The Scripture says we should.

Our new-born spirit says we should – it's who we really are.

'Pneuma' says we can and will as we walk with him into an ever-increasing awareness of the Purpose and Passion of Christ Himself.

So, let's take the '*Journey into Christlikeness.*'

Some of us we will be re-tracing steps that we have already taken but be sure that like '*watching a movie that we think we know forwards and backwards,*' we will discover (or re-discover) some incredible truths – things we should have picked up but didn't the first time through.

For others of us the entire journey will be one of discovery – perhaps some of you might truly surrender your life to Jesus – the Jesus you discover more clearly than ever before.

Hopefully for all of us ... we will arrive at a place where we are more '*Christ-Like*' than we have ever been before.

And in that hope, I share today's ...

### ***Final Thot ...***

The greatest **JOY** (and blessing) any **BELIEVER** can ever know in this life is to **LOOK** in the **MIRROR** and see **JESUS** looking back.

***THE***  
***‘IDENTIFICATION’***  
***STAGE***

***“Who Is He And How Does That Relate To Me?”***

## **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Identification Stage'**

*"He's The One Who Knows All About Me."*

(John 1:47-49; John 4:1-48; Revelation 2:23)

**Intro ...** *"Becoming Christ's Mirror Image"* – that's what the Scripture says should be the main focus of our lives as *'Followers of Christ'* That's what the Scripture says is the primary focus of *'Pneuma'* Himself as He *'companions'* us through this life.

His Calling and Purpose is to so *'Work in us'* that by the time we exit this life and enter Christ's Presence we will be as much *'Like Christ'* as we can possibly be – that we would each take our place in His Eternal Bride as one that He can look upon with pride and pleasure.

But *'Becoming Christ's Mirror Image'* is no small task for us earth-bound, flesh-containing, world-influenced, devil-targeted *'Born-Again Human Beings'*

Such a transformation entails quite a process – a process of cooperation that can be understood to advance through four distinct stages.

We identified those *'Stages'* last week – Stages in the Journey toward Christlikeness.

The underlying premise of this entire investigative journey is that before we can truly and accurately and effectively pursue *'Christ-Likeness'*, we must truly and accurately understand what *'Christ was, in fact, like'* as He walked upon this earth.

It will help *'Pneuma'* immensely if we can get on the same page with Him regarding the *'Final Product'* He has in mind.

So today we begin seeking the answer (hopefully, a more comprehensive one than we have ever discovered before) to the question ...

*"What was this Christ who we are to become like, in fact, like?"*

The Four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – will provide us with plenty of material. Our style will primarily be *'Read and Comment.'*

As we pointed out last week ...

The **First Stage** of This Investigative Journey is called the **Identification Stage** and in this Stage, we will be seeking to look at Jesus Christ through the eyes of an unbeliever – that is, through the eyes of one who is just ‘*Discovering Him*’ – the very people for whom the Gospels were actually written.

Try to ‘*take off your believer’s hat*’ if you can.

We will ‘*Uncover His Identity*’ little by little over the next few weeks just like those of His own day did. And, of course, as we do, be sure to ask yourself regularly ...

*“Is this Jesus as I have always understood Him to be?”*

And then a most important secondary question: “*Have I totally surrendered myself to Him?*” For obviously, we cannot even begin to become ‘**like Christ**’ until we are ‘**surrendered to Christ**’.

In a sense these opening messages will be like one big continuous message ... like chapters in an ‘*edge of your seat*’ novel.

Some weeks might end with a bit of a ‘*cliff-hanger*’ affect. They will all fit together and build upon one another. Seek to expose yourself to them all.

By the time we conclude **Stage One** of this transformational journey, we want to be sure that we have ‘Identified Christ Accurately’ and ‘Surrendered to Christ Completely’. So then, let’s get going.

Here once again is the ...

**KEY QUESTION IN THIS IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...**

“**WHO** is He and **HOW** does that **RELATE** to me?”

We will be answering that question again and again, Today’s answer is expressed in ...

**TODAY’S KEY REVELATION...**

“Jesus is the One who **KNOWS** all about me - the One before Whom my **LIFE** is laid bare. He will one day call me into **ACCOUNT**.”

Now walk with me through ...

**TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

(I have arranged them under several headings.)

The first few fall under the heading **"Making Some Discoveries" ...**

**"HOW do you KNOW me?"**  
(John 1:48)

This question was raised by Nathaniel – a solid Jewish man whom Jesus profiled as *"A true Israelite in whom there is no guile"* – In other words – a good, honest Jewish man.

Nathaniel was from Galilee and was no doubt a friend of Simon and Andrew and Philip who had traveled from Galilee to hear John the Baptist and to be baptized by him.

Andrew and Philip had been with John on the day John had declared Jesus to be the *"Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Nathaniel was initially skeptical when Andrew told him about Jesus but Jesus' acknowledgement of him and Jesus' subsequent description of where he had been and what he was doing startled that skepticism right out of him. It seemed like Jesus really *'knew him'* though Nathaniel didn't know how.

Jesus startled Simon in the same way when the moment he met him He nicknamed him *'Peter, the Rock'* as though He knew something about Peter that even Peter didn't know. He knew each of His Chosen Twelve inside and out.

**"He told me EVERYTHING I ever DID."**  
(John 4:39)

Now those words were spoken by the *'Woman at the Well'* – the Samaritan woman that Jesus engaged in conversation one hot afternoon. He revealed things about her that He had had no opportunity to find out.

He knew her past marital history – He knew her present immoral living arrangement. He knew the hunger and thirst that was in her heart for things spiritual and eternal.

He revealed to her that He was in fact the 'Messiah' sent in fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy. She realized that He was the One to whom she and everyone else must answer.

*"He **KNEW** what they were **THINKING**."  
(Luke 5:22)*

This conclusion was drawn by one who observed the way Jesus could 'read' people and know exactly what was going on inside of them.

And when Jesus would say right out loud what they were in fact thinking, 'the jig was up' and their well-constructed 'smoke-screens' were blown away. They quickly learned to 'not come around' unless they were prepared to be exposed and challenged.

*"I am He who **SEARCHES** the hearts and minds,  
and I will **REPAY** each of you according to your **DEEDS**."  
(Revelation 2:23)*

This now is the resurrected, exalted Jesus 'identifying Himself for us' ... This verse demonstrates that this knowledge of us and our deeds is part of His Heavenly Awareness. He still knows all that is thought and sensed as well as done – He is the One who will mete out rewards or punishments based upon what He knows to be true about us. This is a reality that can be both comforting and disconcerting.

All of these Scriptures buttress **Today's Key Revelation** ...

*"Jesus is the ONE who knows all about me - the ONE before whom my whole life is laid bare – the ONE to whom I must give account."*

The **second heading** I would call "**Drawing Some Conclusions**" ...

*"Rabbi, you are the **SON** of **GOD** – the **KING** of **ISRAEL**."  
(John 1:49)*

That was Nathaniel demonstrating that he was exactly who Jesus said he was ...

*"A true Israelite in whom there was no guile."*

Nathaniel possessed no pretense, no personal agenda, simply a passion for the Things of God and the Promises of God.

Nathaniel quickly concluded that he was in the presence of supernatural knowledge – Divine even ...

Like the Centurion at the Cross watching Jesus die, Nathaniel declared that this ONE in front of him was the Son of God and thus the rightful King of Israel – the ONE before whom all true Israelites must bow the knee.

True Knowledge of Jesus Christ inevitably leads to complete surrender.

“Could this be the **CHRIST**?”  
(John 4:29)

That's what the 'Woman at the Well' said as she spoke to the townspeople. These were people that she normally avoided – people who saw her as perhaps the biggest sinner in their city. Did not her words really mean ...

*'I am convinced that He is indeed the Christ and if he is the Christ then we are most blessed to have Him here with us. Come hear Him yourself.'*

The whole town came out and surrendered their lives to Him.

“Go **AWAY** from me, **LORD**, for I am a **SINFUL** man.”  
(Luke 5:8)

These words were spoken by “Rocky” ... Jesus' new disciple, Simon Peter, just after Jesus had performed a great miracle - just after Jesus had spent the afternoon preaching from Peter's boat.

Peter heard and Peter saw and then Peter knew just how far short he fell. He knew just how inadequate he was. He knew that he was anything but the shining example Nathaniel was.

It's like he was saying ...

*'I don't know myself half as well as You know me, Lord, but I know myself well enough to know that I don't belong in any group that You are putting together.'*

Knowledge of the Lord's Knowledge can and should lead us initially a point of complete despair. We don't qualify to be 'part of the gang' and we know it.

However, on the other hand, if we feel that we '*measure up pretty well*' – if we feel willing to '*take our chances*' on the Day of Judgment – if we feel that we are '*In the running for a Heavenly Home,*' then we don't know ourselves anywhere near as well as we should.

In and of ourselves, we are sinful and unacceptable and will someday stand in judgment before the ONE who knows everything about us and who will hold us accountable for all that we have done.

Anyone who does not know that doesn't know the first thing about Jesus!

Come into His Presence – Acknowledge your sin.  
Call out to Him for Mercy and Forgiveness.  
Resolve to sit at His Feet and learn all that you can.

Here's now one thing that you can add to what you have learned this morning ... We would have way too much of a '*cliff-hanger ending*' if I didn't include it.

***This ONE WHO KNOWS YOU – LOVES YOU!***

He wants you to be saved from the consequences of your sins.  
He wants to include you in His Band just like He included Peter.  
And when you truly know that, you will run **to** Him not **from** Him.  
And once you have, you will find His Knowledge to be  
a source of comfort, even as Peter himself did.

In our final Scripture of the morning we see Peter  
**Relying Upon Christ's Knowledge ...**

**"LORD, You **KNOW** all things – You **KNOW** that I **LOVE** you."**  
(John 21:17)

This conversation took place in the days following Christ's Resurrection from the dead. Those were days when Jesus was preparing His Disciples to carry on in His Absence – to carry on the work that He had begun. Peter would play a key role in that work but Peter had failed the Lord miserably the very night that Jesus was betrayed and captured. Three times he denied even knowing Him.

Peter was the one who previously was so ignorant of himself that he boasted that he would never deny the Lord even if everyone else did.

He maintained that he would not do such a thing even when Jesus Himself said that he would. Peter had come to fancy himself much more 'rock-like' than he was.

And that failure crushed him – He recognized that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. He once again concluded that he was a 'sinful man' and he fled in disgrace. But after the resurrection, Jesus found him and forgave him and restored him and deep inside Peter something changed.

A 'Love for Christ' welled up in him beyond anything he had previously known, for in that moment he experienced the Love of ONE who could and would and did forgive.

Though he could be sure of nothing else about himself, he was now sure of this. His heart belonged to Jesus Christ and so when the Lord again and again posed the question "Do you love me?" Peter finally gave the answer we just read ...

*"Lord, You Know all things – You Know that I love you."*

Here now is the **comfort** that comes of Christ's Knowledge – He knows that those who have surrendered their lives to Him have also yielded their hearts to Him. And even if they momentarily fall (as Peter did) He **knows** they love him and He will never forsake them or doubt them. He will in fact restore them to His Service.

Take comfort in the knowledge that if you love Him, He **knows** it.

And so, on this first 'Investigation Sunday', I ask you to consider deeply the question raised in today's ...

### ***Final Thot ...***

The first step in this investigative journey is to realize that **JESUS CHRIST** – the Son of God – **KNOWS** all about you.

There is **NOTHING** that is either **HIDDEN** from Him or **DISCOUNTED** by Him.  
Each of us is **ACCOUNTABLE** to Him.

Are you ready to **STAND** before **HIM**?

## **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Identification Stage'**

*"He's The One Who Can Forgive All My Sins."*

(John 1:29; Mark 2:5; Mark 2:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:9)

**Intro ...** Today I invite you to take a second step with me down the 'Investigative Pathway' on our 'Journey Toward Christ-Likeness.'

Last week we entered **Stage One** of this Journey – **The Identification Stage**. During these next few weeks we will be seeking to 'Identify Jesus Christ Accurately' so that we can be sure that we have 'Surrendered Ourselves To Him Completely.'

Obviously, we cannot become 'Like Christ' unless we are consciously 'Surrendered To Christ' and to His Holy Spirit, 'Pneuma.'

'Pneuma' is the one who has been assigned the task of 'Transforming us' little by little, day by day, into the very 'Likeness of Christ' but before He can 'Form this likeness in our hearts', he must first 'Form this likeness in our minds. Picturing Jesus accurately is the necessary first step in this process.

**Last week I shared with you the ...**

### **KEY QUESTION IN THIS IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...**

**"WHO is He and HOW does that RELATE to me?"**

That's the question that was raised by everyone who met Christ in his own day. That's the question that every unbeliever must raise today. That's the question that I am asking all of us to raise in our own minds each week.

**Here was ...**

### **LAST WEEK'S KEY REVELATION...**

*"Jesus is the One who **KNOWS** all about me - the One before Whom my **LIFE** is laid bare. He will one day call me into **ACCOUNT**."*

(John 1:48; John 4:39; Luke 5:22; Revelation 2:23)

This is a critical beginning ... Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God who came to earth. He possesses complete knowledge of each of us.

There is nothing in our lives hidden from His Awareness. Someday we will stand before Him and give account of all we have thought and felt and done.

Now that is a sobering thought ... We must be ready for that moment though we know that in and of ourselves we will never be ready.

It's the first thing that unbelievers acknowledge whenever they truly encounter Christ ... they realize that they stand in a very precarious position before Him. They fall far short of what He is and what He stands for and they know it.

However, those who have given their lives to him, those who truly do love Him, can take great comfort in the fact that they know He knows that. Just like Peter did.

So as we asked last week, we ask again this morning ...

*"When the Lord Jesus looks into your heart, what does He see?"*

**Here now is ...**

**TODAY'S KEY REVELATION ...**

*"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** all my **SINS**.  
He offers me a **FRESH START**."*

(John 1:29; Mark 2:5; Mark 2:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:9)

There is nothing more universally true of human beings than that they know they are not perfect ... they know that don't even consistently live up to their own standards, let alone God's.

They know that they will surely 'Be exposed' on the Day they stand before Christ and give account. They could (and should) despair and some do.

The Bible calls this 'imperfection' – this 'falling short of perfection' – **SIN**.

But many human beings, if not almost all of them, take comfort in the fact that 'nobody's perfect.'

*"We are all members of an 'imperfect' race", they think. "Surely He cannot just pick me out – we are all in the same boat. No human being is actually much better (from a perfection standpoint) than any other."*

The problem comes (and the comfort leaves) once we discover that the ONE who knows us perfectly did Himself take on human flesh and achieve that very level of perfection that we find so unattainable and that He holds us to the very standard of perfection that He Himself demonstrated.

We are not going to be compared to one another.

We are going to be compared to Him and it's going to be very obvious to all the heavenly hosts that we have fallen terribly short.

All human beings will be recognized for what they are ... fallen, sinful members of a fallen, sinful race - completely unacceptable for entrance into the perfection of Heaven.

Here now is where we begin to understand the significance of **Today's Key and Most Vitally Important Revelation ...**

*"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** all my **SINS**.  
He offers me a **FRESH START**."*

Wrap your minds and hearts now around Today's Key Scriptures as though you are hearing them for the first time (perhaps you are). I've arranged them under several categories of insight.

### **TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

#### **1. Jesus KNEW He had been sent to earth to provide forgiveness for sins ...**

\* *"Behold, the **LAMB** of **GOD** who takes away the **SIN** of the **WORLD**"*  
(John 1:29)

These words were spoken by John the Baptist who had been commissioned to '*Prepare the Way for the Lord*' – these words marked the culmination of that commission – these were '*Words of Identification and Introduction*

It's as though John was saying ...

*"Here He is – My work is done."*

Notice the emphasis of those words ...

*'He is the One who will deal with your sin.'*

In fact, He will *'take it away'* ... *He will remove its burden from you.*

If you had heard John say those things, if you were one who had been feeling burdened down by the guilt of your sins, would you not have wanted to learn more of this man; would you not have wanted to *'Give yourself to this man'* – to find in him *'Release and Relief from that burden'*?

\* *"Son, your **SINS** are **FORGIVEN.**"*  
(Mark 2:5)

These words were actually spoken by Jesus Himself – Here He was doing exactly what John had said he would do ... *'Forgiving Sins*

This was a man, completely paralyzed, brought to Jesus by four friends ... His physical affliction was obvious to all – his spiritual affliction not so much.

His physical affliction was a problem for the duration of his earthly life – His spiritual affliction was a problem for all eternity.

Jesus dealt with the more serious of his problems first.  
He forgave him of his sins and thus declared him *'Fit for heaven.'*

If you had been that man and if you had known what was at stake and if you had been given a choice, which *'healing'* would you have chosen?

***The point was*** ... Jesus much more wanted to be known as *'One who could and would forgive sins'* than as one who could merely *'Heal the body.'*

However, in this instance he would do both for the religious leaders who were always *'keeping an eye on him'* questioned his authority to make such a pronouncement regarding sins.

And to them he responded ...

\* *"The Son of Man has **AUTHORITY** on earth to **FORGIVE** sins."*  
(Mark 2:10)

And then he performed a miracle of physical healing that they could see to verify that the miracle of spiritual healing that they could not see had also been done.

He had the authority to do both and he exercised that authority right there in front of them. They could not deny the physical but they had to accept the spiritual by faith. Some did – some didn't.

However, there is no doubt that *'Jesus Christ knew that He had been sent to earth to provide forgiveness for sins.'*

These accounts in the Gospels were *'attention – getters.'* They were individual *'spotlight moments'* that drew the attention of the world to Jesus' ultimate purpose for coming to earth – to provide forgiveness for sins.

Consider now these verses under this **second** *'Insight Category'* ...

## **2. God Provided A WAY By Which It Could Be DONE ...**

\* *"He himself bore our SINS in His BODY of the Tree (cross) so that we might DIE to sins and live for RIGHTEOUSNESS; by His WOUNDS we have been HEALED."*  
(1 Peter 2:24)

If sinners burdened down by guilt had only one verse to read, I would suggest this one.

Here is the plan of God to forgive sinners through the Person of Jesus Christ revealed.

Jesus the perfect one, took upon himself all the imperfections of men – all the sinful thots and deeds of men – and suffered judgment for them.

And in this verse is revealed the ultimate purpose of God and it's not just to forgive sinners – it's to transform sinners into something completely different from what they had previously been.

God has no desire to simply have a world full of people who consider themselves to be '*sinner saved by grace.*'

He desires to have a world of people who consider themselves (through their identification with Christ) to be '*dead to sin and alive for righteousness*' just like Jesus was when He walked upon the earth.

And the reason that this '*transformation*' is not only a desirability but a possibility and even a probability is because '*His wounds have healed us.*'

The very domination of sin and the devastation brought by a heart filled with sin has been removed from us.

O my friends, what damage we do to that verse and what limitation we bring into our lives when we choose to view it primarily in terms of things physical.

***This is*** not a verse intended to inspire '*Healing Services*' ...

***This is*** a verse intended to inspire '*Revival Services.*'

***This is*** a verse that cries out to all men and women (saved as well as lost) to embrace the fullness of the life that Christ's Death on the Cross can provide and that the Spirit of God has come to produce.

Here now is how the Apostle Paul, who met the Risen, Glorified Christ on the Damascus Road, expressed it.

\* "God made Him who had **NO** sin to be sin for us,  
so that in **HIM** we might **BECOME** the righteousness of God."  
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

Here again we see the great substitution and the great transformation anticipated by the actions of the Almighty on behalf of the fallen, sinful human race.

God has stepped in and provided a means whereby sinful human beings can in fact become righteous in His eyes and in the eyes of the world just like Jesus was.

He became like us so that we might become like Him as we "*Walk with 'Pneuma'*" through the fallen society that surrounds us.

Let's complete this categorical insight now by considering this verse found in the Epistle to the Hebrews ...

\* "How much more will the **BLOOD** of Jesus ...  
**CLEANSE** our **CONSCIENCES** from acts that lead to **DEATH**,  
so that we may **SERVE** the Living God!"  
(Hebrews 9:14)

What a wondrous word is 'Cleansing' ...

It adds such a vivid image to the word 'Forgiving' ...

'Cleansing' removes the evidence of what had previously been there.

This is indeed the '***Fresh Start***' that today's **Key Revelation** spoke of ...

*"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** me for all my **SINS**.  
He offers me a **FRESH START**."*

So often our lives as Followers of Christ (our hearts and minds especially) are filled with '*evidence of our past*' - '*stains of sin*' we could call it – guilt and remorse and regret and the endless re-playing of things.

This verse says that Christ's Purpose is to '*Cleanse our Conscience*' from these unprofitable and even deadly behaviors.

Inside my own mind and heart, I need to say ...

*"If God has forgiven me, if Christ has suffered for me, then I am indeed forgiven and the wrongful deeds of my past have been fully paid for and I am ready to get on with the living of this new life I have been given."*

This '*Cleansed Conscience*' – this '*Life of Service to the Living God*' – is God's Plan for Man. This is God's Will and Desire for man – for each of us in this room this morning.

God has provided the way whereby it can be done – Sinful human beings can be forgiven and salvaged – transformed and re-calibrated.

Given as it were: '***A Fresh Start.***'

Here now is our **final** categorical insight ...

### 3. Each Human Being **DETERMINES** whether or not it **WILL** be done ...

One verse will suffice – one verse that sums up all that we have said this morning and that identifies the ‘condition’ under which God’s Forgiveness and Cleansing can be received.

Here it is ...

\* “If we **CONFESS** our sins (own up to them),  
He is **FAITHFUL** and **JUST** and will **FORGIVE** us our sins  
and **PURIFY** us from **ALL** unrighteousness.”  
(1 John 1:9)

It’s so straightforward that I will simply let it stand as it stands and let it say what it says.

In a word ...

If we will do the part that only **we** can do,  
God will do the part that only **He** can do.

We **Confess** our sins and He **Forgives** them through Christ.

And so, we come to today’s final and culminating that ...

#### **Final That ...**

The second step in this investigative journey is to realize that **JESUS CHRIST** the Son of God has the **AUTHORITY** to **FORGIVE** you for all your **SINS** and that He **OFFERS** you a **FRESH START** in your life.

Are you **READY** to **CONFESS** that you are a **SINNER** in **NEED**  
of **FORGIVENESS**? Are you **READY** to ask Him to **FORGIVE** you  
for all your sins and grant you that **FRESH START**?

## **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Identification Stage'**

*"He's The One Who Can Satisfy My Spiritual Hunger And Thirst."*

(John 4:10-15; John 6:33-35; John 7:37-38)

**Intro ...** Can you imagine what it must have been like to encounter Jesus for the very first time? Can you understand the quandary He created for everyone who did so?

He was an extraordinary man; He did extraordinary things; He made extraordinary statements and He called for extraordinary commitments from all those who enter His sphere of influence.

Who is He and how does that relate to me? That was the question that was raised by everyone who came face to face with him. That's the question that people still face today – even 'Born-Again' people.

What exactly was Jesus like as he walked upon this earth – what were the central characteristics of His life? How did He impact the lives of those who were drawn to Him? What would it be like to become 'Like Him'?

Those are the questions that will absolutely fill our minds once we understand that, though He last walked on this earth some 2,000 years ago, He desires to have His Presence felt just as much today as it was way back then.

Now, how in the world (how in this world, indeed) can that be done?

Only one way ... His presence can only be felt in this world today as untold numbers of His Followers become so 'like Him' that people will feel that they have (to some degree at least) met Him when they meet them!

Now, that is exactly what the Risen Exalted Lord Jesus sent His Holy Spirit, 'Pneuma' Himself into this world to pull off. It's a though His instructions were:

*"Change these 'Born-Again Followers of Mine' into my own likeness.  
Through them allow me to 'Walk the earth again' and 'Touch people's lives  
with God's Goodness and Grace."*

That is the Spirit's Task – that's exactly what He is seeking to accomplish in each of our lives.

The Apostle Paul told us that in 2 Corinthians 3:18 ...

*"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory,  
are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory,  
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

However, it would help Him greatly in His efforts to make us **'like Christ'** if we had a clear understanding of what Christ was in fact **'like'** as He laid down the steps that we are to follow.

And so, we have begun an ambitious *'Journey toward Christlikeness'* ...  
The First Stage we have called appropriately the *'Identification Stage.'*

As much as possible we are attempting to look at Christ through the eyes of an unbeliever – through the eyes of one who is encountering Jesus for the first time. Perhaps some of you actually are.

All of us, I'm sure, are going to discover some things about Jesus that we didn't know before or that we didn't really understand before.

Our goal at the end of this *'Identification Stage'* is to ...

*'Identify Jesus absolutely Accurately so we can be sure that  
we have surrendered ourselves to Him absolutely Completely.'*

So far we have seen that ...

*"Jesus is the One who knows all about me – He is the One before whom  
my life is laid bare. He will one day call me into account."*

That's both a comforting and disconcerting thought – comforting because it says He knows me – really knows me – I don't need to try to cover up or disguise anything – He sees right through all of that – With Him I can bring a halt to any pretense and just be who I really am.

However, it's a disconcerting thought because someday He will call me into account for all that I have thought and felt and done – My earthly life will be evaluated by heavenly standards. And I know how that will come out. But that's part of Who He Is.

Fortunately, we have also seen (just last week, in fact) that ...

*'Jesus is the One who can forgive all my sins.  
He offers me a fresh start.'*

Now that is as encouraging a thought as the previous one was disconcerting.

He has the authority to forgive me of my sins – He has the authority to offer me a fresh start in life – no matter how messed up my life may be.

And he will do both of those things if I come to Him and humbly confess the very things that both He and I know I have done - if I confess, in fact, that I am indeed a sinful person in need of cleansing.

And as I so confess my sins, He and His Father in Heaven forgive of my sins and set me on a new course in life – guided by His Holy Spirit – ‘*Pneuma*’ Himself.

Now here's ...

### **TODAY'S KEY REVELATION ...**

Jesus is the One who can **SATISFY** my spiritual **HUNGER** and **THIRST**.  
He will **NOURISH** me with **SPIRITUAL** food.  
(John 4:10-15; John 6:33-35; John 7:37-38)

Who begins a journey without making provision for adequate nourishment? Nourishment is essential if that journey is to culminate in success.

Check out ...

### **TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

1. If you **KNEW** ... who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have **ASKED** Him and He would have given you **LIVING WATER**.  
(John 4:10)

These words were spoken to that ‘*Woman at the Well*’ that we talked about two weeks ago – that woman to whom Jesus revealed the depth of his knowledge – the one who exclaimed to her neighbors and friends ...

*‘Come see a man who told me everything I ever did.’*

Now in addition to ‘*telling her everything she ever did*’ Jesus told her something else.

He fit an incredible insight about himself into their ordinary discussion about water – a discussion begun by him simply asking her to draw him up a drink from the well on a hot afternoon.

Physical thirst was the thing they had in common that day and Jesus used that common physical experience to illustrate a spiritual reality.

You see, Jesus not only 'knew' all about the activities of her life, He also knew about the condition of her soul. She, along with every other human being, possessed a thirst for the things of God, though she didn't really recognize it for what it was.

She, no doubt, would have called it by a lot of different names: a thirst for security and stability, a thirst for significance and a sense of specialness, a thirst for serenity and a sense of wholeness. She had worked her way through five marriages and who knows what else seeking to satisfy that thirst.

She is placed in the Scriptural account as an example of all of us. We have within ourselves a genuine thirst for the things of God – for meaning, for connection, for something or someone to adore and worship.

That thirst was put into us by our Creator Himself – Adam and Eve satisfied it regularly in the Fellowship they enjoyed with God in the Garden He had fashioned for them.

Jesus says to her (in effect) ...

*'I can provide satisfaction for that thirst - not the kind of satisfaction that fades away soon after the drink is taken – not a satisfaction that needs to be renewed again and again as long as the heat of the sun is felt – but a kind of satisfaction, a kind of water, that has 'life within it'- living water.'*

Tell me that you have never felt that 'thirst' ... that thirst for meaning or significance or purpose or passion in your life. Perhaps some of you are feeling that thirst within you this very moment.

Jesus says to you through His Spirit ...

*"If you will ask me, I will give it to you."*

That's what He said to the 'Woman' and then he said something else just a bit later in the conversation – Something that took his first statement to an entirely new level.

That 'something' is found in our second **Key Scripture** ...

**2.** “Whoever drinks the water I give him will **NEVER** thirst.  
Indeed, the water that I **GIVE** him will become in him a **SPRING**  
of **WATER** welling up to **ETERNAL LIFE**.”  
(John 4:14)

Here Jesus says that this ‘water’ that He can provide will satisfy that ‘thirst’ permanently ... Never do we have to ‘thirst in this way again.’

Wouldn't it be great, if you were about to embark on a long journey, to be able to take one drink of some kind of scientifically generated water that would last you for the entire trip, wouldn't it be great if you could give such a drink to your kids ... no more will you hear ...

*“Daddy, I'm thirsty”, can we stop for a drink?”*

Here Jesus says that the ‘water’ that he can give can not only ‘satisfy’ our soul's thirst but it can actually become a ‘Source of Life’ within us. We will no longer have to ‘look for life and meaning’ – no longer ‘search for significance and stability’ – we will have it ‘Bubbling up within us at all times.’

We might even find people coming to us and asking for a drink as in ...

*‘I want some of whatever it is that you have.’*

Notice that there is an ‘implied process’ in this verse.

Jesus said that the water that He gives “will become ... a spring of water.’ The longer we drink, the more we learn of Christ, the more we ‘walk in step with His Spirit,’ the more full the well and the more powerful the flow.

Let us resolve to drink of the things of Christ and to drink deeply!

But water alone, though it is essential for life, will not sustain us – will not fully ‘nourish us’ ... **Food** is also necessary.

In our third **Key Scripture** of the morning, we see Jesus adding this vital element of nourishment to the one he had already mentioned.

**3.** “I am the **BREAD** of life. He who **COMES** to me will never go **HUNGRY** and he who **BELIEVES** in me will never be **THIRSTY**.”  
(John 6:35)

These words were spoken to the crowds who had searched Jesus out and found him on the 'other' side – the much less populated side – of the Sea of Galilee. They were beginning to be impressed with him but they weren't sure, though, what to make of him.

They had seen him miraculously feed the 5,000 and had been satisfied by the meal. The meal had been marvelous – they would never forget it but a few hours later, they were hungry again for His miraculous powers didn't make the loaves and the fish any more nutritious, just more numerous.

And yet they sensed that there was more that he could do and they sensed as well that they had a hunger that went beyond the merely physical.

So, on that afternoon, they reminded Jesus of the miracle that God had wrought in what we call '*Old Testament Days*' ...

They reminded him how God provided their fore-fathers with '*manna*' – a kind of miracle bread - during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

'*Bread from heaven*' they called it. It was food that arrived every morning and it sustained them perfectly for years and years.

Their implied question was: "*Could you do something like that for us?*"

The Scripture that we just read is how Jesus answered them. Here again He took advantage of a physically-based question to give a spiritually-based answer.

*"I am the Bread of Life. He who come to me will never go hungry  
and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

He made it personal – He directed them to himself.

*'I am the one the Father has sent to satisfy your souls.  
I am living bread as well as living water. Eat, drink be satisfied forever –  
Be free from that inner hunger and thirst forever.'*

And many of them, including His Own precious Disciples, did just that ... They came to him – they believed in him.

And though physical hunger and thirst would remain part of their lives forever, spiritual hunger and thirst were satisfied - as were they.

Is that how it is with you?

Have you come to Christ as to the Son of God and Savior of the World?

Do you truly believe in Him as the Son of God and Savior of the World?

If you haven't yet heard Christ's Call directly enough, then let the Spirit impress you with it in our fourth **Key Scripture** of the morning ...

4. "If a man is **THIRSTY**, let him **COME** to me and **DRINK**."  
(John 7:37)

Do you hear that? Are you thirsty?

Are you **aware** that there is something incredibly important missing from your life? Are you **aware** that there has been placed within you a desire (a thirst) for purpose and meaning that nothing you have tried so far has satisfied?

Do you **know** that it's possible to 'Come to Christ' – to know much about Christ – to even say that you 'believe these truths about Christ' - and still be thirsty? Do you **know** that it is possible to be led, as it were, like the proverbial horse to water, but never actually stick your face in and drink?

That's the danger of being in a church for too long without committing yourself to Christ ...

**You can** 'learn about the water of eternal life' – **you can** be around those who seem to 'possess the benefits of eternal life' – **you can** enjoy the 'atmosphere created when such people gather together.' **You can** even convince yourself that you are 'drinking the water' yourself but when you are gone from that place and those people, you know that you are as thirsty as ever. But it does feel good whenever you 'congregate around the well.'

Some people in Christian homes are like that ... they enjoy so many blessings that come from living with people who love the Lord and are indwelt by His Incredible Spirit that they start to believe that they need nothing more.

They satisfy themselves with the 'temporary manna' God has provided them and ignore the real 'Bread of Heaven' – Jesus Christ Himself.

**Now finally** this morning, consider with me a verse not taken from John's Gospel – that most intimate account drawn up by Jesus's most beloved disciple.

This verse comes from the 'Sermon on the Mount' – that marvelous collection of truths found in the Gospel of Matthew chapters 5-7 – chapters well worth reading every day of your life. It's a passage of Scripture that we covered extensively a couple of years ago in a Sermon Series called 'Kingdom Living.'

This morning I apply it to those of us who are seeking to have 'Pneuma' accomplish His purpose in our lives – the transformation of us into the very 'Likeness of Christ' ... to make us 'Mirror Images' (as it were) of Christ.

It picks up on the theme of the morning ...

**5. "BLESSED are those who HUNGER and THIRST after RIGHTEOUSNESS (Christlikeness) for they shall be FILLED."**  
(Matthew 5:6)

This could be understood to be a 'new kind of hunger and thirst' – a hunger and thirst that goes beyond 'receiving forgiveness for our sins' – beyond 'experiencing that new birth' - beyond 'the initial steps of obedience' ...

This verse speaks of a 'hunger and thirst' for the very thing that the Spirit of God has been sent into our lives at our 'spiritual birth' to accomplish – a 'hunger and thirst' for true righteousness – for full and complete conformity to the 'Image of Christ.'

Such a 'hunger and thirst' in our hearts thrills the Spirit of God.

Just like a mother preparing dinner is thrilled to know that her children (and husband) are desperately desiring to sit down at her table and be fed, so is 'Pneuma' thrilled when we express such an eagerness to be fed the very things that will transform us into Christ's likeness.

And fed we shall be for that is His task and calling.  
It's a blessing to feel such hunger.

As we close this message this morning, I share with you this ...

**Final Thot ...**

**HUNGER for CHRIST is the ONLY 'hunger' that can ever be SATISFIED!**

# **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Identification Stage'**

*"He's The One Who Possesses The Words Of Eternal Life"*

(John 6:66-68; John 14:6; John 10:7-10; Acts 4:12)

**Intro ...** As we begin our message this morning, as we continue to build upon what we have discovered so far, let's remind ourselves of where we have been and why we have engaged in the study we have.

A bit more than a month ago now, I shared with you the **Two Key Concepts** that underlie this series of messages ...

## **KEY SERIES CONCEPT ONE:**

Becoming Christ's **MIRROR IMAGE**  
is **EVERY** believer's **CALLING**.

In a word, that is what Jesus Christ desires of each us – to become truly Christian – '*little Christs*' as it were – to allow Him to once again reach out to the lost and needy souls in this world in physical, visible ways – to allow the heart of God to be seen in the midst of this fallen world once again.

However, we will never become '*Like Christ*' by simply saying,  
*"I'm going to be like Jesus today."*

There's still too much of the old nature in us; there's still too much of the world's system of thought molding us; there's still too much of the Devil's influence upon us and even more important than those realities, there's still way too big a gap in our understanding of the Person of Christ for us to have a truly '*clear*' picture of what it is that we are '*trying to become*.'

We need some divine assistance if we are to heed this Call of Christ. And so, we come to the second of those two key concepts ...

## **KEY SERIES CONCEPT TWO:**

**TRANSFORMING** us into Christ's Mirror Image is '*Pneuma's*  
**PASSION** and **PURPOSE**.

'Pneuma' was sent into this world and into the hearts of every born-again believer to carry out the desires of the Father and the Son. His is the task of multiplying those 'Mirror Images' in this fallen, darkened world.

**Stage One** in that task we have called '**The IDENTIFICATION Stage**' ... Here is the **Key Question** that must be answered by all who would eventually become one of those "**Mirror Images of Christ.**"

**KEY QUESTION IN THIS IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...**

"**WHO** is He and **HOW** does that **RELATE** to me?"

That's the question that the people of Jesus' Day raised whenever they encountered him either personally or through the testimony of those who had.

Over the past several weeks we have been discovering that the answer to that question is both profound and broad – it touches upon the most important issues of human life and it challenges everything in our life. No one can truly encounter Jesus Christ and remain unchanged.

Each part of the answer to that key question is a 'Revelation from God' in its own right. So far we have identified three such 'Revelations' ...

**REVELATION ONE ...**

"Jesus is the One who **KNOWS** all about me - the One before Whom my **LIFE** is laid bare – He will one day call me into **ACCOUNT.**"

**REVELATION TWO ...**

"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** all my **SINS.**  
He offers me a **FRESH START.**"

**REVELATION THREE ...**

"Jesus is the One who can **SATISFY** my spiritual **HUNGER** and **THIRST.**  
He will **NOURISH** me with **SPIRITUAL** food."

Each of these messages provides awesome insights into the Person of Jesus Christ – the one who we are to 'mirror.' Each of them calls for us to embrace this Jesus and yield ourselves to His Calling upon our lives.

Here now is ...

**TODAY'S KEY REVELATION ...**

*"Jesus is the One who possesses the **WORDS** of eternal **LIFE**.  
He opens the **DOOR** of **SALVATION** to me."  
(John 6: 66-68; John 14:6; John 10:7-10)*

Words are powerful things – words can stir the heart – words can fire up one's imagination – words can open doors of opportunity – words can draw people together in life-long bonds.

Jesus, we declare this morning, is the One who  
*'Possesses the Words of Eternal Life.'*

Did you know that there are 'words' like that – words that can not only put a smile on your face and joy in your heart but eternal life in your soul?

Let's walk our way through a few of them found in ...

**TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

**1. "LORD, to whom shall we GO?  
YOU (alone) have the **WORDS** of eternal **LIFE**."**  
(John 6:68)

Peter was the one whom the Holy Spirit enabled to draw this wondrous conclusion. And it was drawn in a moment of distress and discouragement. It came right after the unthinkable had happened.

The crowds who had gathered around Jesus by the thousands – the ones who had relished seeing his miracles of healing and who had even been miraculously fed by his hand - had turned against him.

They could accept the benefits that came of hanging around him but they struggled to accept his teaching – especially Him saying that he was the '*living bread that came down from heaven.*'

They struggled to accept his teaching that they would somehow have to 'eat his flesh and drink his blood' whatever that meant. *Instead of waiting for clarification, many of them simply 'turned away.'*

Jesus then turned to His chosen twelve and said ...

*"You do not want to leave me too, do you?"*

It was in answer to that question that Peter gave that '*Spirit-Inspired Response*' ...

*"Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of Eternal Life."*

and then he added ...

*"We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

He could have easily added ...

*'Lord, we surely don't understand everything that you say but we know that  
someday we surely will and we know and believe that these things you say  
open the door of salvation to us. We are sticking with you.'*

Is that the attitude of your heart this morning – Do you know and believe that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God and that He possesses the words of eternal life and that he opens to door of salvation to you?

Are you ready to hear some of those words ... some more of those words that have caused many people over the years to 'turn from Christ' and to even 'heap abuse upon His People'?

How about these words recorded in John's Gospel chapter 14 verse 6 ...

**2. "I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE.  
No one comes to the FATHER except THROUGH me."  
(John 14:6)**

No doubt about it ...

Jesus was saying that there was only one door into the Father's Eternal Presence and that door had his name on it. Keep in mind that Jesus said these words to an audience that was almost completely Jewish.

These were people who believed that 'Abraham' was the name inscribed on that door – "We are Abraham's children" they would say to Jesus on more than one occasion.

*'We, by heritage and long-standing promise, have access into that Eternal Realm.  
How dare you put yourself in Abraham's Place?'*

These were the 'Words' from Jesus that eventually caused the Leaders of the Jews to condemn him to death as a blasphemer.

They were not willing to wait for any further clarification from him.  
They were not willing to 'suspend their own conclusions' for even a moment.

But Peter and the others received and believed these words (whether they fully understood them or not) to be 'Words of Eternal Life' spoken by the Holy One Himself!

Those words built upon these that Jesus had spoken a little bit earlier in his ministry. They are recorded in John chapter 10 verses 9 and 10 ...

3. "I am the **GATE**; whoever enters **THROUGH** me will be **SAVED**.  
He will come in and out and find **PASTURE** ...  
I have come that they might have **LIFE** and have it to the **FULL**."  
(John 10:9-10)

Those 'words' convey some concrete images ...

A '**Gate**' leading into security and salvation –  
A '**Pasture**' providing nourishment for daily needs–  
A '**Life**' of genuine abundance.

Those are 'words' whose full meaning Jesus' true disciples definitely wanted to pursue – they seemed to focus upon this life – they did not yet offend or divide. They were preliminary words. But they were pregnant with possibilities.

I could have (and perhaps should have) switched the order of these two passages but I wanted us to feel the impact of Jesus' John 14:6 pronouncement first.

I wanted us to see and feel the impact upon the people – the difficulty of them ‘*accepting by faith*’ what Jesus had said regarding heavenly life even though they had eagerly embraced what he had said regarding earthly life.

The one came across as ‘*wonderful*’ the other came across as ‘*heretical*.’

And once that seemingly ‘*heretical statement*’ had been made, it became the center of everything. That was the very thing that the Apostle Peter zeroed in on when he and John were arrested and then called before the Jewish Authorities and asked to explain a miracle of healing they had performed.

Here's his concluding statement before them recorded in Acts 4:12 ...

**4. “SALVATION is found in no one else, for there is NO OTHER NAME under heaven given to men by which we must be SAVED.”**  
(Acts 4:12)

There you have it. The very Peter who, in a burst of insight, had months before said to the Lord Jesus ...

*“You have the words of eternal life.”*

is now passing on these words to the leadership of his nation – the guardians of his ancient faith.

*“Salvation is found in no one else.”*

Oh, how much more Peter knew on that testimony day than he had known on that earlier day.

**He had** heard Christ say during that last Supper ...

*“This is my body which is given for you.”*

**He had** then seen Christ's body literally ‘given’ on the cross. **He had** seen His Savior risen from the dead. **He had** received the Spirit His Savior had sent. **He had** entered through the gate. **He had** been saved. **He had** found pasture; **He was** experiencing the abundancy that Jesus had spoken of. **He spoke** to them not only by faith but also by sight. **He had** begun to experience the things that he had previously accepted completely by faith.

He includes them – He pleads with them ...

*"There is no other name (not Abraham/not Moses/ not David/ not Isaiah)  
by which we (you and I) must be saved."*

I have no doubt that there were some in that room, sitting in that Assembly of Leaders, who heeded those 'Words of Eternal Life' being passed on by one of Christ's Own.

Just two chapters later in the Book of Acts, it is reported that ...

*"A large number of priests became obedient to the faith"  
(Acts 6:7)*

So now we come to and conclude with ...

### **TODAY'S KEY INSIGHT ...**

*Life takes a decidedly **NARROW** and **CHALLENGING** turn once Jesus is identified as an **EXCLUSIVE SAVIOR** – as the **ONLY WAY** – as man's **ONLY CHANCE** of Eternal Life.*

That '**Key Insight**' is once again (just like it was in the First Century) one of the biggest challenges to the true 'Follower of Christ'...

It runs contrary to the 'spirit of the age.'

It's not 'politically correct.'

It runs contrary to the teachings of 'other faiths.'

It's used to brand true 'Followers of Christ' as haters and fanatics.

It causes them to be marginalized but ...

as today's **final thot** puts it, the undeniable truth is ...

### **Final Thot ...**

If '**NO OTHER WAY**' really means '**NO OTHER WAY**'  
then there really is '**NO OTHER WAY.**'  
It's **JESUS** or **NOTHING!**

## CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Identification Stage'

"He's The One Who Extends A Life-Altering Call."

(Mathew 4:18-22; Luke 5:27-32; Mark 10: 17, 21-22; Luke 14:16-27)

**Intro ...** Today we take the final step in the **First Stage** of our 'Journey toward Christ-Likeness

We've called this first state the "**Identification Stage**" for the truth is until we know **who** Jesus was – until we clearly see **how** He presented himself as He walked upon the earth – and until we are sufficiently impressed with Him, we will not be very motivated to seek to become like Him.

That is, we will not be very motivated to live like he lived and minister like He ministered and to look at life the way He looked at life – to 'allow' 'Pneuma' to conform us to His Likeness – to make us His 'Mirror Image' in this world.

And so, we have invested ourselves in five weeks of preparation – five weeks seeking to answer the ...

### KEY QUESTION IN THIS IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...

"WHO is He and HOW does that RELATE to me?"

The answers that we have sought and found over this past five weeks have been primarily 'relational' not theological.

I have asked us all to seek to 'take off our believer's cap' and approach this 'Jesus of the Gospels' in the same questioning way that the people of His own day did.

"**Who** is He and **How** does that relate to me?"

**Four answers** to that question have been revealed to us so far – the **fifth** and final one will be revealed this morning. If you have missed any of these messages, I would encourage you to go to our church website and catch up so that you will be completely 'up to speed' when we enter **Stage Two** of this 'Journey' next week.

Here then is ...

### REVELATION ONE ...

*"Jesus is the One who **KNOWS** all about me - the One before Whom my **LIFE** is laid bare – He will one day call me into **ACCOUNT.**"*

(John 1:47-49; John 4:1-48; Revelation 2:23)

### REVELATION TWO ...

*"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** all my **SINS.***

*He offers me a **FRESH START.**"*

(John 1:29; Mark 2:5; Mark 2:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:9)

### REVELATION THREE ...

*"Jesus is the One who can **SATISFY** my spiritual **HUNGER** and **THIRST.***

*He **NOURISHES** me with **SPIRITUAL** food."*

(John 4:10-15; John 6:33-35; John 7:37-38)

### REVELATION FOUR ...

*"Jesus is the One who possesses the **WORDS** of eternal **LIFE.***

*He opens the **DOOR** of **SALVATION** to me."*

(John 6:66-68; John 14:6; John 10:7-10; Acts 4:12)

And now this morning the Scriptures make known to us ...

### REVELATION FIVE ...

*"Jesus is the One who extends to me a **LIFE-ALTERING CALL.***

*He would **RE-SHAPE** and **RE-DIRECT** my **LIFE.**"*

(Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:27-32; Mark 10:17, 21-22; Luke 14:16-27)

### TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...

**1. "COME, follow me and I will make you **FISHERS** of **MEN.**"**

(Matthew 4:18-22)

That is one of the most familiar statements of Christ recorded in the Scriptures ...

Here the larger context in which it is found.

*"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. '**Come, follow me,**' Jesus said, '**and I will make you fishers of men.**' At once they left their nets and followed him.*

*Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."*

Now we know from our previous studies that this was **not** the first-time Simon and Andrew had encountered Jesus – they had been disciples of John the Baptist – they had no doubt been baptized by John and possibly viewed Jesus' own baptism. They had heard John's testimony concerning Jesus. They had had their own questions concerning Jesus' identity sufficiently answered.

After His baptism, Jesus headed into the wilderness. Simon and Andrew (and no doubt quite a few others) headed home to Galilee and waited and perhaps wondered.

And then Jesus came and extended to them that life-altering call.

Here's our **second** Key Scripture ...

**2. "FOLLOW me, Jesus said ... and LEVI got up, and LEFT EVERYTHING ... and FOLLOWED Him."**  
(Luke 5:27-32)

This too is a most familiar Scripture – Matthew, Mark and Luke all record it.

Let's once again look at the larger context.

*"Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. '**Follow me,**' Jesus said to him, **and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.***

*Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.*

*But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and `sinners'?'*

*Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'*"

Isn't it interesting ... only sinners were targeted by Jesus.

Those who were 'righteous' (in their own eyes at least) had no need of one who 'knew all about them' - one who could 'forgive them of their sins' – one who could 'satisfy their spiritual hunger and thirst' – one who could 'open the door of salvation' to them.

Jesus would not waste his time or his breath on them – they saw him only as one who would 'disrupt their system' not as one who could 'save their souls.'

Levi, as a Jew serving the hated Roman Government. Levi, as a Tax Collector 'fleecing his own people' knew all about his deficiencies.

He knew his guilt and he knew his shame. He also obviously knew something of this Jesus and when he was extended that 'Life-Altering Call' he responded immediately.

He became known as Matthew and later wrote the Gospel that bears his name.

Here now is our **third** Key Scripture of the morning ...

3. "One thing you **LACK**, (Jesus) said, Go **SELL** everything you have and give to the **POOR** ... then come, **FOLLOW** Me."  
(Mark 10:17, 21-22)

Those phrases are drawn from this larger passage ...

*"As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'*

*Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said.*

*'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

*Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!'"*

Notice that Jesus didn't say: "*It's impossible for a rich man to enter into heaven*". He 'merely' said that '*It's hard.*' Why do you suppose that is?

Is it not because it's easy for a rich man to believe that to some degree at least '*He already is in heaven*' – heaven on earth?

He feels secure – He feels significant – He perhaps even feels ‘*blessed*’ or ‘*rewarded*.’ His wealth (in whatever area of life he possesses it) is the firm foundation upon which he stands and his life is built. He has a ‘*salvation*’ wrought by his own hands and finds it sufficient.

The only way to assess to what degree a ‘*rich man*’ sees his wealth as his real ‘*Savior*’ is to suggest that he ‘*give it all away*’ – that he sacrifice it all – and that he find in Christ all that he truly needs.

That’s what Jesus did – to a rich young man who initially believed that his ‘*riches*’ were no hindrance to his Spiritual Growth or to his reception of Eternal Life.

The young man discovered just how far from the Kingdom of God he really was.

Jesus exposed him to all of us but most importantly to himself. I hope that upon reflection, that rich young man did exactly what Jesus called him to do and that he found in Jesus the very thing that he thought he already had – true riches indeed.

The Disciples were duly impressed by this little encounter – they were also delighted because as Peter so quickly pointed out on behalf of them all ...

*“We have left everything to follow you!”*

Way to go, Peter!

But it was true, and Jesus acknowledged that it was and commended all those who had and would down through the years do the same.

Now just in case Jesus’ Disciples had not yet gotten their minds completely wrapped around the extreme nature of this ‘*Life-Altering Call*,’ Jesus takes His language to another level entirely in Today’s **final** Scripture.

This is one of the more ‘*difficult to hear and accept things*’ Jesus ever said so, let’s approach it carefully.

**4.** “If any man would **COME** to me and does not **HATE** ...  
**HIS OWN LIFE** He cannot be my **DISCIPLE**.”

Right off the bat let me clarify that Jesus is not saying that those who 'hate themselves' are uniquely qualified to be his disciples. Self-Hatred is a sign of serious spiritual (and emotional) deficiencies.

Jesus is saying here that the 'hatred' (as it were) is directed at 'this earthly life' and the things that comprise it.

And Jesus is saying as well that none of those things can be the object of our true love and devotion.

Here's the story he told to make his point.

*"Jesus replied: A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'*

*But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'*  
*"Still another said, 'I have just got married, so I can't come.'*

*"The servant came back and reported this to his master.*

***Then the owner of the house became angry ...***

*(It seemed like everything in life was more important than him.)*

Jesus then applied the story to his own situation – Here's what he said ...

*Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:  
"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother,  
his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life —  
he cannot be my disciple.  
(Luke 14:16-27)*

Can you see what He was saying?

It's a matter of priority.

Nothing can be allowed to rival our commitment to Christ – nothing in this life is in the same ballpark as Him.

He is eternal; all these other things are temporal and passing away.

Even our own earthly life – our own pleasures and satisfactions – our own sources of enrichment – our own ability to breathe in and out must be subordinate to Christ.

In a word, we must be as willing to step away from any of these earthly things if Christ calls us to as if we actually hated them.

How hard is it to step away from something you hate?  
Probably not very.

Jesus is saying that compared to our love and commitment to Him that's where everything else should rank. Everything else should be something that we would willingly step away from if Christ should call us to do so.

Need I say that that is not what is being taught in many churches and Christian Gatherings today.

It is pretty much understood that that kind of teaching would not strike the ears of most people today any better than it did in Jesus' day.

And the only way that anyone could accept that kind of '*Jesus First Priority*' is if that person has absolutely fallen in love with the Person of Christ as a result of seeing Him as He really is ...

As the One who knows all about us and loves us anyway ...

As the One who has the authority to forgive us of all our sins ...

As the One who can satisfy our souls with spiritual food and drink ...

As the One who possesses the very words of Eternal Life and who shares them freely with us ...

Now that is Someone who deserves our entire allegiance –

Someone to whom we can confidently surrender our entire lives –

Someone whose Call upon us makes us more and more of a blessing to those around us – people whose lives actually benefit because we have placed our commitment to Christ way above our commitment to them.

That is the very '**Someone**' who says to us continually "**Come Follow Me**" – Allow my Holy Spirit to make you '**Like Me**.'

And so, we come to ...

**TODAY'S KEY INSIGHT ...**

The ultimate point of **IDENTIFICATION** is that **JESUS CHRIST** is the One who must be **FOLLOWED** – the One who **CALLS** me to **SURRENDER** my **LIFE** to Him.

He is the One whose **VALUES**, **TEACHINGS**, **DESIRES** and **EXAMPLE** will **RE-SHAPE** and **RE-DIRECT** my **LIFE** if I **YIELD** myself to that **CALL**.

**STAGE ONE** in this 'Journey toward Christlikeness'  
concludes with a **CALL** to **COMMITMENT**.

What a Savior God has sent into this world!

What a blessing it surely was to hear his voice and come first hand to grips with what He said and with who He was.

The more accurately we identify Him, the more completely we will surrender ourselves to Him.

And this we will do for we have come to understand,  
as our ***final thot*** puts it ...

***Final Thot ...***

A **COMMITTED** Follower is the only kind of follower Jesus will **ACCEPT**.

May we like Peter say ...

*"Lord, we have and will **LEAVE EVERYTHING** to **FOLLOW** you."*

***THE***  
***‘IMITATION’***  
***STAGE***

***“What Specific Behaviors Of Jesus Am I To Imitate?”***

# **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Imitation Stage'**

*"Imitate Jesus In His Sense Of Service"*

(John 13:1-5; 12-17)

**Intro ...** Today is '**Transition Sunday**' – the Sunday we make the jump from Stage One to Stage Two in our '*Journey toward Christ-likeness.*'

**Stage One** we called '**The Identification Stage**' – that's the stage everyone enters the moment they encounter Jesus Christ – the **key question** by which the 'identifications' of stage one are discovered is:

***"Who is He and How does that relate to me?"***

That's the question that was raised by everyone who met Jesus during the days that He walked upon the earth. That's also the question that the Holy Spirit would place in every person's mind who encounters Jesus Christ today.

*'Who is He – who is this man – and How does that relate to me?'*

During these past few weeks, I have asked each one of us to seek to '*take off our believer's cap*' and approach Christ through the Scriptures as though we were meeting Him for the first time.

I've wanted all of us to (once again) feel the full impact of that question. What indeed does the Identity of Jesus Christ mean to us?

**Five Answers** to that question have been identified.

- 1.** Jesus is the ONE who knows all about me – the ONE before whom my life is laid bare ... He will one day call me into Account.
- 2.** Jesus is the ONE who can forgive all my sins ... He offers me a Fresh Start.
- 3.** Jesus is the ONE who can satisfy my spiritual hunger and thirst. He would nourish me with Spiritual Food.
- 4.** Jesus is the ONE who possesses the Words of Eternal Life. He opens the Door of Salvation to me.
- 5.** Jesus is the ONE who extends to me a Life-Altering Call. He would Re-shape and Re-direct my life.

These messages were and are primarily **Evangelistic**.  
They desire to bring us to a Place of **Identification** and **Appreciation**.  
They ultimately call us to a Place of **Commitment** and **Surrender**.

And so today as we transition into **Stage Two** of this 'Journey Toward Christ-likeness', I would pose to you this '**Three-Part Transition Question**' ...

"Have you responded to the Life-Altering **CALL** of Jesus Christ?  
Have you put your life in the hands of the One He **SENT**?  
Have you in fact 'Left All to **FOLLOW** Him?

Whether in the First Century or in the Twenty First Century that's the condition for entrance into the **Second Stage** of this tremendous journey for we cannot begin to become **like** Christ until we have committed our lives **to** Christ and have received the very Spirit sent **by** Christ to work this '*miracle of transformation*' within us.

That I trust that each of us has done.

So, let's now push on with the project ...

The '**Identification Stage**' has been completed – the '**Imitation Stage**' is about to begin.

Now in this stage, you can put your 'Believer's Cap' back on but I want you to take your 'Discipleship Cap' off.

I want you to now approach the Scriptures as a brand-new Born-Again Follower of Jesus Christ ... I want you to sense '*Pneuma*' beginning the process all over again of shaping you into Christ's Image.

There may be some things in this initial work of His that you missed the first time around – there may be some things that you have forgotten – some teachings of Christ or some directives from Christ about which you might be a bit confused.

You might discover that '**Stage Two**' is actually pretty challenging even though it's at the front end of the journey.

Here's how we define '**Stage Two**' ...

**THE IMITATION STAGE**  
**“DOING IT ‘LIKE’ JESUS DID IT”**

In this stage of the journey, new believers do not yet have the spiritual capacity or experience to fully ‘think like Jesus’ or ‘feel like Jesus’ or even ‘anticipate ministry moments like Jesus’ let alone ‘make ministry decisions like Jesus’ but they can ‘observe Jesus’ and seek to pattern their behavior after Jesus – They can seek to ‘imitate Jesus.’

In this stage of the journey, we will pay very special attention to those times when Jesus specifically told his disciples to ...

*‘Do it like me – like you have just seen me do it.’*

In other words, times when He directly told his disciples to *‘Imitate Him.’*

**Seven** such *‘Actions of Imitation’* will capture our attention is this stage of the journey.

All of them are **easy** to understand – all of them however are **difficult** to do – they run contrary to our natural tendencies - in fact, only with *‘pneuma’s’* transforming help can they **be** done.

He can enable us to actually *‘Imitate Jesus.’*  
Praise God we have Him!

Today we consider ...

**IMITATION ACTION ONE ...**

**“IMITATE** Jesus in His **SENSE** of **SERVICE.**”

- Doing what **NEEDS** to be done no matter how **MENIAL** –  
(John 13:1-5; 12-17)

Here's **Today's Key Passage** ...

*“It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.”*

*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist.*

*After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.*

*When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.*

*"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.  
"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am.  
Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,  
you also should wash one another's feet.*

*I have set you an example that you should do  
as I have done for you.*

*I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things,  
you will be blessed if you do them."*

What an amazing and completely unexpected happening. Jesus Christ took upon himself the role of the most lowly of household servants and washed the 24 dusty, dirty, no doubt, smelly feet belonging to his 12 proud disciples.

I call them 'proud' disciples because in Luke's account of this Last Supper, we are told that the disciples had engaged in a pretty vigorous debate regarding which of them was the greatest – the most important – one.

Do you suppose that that debate had begun when they first noticed that the customary servant was not available to do the customary thing – that they were going to have to recline at the table with 'unwashed' feet.

I can just imagine Peter saying ...

*'John go get the basin – it's right over there in the corner –  
after all you are the youngest.'*

And I can image John responding ...

*'I might be the youngest but I'm the one the Lord loves best and besides I'm one of the 'three' that He took with him up the mountain to see Him in all His Glory' –  
I'm far too important to stoop to do such a distasteful thing – I will not and  
should not be embarrassed in such a way.'*

And then I can imagine Peter (who no doubt was sure he was the most important one) turning to his brother, Andrew, and saying ...

*'Andrew, why don't you do it – You know that the Lord has honored me on several occasions ... You, in a lot of ways, have just been 'along for the ride Make yourself useful, brother, and go grab that basin.'*

I can hear the frustration and the irritation in Andrew's voice as I imagine him saying ...

*'Along for the ride?  
Why, Peter, you wouldn't even be 'on this ride' if I hadn't come and found you the day I heard John identify Jesus as the 'Lamb of God You owe everything to me!'*

And on and on, it probably went ... Each one finding someone more suitable for the task than them and each one making his case for why his standing in the group should exempt him.

The argument apparently came down to the question of whom among them all was the greatest – the most important – the one who the rest of them would recognize as possessing the authority to make the '*final decision*' about this necessary but potentially humiliating task.

I would imagine that it was just as the argument was reaching its peak that Jesus quietly arose and performed the lowly task Himself as described in the Scripture that we just read.

Let's pull some **key verses** out of that passage as we seek to understand its significance ...

**TODAY'S KEY SELECTIONS ...**

**"DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR YOU?"**

(John 13:12)

The immediate answer to that question would have been a resounding

**'NO'**

They didn't have a clue what and why Jesus had done what he had done. Peter had even tried to keep Jesus from doing it.

To his credit, Peter had at least rightly concluded that if he, Peter, was too important to do this distasteful task than surely the Lord Jesus was.

But Jesus had told Peter ...

*'If you don't accept this act of service from me,  
then you cannot belong to me or be part of what I am doing.'*

In a word, what Jesus was saying ...

*'If you cannot accept me – if you cannot see me as a servant to you -  
then you will never be able to see yourselves as I intend you to be  
or accept the role that I intend you to fulfill.'*

That's a powerful thought ... Do we understand what Jesus was doing?

And lest that question simply generate another free-for-all debate,  
Jesus quickly followed with this straightforward directive.

***“YOU SHOULD ALSO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET”***

(John 13:14)

Here Jesus begins to describe that future role that He had for them –  
the '*personal identity*' that He wanted each of them to adopt.

It was not enough for them to '*simply*' accept His service on their behalf ...  
He was telling them that they should accept His very '*Sense of Service*' ...  
a sensitivity to what needs to be done coupled with a willingness  
to step out and actually do it.

'*Washing one another's feet*' would become a kind of practice,  
a kind of role play of the type of servant's heart that He would have  
His Spirit eventually develop in each of them.

I imagine that they never '*hired a servant*' again when they gathered  
for a meal. There was probably a '*mad dash*' for the basin every time  
they entered a dining room.

But it was more to it than that, wasn't there?  
It wasn't just the action of '*Foot-Washing*', was it?

Jesus went on to more broadly explain the purpose of his  
servant-like behavior ...

***"I HAVE SET YOU AN EXAMPLE"***

(John 13:17)

In contrast to the world system where it is said,

*"Rank has its privileges",*

Jesus is saying that in His System (His Kingdom) ...

*'Rank – Position – Honor – Recognition provide opportunity for totally unexpected, unanticipated, almost unbelievable Christ-like Service.'*

He could have said, to use a much more recent vocabulary ...

*"Blow people's minds through your humble, thoughtful, willing service just as I have 'Blown Yours.'"*

And then he followed His Interrogation and His Directive and His Explanation with this Clarification ...

***"NOW THAT YOU KNOW THESE THINGS,  
YOU WILL BE BLESSED IF YOU DO THEM."***

(John 13:17)

'Knowing' and 'Doing' are not the same, are they?

Most of us 'know' far more than we 'do', don't we?

Jesus points out that 'stopping at the point of knowledge' does not bring the blessing that we desire and that He desires for us.

Only 'doing' or at least 'seeking to do' does.

Like I said several weeks ago in the introduction to this series ...

Now the easiest of all the behavioral things that we are responsible to 'know' are the ones that Jesus has 'exampled' for us.

and then said (in effect) ... ***'Imitate Me.'***

And so now as we 'wrap our understanding' of this first '**Step of Imitation**', consider with me ...

***TODAY'S KEY INSIGHTS ...***

**1. Genuine LOVE inevitably expresses itself in HELPFUL SERVICE.**

Love cannot 'see' and not 'do' – Love cannot 'know' and not 'respond.' John said, in the fuller passage that we read that in the action of washing his disciples' feet Jesus showed them the '*full extent of His Love.*'

Love is what stimulates helpful service and genuine love will always express itself in helpful service whenever that service is needed.

**2. No TASK of necessary service is too MENIAL to undertake.**

That statement pretty much speaks for itself.  
No necessary, God-Pleasing, people serving task is beneath any of us.

**3. The FIRST to recognize a NEED should seek to MEET it.**

In a word ... If you see it, do it – take care of it if you possibly can.  
Don't form a committee – Don't take a vote – Don't put it on someone else's shoulders – Don't rationalize why it's not your responsibility.  
Especially when it involves a brother or sister in Christ, jump in!

**4. MINISTRY performed with a humble, willing HEART  
will bring great SPIRITUAL BLESSING.**

What Jesus was saying is that 'God notices' ...  
The Father in Heaven is pleased; Jesus our Savior is honored and  
'Pneuma' is greatly encouraged. What more could we want?

'Imitating Jesus in His Sense of Service' is an awesome first step  
down the Path toward Genuine Christ-likeness ...

It's as needed in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century as it was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.  
So, as our **Final Thot** puts it ...

**Final Thot ...**

Let's ROLL up our SLEEVES – 'Pneuma' is 'walking us' into a MESSY WORLD!

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Imitation Stage’**

*“Imitate Jesus In His Lifestyle of Love”*

(John 13:34-35; John 13:14-15; 1 John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39)

**Intro ...** Last week we ‘transitioned’ into the second stage of this ‘Journey Toward Christ-likeness’ that Pneuma has us on which is, of course, His effort to turn us (as it were) into “Christ’s Mirror Image.”

**Stage One** of this journey we labeled “The Identification State” built around the Key Question:

*“**Who** is He and **How** does that relate to me?”*

**Stage Two** we have called “The Imitation Stage” and the Key Question could well be formulated as:

*“What specific **Behaviors** of His did Jesus say that I should seek to **emulate** - in what **ways** am I to seek to **imitate** Him?”*

Last week I mentioned that I had discovered seven such ‘Actions of Imitation’ spelled out in the Scriptures ...

These are seven Christ-Honoring, God-Pleasing Actions that require no ‘figuring’ on our part – no ‘wondering’ or ‘surmising.’

These are all straightforward actions taken by Jesus, observed by His Disciples and left as ‘examples’ for all who ‘Pneuma’ would ‘companion’ down the path.

Last week we cast our gaze upon **Imitation Action One** ...

*“Imitate Jesus in His Sense of Service”*

- Doing what needs to be done no matter how menial -

Jesus exemplified that ‘Sense of Service’ by willingly and humbly ‘washing his disciples dirty, dusty feet’ on the occasion of the final meal they had together. He then said to them ...

*“As I have washed your feet (tended to this most menial, though necessary task) you are to wash one another’s feet.  
I have set you an example...”*

Did any of you have the 'joy' of doing some 'menial thing' for the sake of the Kingdom – on behalf of one of your fellow believers – this past week? Did you feel a 'kinship with Christ' as you did it?

I had several opportunities to do so this past week and with last week's message and the words of Jesus still running around in my mind, I found them to be no longer 'menial' but incredibly 'meaningful'!

Today I would share ...

### **IMITATION ACTION TWO ...**

**"IMITATE Jesus in His LIFESTYLE of LOVE"**  
- **COMMITTING** yourself 100% to the **BODY** of **CHRIST** –  
(John 13:34-35; John 13:14-15; 1 John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39)

### **TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

#### **JESUS' COMMANDED BEHAVIOR:**

**"As I have LOVED you, you are to LOVE one another."**  
(John 13:34)

This directive grows out of the very same situation we examined last week – it follows immediately the 'Washing of the Disciples' feet" and the command given to them.

Jesus is now (as Emeril Lagasse used to say) 'Taking in up a notch.'

More than just 'serving one another' – doing even the menial thing when necessary – Jesus is now saying that such service should be an outgrowth and an expression of a genuine love that they have for one another.

Let's expand His Words a bit ...

**"Love one another that is, engage in tangible demonstrations of commitment to one another – even as I have loved that is, engaged in such demonstrations of commitment to you."**

Now using last Sunday's Scripture as a jumping off point, let's see just what this 'Imitating Jesus in His Lifestyle of Love' might mean ...

**It means ...**

\* Love with a Commitment to **SERVICE** – John 13:14-15

*"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example ..."*

Genuine love for one another will never allow a genuine need to go unnoticed or unaddressed. It's love that develops in us that 'Sense of Service' that characterized Jesus Himself. Love is what turns the 'menial' into something 'meaningful.'

**It means ...**

\* Love with a Commitment to **SACRIFICE** – 1 John 3:16

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."*

Here's the Apostle John demonstrating that he had gotten the message. He saw that behind the incredible sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross was a heart filled with love for us all. And remembering the 'Imitation Directive' Jesus gave on that Last Supper night, John rightfully writes ...

*'We ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.'*

Though sometimes that might happen literally, much more often it will happen figuratively as in sacrificing something of ourselves for the sake of those that faith in Christ has brought into our lives. Love makes such sacrifice almost automatic.

**It means ...**

\* Love with a Commitment to **STABILITY** – Romans 8:38-39

*"I am convinced that ... nothing in all creation shall be able to separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Here's where that **100% commitment** comes into play.

If nothing can ever separate us from Christ's Love, then nothing should be able to separate our fellow believers from our love.

No matter what a fellow believer has done – no matter what circumstances have come upon them – the Love of the Body is to be unchanged toward them. We love them and we want the best for them and we are still willing to sacrifice to obtain those things for them. This is Christ-Like Love.

Here are some words we sing frequently ...

*"His love never fails, never gives up, never runs out on me."*

His didn't – His doesn't and Jesus says ... 'Ours mustn't either.'

How good to know that the '**Fruit**' of *Pneuma*'s presence in our lives is '**Love**: Love with a commitment to **service** and a commitment to **sacrifice** and a commitment to **stability** – a 100% commitment to the Body of Christ!

'*Pneuma*' will walk us right into this '*Lifestyle of Love*' if we allow Him to.

However, *Pneuma* has quite a task creating such love among a bunch of formerly flesh-driven, world -influenced, devil-deceived human beings. Think of the ones that he had to work with in Jesus' Day.

Consider ...

<b>JESUS' RAW MATERIAL:</b> The <b><u>TWELVE</u></b> He Chose ...
---

Here's your '*homework*' for the week.

I'm just going to mention some of the tensions – the potential divisions – that existed among these men that Jesus chose.

See if you can '*categorize them*' correctly.

Among the '*Twelve*' were:

COMPETITORS/PARTNERS IN THE SAME BUSINESS –  
A ZEALOT AND A SELL-OUT –  
CITIZENS OF RIVAL TOWNS –  
THREE SETS OF BROTHERS –  
SALESMEN AND CONSUMERS –  
SPONTANEOUS AND RESERVED PERSONALITY TYPES

They were not the types or the combinations you would choose if your goal was to produce a happy, harmonious group!

However, Jesus not only 'chose *them*' he expected an incredible **conclusion** to be drawn because of them.

**JESUS' ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:**

"All men will **KNOW** that you are my **DISCIPLES** if you **LOVE** one another."  
(John 13:35)

That is one tremendous outcome of us '*Imitating Jesus in His Lifestyle of Love.*'

Even the unbelievers know that only Jesus and those who belong to Jesus – those who are becoming more and more like Jesus – possess the capacity to love like that.

'Pneuma' would surely agree with today's ***final thot*** ...

***Final Thot ...***

A loving **UNITY** brought out of **DIVERSITY** is just as **RARE** and just as **IMPRESSIVE** today as it was in **JESUS'** day!

# **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Imitation Stage'**

*"Imitate Jesus In His Gentle and Humble Manner"*

(Matthew 11:29; John 8:1-8; John 10:16; John 19:26-27; John 20:26-29; Luke 22:31-33)

**Intro ...** *"Becoming Christ's Mirror Image"* – that's what we are doing. More precisely, that's what God's Holy Spirit, '*Pneuma Himself*', sent into our lives by our Heavenly Father and our Exalted Savior, is working in us to accomplish.

'*Pneuma*' has each of us who have given our lives to Christ on a '*Journey toward Christ-Likeness*' – that's the main purpose of our life here on this earth.

And there are several '*stages to this journey*' ... The first stage we have called the '*Identification Stage*' where the key question regarding the person of Jesus Christ is '*Who Is He and How does that relate to me?*'

During the weeks we spent completing that '*Stage*,' we discovered '*Five Biblically-Based Answers*' to that question.

Now, as we began that **First Stage** of the Journey, I asked us all to '*Take off our Believer's Caps*' as it were and approach Jesus as though we were meeting Him for the first time – just like all the people of His Own Day were.

**Stage One** of this Journey – the *Identification* Stage – was intended to bring each of us to a fresh sense of whole-life commitment to Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

**Stage One** concluded with us enthusiastically '*Putting our Believer's Caps Back On.*' That, I trust, we all have done.

Two weeks ago, we entered **Stage Two** of this '*Journey Toward Christ-Likeness*' and I suggested that though we have our Believer's Caps back on, it's now time to '*Take our Discipleship Caps off*' and return to square one in our understanding of the Christian Life.

What is it that the One I have newly committed myself to wants me to do? How do I come to understand what it means to '*Become Like Him*'? How does that process of '*Becoming Like Him*' unfold in my life?

**Stage Two** sets that process in motion – I've called it the '**Imitation** Stage.' Here's how I explained it two weeks ago ...

*"In this stage of the journey, new believers do not yet have the spiritual capacity or experience to fully 'think like Jesus' or 'feel like Jesus' or even 'anticipate ministry moments like Jesus' let alone 'make ministry decisions like Jesus' but they can 'observe Jesus' and seek to 'pattern their behavior after Jesus' – They can seek to 'imitate Jesus.'*

Indeed, they can 'Seek to imitate Jesus' ... particularly in those areas of life where Jesus Himself has said ... "Do it just like you have seen me do it."

'**Imitation Actions**' I have called them ... they are the building blocks of a solid discipleship ... Seven of them I have found in the Scriptures. So far, we have discussed two.

We are to ...

*"Imitate Jesus in His Sense of Service" which means ...  
'Doing whatever needs to be done no matter how menial.'*

and

*"Imitate Jesus in His Lifestyle of Love" which means ...  
'Committing ourselves 100% to the Body of Christ.'*

Both of those messages (and in fact every message of the entire series) is available at our church website ([www.sonlifecommunitychurch.com](http://www.sonlifecommunitychurch.com)).

Today we come to ...

### **IMITATION ACTION THREE ...**

**"IMITATE Jesus in His GENTLE and HUMBLE Manner"**  
- Treating all people with TENDERNESS and COMPASSION –  
(Matthew 11:29; John 8:1-8; John 10:16; John 19:26-27; John 20:26-29; Luke 22:31-33)

Here is today's very straightforward **Key Scripture** ...

### **TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ...**

**"TAKE my YOKE upon you and LEARN from me  
for I am GENTLE and HUMBLE in heart ..."**  
(Matthew 11:29)

*"Learn from me" Jesus says ... 'Watch and learn' ... Learn to be 'gentle and humble with people' no matter what your natural tendencies might be.*

Can you image how that sounded to James and John, who Jesus nicknamed *'The Sons of Thunder'* or to Simon the Zealot who advocated the forceful overthrow of the Roman Government or to Simon Peter who acted so rashly at times that he didn't have time to even consider being either gentle or humble? How do those words fall on your ears?

*"Yoke yourself", Jesus says ... 'Connect yourself to me and to the manner in which I treat people – Watch how I do it and then you do the same.'*

So, let's do that.

Consider with me this morning these ...

<b>EXAMPLES OF THE GENTLE HUMBLE JESUS IN ACTION ...</b>
--

Picture each one of these situations as vividly as you can.  
Try to place yourself in each circumstance responding just like He did.

See Him interacting ...

<b>* WITH THOSE WHO WERE <u>WEAK</u> AND <u>VULNERABLE</u></b>
--

- Little **CHILDREN** (Mark 10:16)

*"And He took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."*

His disciples were annoyed with these little ones and with their parents who were bringing them. How dare they interfere with their Master's important work of *'Spreading the Gospel'*!

Rather than saying *'Don't trouble the Master,'* Jesus would have preferred them to say ...

*"Master, here's another one – Isn't she or he simply adorable?  
Wouldn't the world be a better place if we were all like them?"*

- The **WOMAN** caught in **ADULTERY** (John 8:8)

*"Neither do I condemn you ... Go now and leave your life of sin."*

The word 'vulnerable' surely applied to this woman. She was surrounded by angry, self-righteous men with stones in their hands. She was brought before the man who was God's Righteous Son come to earth.

We would say, '*She didn't have a prayer.*'

What she discovered was that '*She had a Savior*' – One who would gently and lovingly deliver her from her dilemma.

Jesus' Disciples would '*learn*' to be gentle with those who were weak.

See Him interacting ...

\* ***WITH THOSE WHO WERE LACKING IN FAITH***

- The **FATHER** of the demon-possessed **BOY** (Mark 9:24)  
*"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief."*

This passage should be both instructive and encouraging for how often are we ourselves the ones who '*lack faith*' – how encouraging to know that Jesus understands and deals with our unbelief gently.

And yet how instructive as well for how often do we encounter those whose '*faith is weak*'? They are to be treated gently not judgmentally.

This too, Jesus' disciples would learn for their own turn would come.

- **THOMAS** after the **RESURRECTION** (John 20:26)  
*"Unless I see ... I will not believe."*

The others had seen the Lord first-hand, Thomas was asked to '*take their word for it*' – to '*believe*' them. Jesus did not berate him but rather accommodated him.

Jesus gave him the same opportunity He had given the others – the opportunity to see His Resurrected Lord in the flesh.

Surely all the disciples and we as well realized that one must be gentle with those who have not yet come to faith – with those who are '*struggling to believe*' some aspect of Christian Truth.

See Him interacting ...

**\* WITH THOSE WHO OVER-ESTIMATED THEIR CAPACITY**

- The **RICH YOUNG RULER** (Mark 10:20-21)

*"Teacher, all these (commandments) I have kept since I was a boy."*

O, how Jesus could have cut that assertion to ribbons! He could have accused the young man of incredible pride – He could have given him a brief recap of the ‘*Sermon on the Mount*’ and pointed out to him the ‘*Fuller Meaning*’ of every one of those commandments. But He didn’t.

The passage says that looking at this young man, Jesus heart went out to him ... that Jesus ‘*loved him.*’ He treated him gently though challengingly.

He challenged him with the full implications of the very first of those Ten Commandments:

*"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"*

when He said to the young man ...

*"Go and sell all that you have ... and come follow me."*

In other words ...

*'Make sure that your wealth has not become a replacement for God in your life and thus led you into a violation of the very First Commandment. Make sure that you have not 'overestimated your commitment to the Almighty!'*

However, that was that very thing Jesus knew the young man had done.

- **PETER** in his willingness to **SUFFER** with **CHRIST** (Luke 22:33)

*"Lord I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."*

Peter, of course, has become the ‘poster boy’ of those who ‘*Over-Estimate their Commitment to Christ and to Christ's Cause.*’ They are the boastful ones; they are the ones who fail to see their own limitations or inabilities. They are the ones who we could easily say ...

*‘Need to be taken down a peg.’*

Gently and lovingly but nevertheless completely honestly, Jesus told Peter just what would happen – Peter would deny him three times that very night. Jesus had previously told Peter that Satan himself was seeking to have his way with him.

But Jesus told Peter that He was praying for him and that Peter would eventually ‘*turn back*’ and would be one who would in time ‘*strengthen his brothers.*’ He just wasn’t at that point yet. Peter learned much from that experience as did they all.

Now finally this morning, See Him interacting ...

**\* WITH THOSE WHO WERE EXPERIENCING EMOTIONAL PAIN**

- The **WIDOW** of **NAIN** (Luke 7:13)  
*“His heart went out to her and he said, ‘Don’t cry’.”*

The main thing for us to see here is that Jesus’ heart went out to this poor woman who was not only burying her only son but who had previously buried her husband. She was left with no one. A large crowd shared her grief and sympathized with her circumstances.

However, **only** Jesus could say (in effect)...

*“Don’t cry; I will give your son back to you.”*

But perhaps many could say ...

*“Don’t be in despair; I will open my home to you” or (in our day today)  
“Don’t despair; your Church will take care of you.”*

Emotional pain is the greatest pain of all – much worse than physical pain.

Emotional pain cannot be reasoned away, and it must not be ignored by those who encounter someone in the midst of it.

Gentleness mixed with humility is necessary.

- His **MOTHER** at the **CROSS** (John 19:26)  
*"He said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your (new) son'*

Though suffering terribly Himself, He was more concerned for His mother's suffering.

He was also concerned for John, the disciple he loved most of all, and He ministered to them both as He gave to the one a protector and to the other a purpose.

And though He knew that in a mere three days, their sorrow would turn to joy as He would not only give His mother her own son back but would give His Beloved John his Savior back, He nevertheless reached out to them in their moment of emotional pain.

Those three days no doubt seemed like an Eternity and Mary and John were surely comforted by one another's company.

Mary (tradition tells us) lived with John until she died.

Emotional Pain cannot be cured through theology.

Jesus didn't say ...

*"Woman, what's the deal?  
I said that I will rise in three days and I will – quit crying,  
it's a bad testimony."*

Instead he '*felt her pain in the moment*' and gently dealt with it, leaving us an example.

Today's ***final thot*** also serves as Today **Key Concept** ...

***Final Thot ...***

**GENTLENESS** is always in **VOGUE** for **FOLLOWERS** of **CHRIST!**

# **CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE – 'Imitation Stage'**

*"Imitate Jesus In His Spirit Of Forgiveness"*  
(Colossians 3:13; Luke 23:34; Mark 2:5; Matthew 18:21)

**Intro ...** Today as we continue our '*Journey Towards Christ-Likeness*,' we will seek to advance one step further down the stage of the Journey called '**The Imitation Stage.**'

In this stage of the journey which could really be thought of as '*Level One Discipleship*,' we are focusing our attention upon those situations where Jesus said to his disciples directly '*Do it like me*' ... '*Imitate my style of life*' in these specific ways.

**Seven** such '*Actions of Imitation*' can be found in the Scriptures. So far, we have discovered and discussed **three** of them.

We are to:

'Imitate Jesus In His Sense Of Service' (and we are to)  
'Imitate Jesus In His Lifestyle of Love' (and we are to)  
'Imitate Jesus In His Gentle and Humble Manner.'

These all by themselves will go a long way toward putting that '*Discipleship Cap*' back on our heads.

But we have barely begun – today we hit the half-way point with the incredibly challenging and sometimes confusing ...

## **IMITATION ACTION FOUR ...**

**"IMITATE** Jesus In His Spirit of **FORGIVENESS**"  
- Forgiving **COMPLETELY** all who have in any way **MISTREATED** you –  
(Colossians 3:13; Luke 23:34; Matthew 18:21)

This lesson today will possibly require us to '*open our minds*' to some new concepts – to understand things in some fresh ways.

Take a moment right now and say to yourself ...

*'I'm ready to open my mind regarding forgiveness.'*

As always, the Scripture will provide the stimulus and the substance of our discussion. There are **Four Key Scriptures** that will form our focus.

All of them deal with the subject of forgiveness – all of them contain the English word ‘forgive’ yet as you can see on your note sheet there’s an important ‘clarification’ that must be made.

### **TODAY’S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

**Clarification:** Two different Greek Words are translated by the one English word ‘**Forgive.**’ These are words with a considerable amount of flexibility.

**One of those Greek words** involves the idea of ‘**REMOVING** Something’  
Peter used this word when he said ... “We have forsaken all to follow You.”

**The other Greek word** involves the idea of ‘**GRANTING** Something’  
The Apostle Paul used this word when he said ...

“God has highly exalted him and given him a Name.”

It takes **BOTH** to get the whole picture.

Discovering that fact this week has ‘opened my mind regarding forgiveness’ in the very way that I am asking you right now to ‘open yours.’

I have discovered that ‘Forgiveness’ involves a ‘gracious granting of something’ as well as a ‘merciful removing of something.’

Here then are the **Four Key Scriptures** that I have chosen this morning out of many, many others where these two words are used:

“Father, **FORGIVE** them (‘remove something from them’)  
for they don’t know **WHAT** they are doing.”  
(Luke 23:34)

Here we see Jesus’ ‘Spirit of Forgiveness’ expressing itself as the rough-handed Roman Crucifixion Squad was nailing him to the cross ...

There was 'something' that would be just naturally attached to their action and 'something else' that would also just naturally be attached to any innocent person who was being treated in such a way.

It was these 'somethings' that Jesus was asking the Father to remove (from the men and from the heart of the afflicted). That prayer is an appeal for true and complete 'forgiveness.'

*"How many **TIMES** shall I **FORGIVE** ('remove something from him')  
my **BROTHER** when he **SINS** against me? (Matthew 18:21)*

Here now we see Peter seeking to 'Imitate His Master's Spirit of Forgiveness' by seeking to establish the boundaries of this action.

I can just imagine him saying ...

*'Lord, my brother sins against me frequently (Is this Andrew he speaks of?)  
You know how he teases me – how he belittles me – how he pokes fun at  
my impetuous behavior – how he flaunts himself over me. I desire to forgive him –  
to remove from him all the things that well up in my heart toward him.  
It's tough to do ... How often am I to follow the 'Dictates of Forgiveness'?  
After the eighth time can I just 'let it all out'?*

And now for the other word translated by our English Word 'Forgive' ...

It's mostly used by the Apostle Paul though Luke also used it both in the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts.

*"**FORGIVE** (grant something to them) whatever **GRIEVANCES** you may have  
**AGAINST** one another. **FORGIVE** as the Lord **FORGAVE** you."  
(Colossians 3:13)*

Here Paul points out that 'forgiveness' involves the 'granting of something **to the offender**' **by** the offended one ... And it's not retribution!

Here Paul makes clear that our example for this kind of 'Forgiveness' is Jesus Christ, the Lord Himself.

Remember how Jesus referred to His Lordship the night He demonstrated His Sense of Service by washing the Disciples dirty feet?

He said ...

*'Now that I your Lord have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example ...'*  
(John 13:14-15)

Can we not hear the Lord saying to us through the pen of the Apostle Paul ...

*"Now that I your Lord have forgiven you (and in the process granted something awesome to you) should you not do the same for one another?"*

Here's our fourth and final **Key Scripture** of the morning ...

*"Be kind and compassionate ... **FORGIVING** (granting something to) one another, just as in Christ God has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)*

Here we see the Apostle Paul also attributing this 'Forgiveness Quality' to our Heavenly Father. He grants something awesome to us in the process of providing forgiveness for us. And He does so because of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Paul even 'suggests' in this Scripture what that 'something granted' might be:

He identifies 'Kindness and Compassion' as companion qualities to this kind of 'forgiveness' – the kind that 'grants something to the offender.'

So now, having looked at these several Scriptures containing both aspects of the 'Imitation Action of the Day', we come to ...

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...**

What does it **MEAN** to completely **FORGIVE** ...  
How do I **KNOW** if I have **DONE** it?

Here are Three Simple Straightforward, Biblically Sound Answers to that Dual-Question that I would share with us this morning ...

Could say that these are **Three Components of Complete Forgiveness.**

### **1. Forgiveness means ...**

Giving up all desire to **AVENGE** myself for the **WRONG** done to me.

This is something that those who would '*Imitate Christ*' must resolve to do.

Forgiveness surely means '*laying aside thots of revenge*' – plans to 'get even' – waiting and watching for just the right opportunity to strike. It's hard to divest ourselves of such thoughts, isn't it?

Paul reminded the Roman Believers (chapter 12) that the Lord said ...

*"Vengeance is mine; I will repay."*

And that doesn't mean that it's okay for us to eagerly await the day when all these people '*get what's coming to them*'!

We are to completely set those thoughts aside ...

We are to remove from the offender our personal agenda of retribution. That's a **key component** of 'Christ-Like Forgiveness.'

Here's another **key component** ...

### **2. Forgiveness means ...**

Laying aside all feelings of **ANGER** or **RESENTMENT** toward those who have treated me **WRONGLY**.

This, too, is part of the package of Complete Christ-Imitating Forgiveness. To not plot revenge – to not eagerly await the day when '*they get what's coming to them*' – does not yet mean that I have forgiven them.

Christ-Imitating Forgiveness goes deeper than just the thoughts in my mind.

Christ-Imitating Forgiveness penetrates deeply into my heart and removes from me the passions that these offenses have stirred within me.

It means to identify and confess the anger and the resentment ... perhaps even feelings of hatred that have taken up residence within me.

Our own experience of God's forgiveness should clearly point out the way ...

When God forgave us, He washed His Heart of the natural feelings of anger and offense that our sin stirred within him.

The Apostle Paul said it this way in the eighth chapter his Letter to the Romans ...

*"There is therefore now no condemnation  
to those who are in Christ Jesus."- Romans 8:1*

Divine Forgiveness changes forever the way a Holy, Righteous God looks at me – the way He assesses me. Feelings of displeasure – Feelings of offense at the way I have lived and the things that I have done are washed away by the waters of forgiveness.  
So, it should be in our hearts as well.

As God has forgiven us we are to forgive one another. We are to 'remove from the offenders' all our negative attitudes toward them because of what they have done. That's the second **key component** of Christ-Like Forgiveness.

Well, that takes care of the 'removing part of forgiveness' and it is no small task especially since the only way I can actually remove those things is to 'remember' the deed that caused them and thus rather than 'removing them' I might actually 'intensify them.' Might be better to just 'try to forget.'

Here's where the third **key component** comes to the rescue.

### **3. Forgiveness means ...**

Desiring that which is **BEST** for those who have **WRONGED** you; desiring God's **FAVOR** to fall upon them.

This is that 'Gracious Granting of Something' we have spoken of. Grant to those who have wrongly treated you your desire that they come to enjoy the fullness of the life in Christ that you have found.

See them as God the Father one-time saw you ... a 'potential child of God trapped in sin.' Pray for them faithfully – treat them compassionately. That's what Paul said and that's what Jesus Himself demonstrated. Replace one set of thoughts and feelings with a 'better set' – a Christ-Like Set!

#### **Final Thot ...**

**COMPLETE** forgiveness both **TAKES AWAY** and **GIVES**. Takes away something **NEGATIVE** and gives something **POSITIVE**.

Be sure you don't **SWITCH** them up!

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Imitation Stage’**

*“Imitate Jesus In His Resurrection Perspective”*

(John 14:19-20; John 17:3; Hebrews 2:15; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Romans 8:11)

**Intro ...** As we continue down the ‘Road to Christlikeness’ and more specifically continue to progress through the stage of the Journey called the ‘**Imitation Stage**,’ we come to the directive that provides the title for this message: “**Imitate Jesus in His Resurrection Perspective.**”

How can we possibly do that?

Well, I’m here today to say that we can and must if we would continue down the path toward Christ-likeness.

Now granted we cannot by our own power or authority command death to leave us alone or command death to release its hold once it has taken ahold of us but here’s what we can do ...

We can take ...

### **IMITATION ACTION FIVE ...**

**“IMITATE Jesus In His RESURRECTION PERSPECTIVE”** (which means)  
- Seeing both DEATH and LIFE through His EYES –  
(John 14:19-20; John 17:3; Hebrews 2:15; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Romans 8:11)

There is a perspective on death and life that is distinctively Christ-Like.

Not all Christians hold it – no non-Christians do.

Today will be a marvelous day to embrace it if you don’t already.

Here then is ...

**TODAY’S KEY SCRIPTURE ...** John 14:19

*“Because I LIVE you too will LIVE ...”*

Interestingly Jesus said that to His Disciples **before** He died.  
These were not post-resurrection remarks ...

He was sharing with them a perspective on life that His Resurrection would demonstrate. He was sharing with them a perspective that they should adopt relative to their own life (and death) – a perspective that He would have us adopt today.

Consider with me ...

### **Three Aspects** of this **Resurrection Perspective**.

#### **ASPECT ONE**: 'Our Eternal LIFE has already BEGUN'

Say that quietly to yourself ... *"My eternal life has already begun."*  
And as you do, I'm sure this question quickly follows that confession:  
*"What in the world does that mean?"*

After all, we're still '*trapped in time*' – We're still striving to free ourselves from the devices of the world and the desires of the flesh and the deceptions of the devil. Someday we will be in heaven, but this day is far from that day.

Believe it or not ... that is a non-Christian perspective.

That is not the perspective on life that Jesus had ... That is not the perspective on life that those who are seeking to imitate Him have either.

Here are a couple of things Jesus said about Life that is Eternal.

*"Now this is eternal life ... that they know (truly, intimately know) YOU  
the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."  
(John 17:3)*

Eternal Life is defined as '*Personal Knowledge*' of the Almighty God and of His Son, Jesus, whom He sent into the world. Those who come to this '*Knowledge*' are the ones to whom Jesus was speaking when He said (in Today's Key Scripture) ...

*"Because I live you too shall live."*

Jesus amplified his definition of that Life by saying in the very next verse ...

*"You will realize that I am in the Father, and you are in me  
and I am in you."* (John 14:20)

This 'Personal Knowledge of the Father and the Son' leads to a  
'*realization of the intimate relationship that the entire Heavenly Family  
share together.*'

All members of the Heavenly Father have lives that are (to use a word one  
of our older cell group ladies invented some months ago) '*inter-twangled*' that is,  
interwoven and intimately and inseparably connected.

And that connection includes all who are '*Walking with Pneuma*'  
down life's path – the path marked '*Eternal Life.*'

So, my Eternal Life has already begun ... I'm living it right now.

That's **aspect one** of the 'Resurrection Perspective' that Jesus would  
have me adopt.

Here's the second ...

**ASPECT TWO:** 'Our **FEAR** of **DEATH** has been **REMOVED**'

Say that quietly to yourself ... "*My Fear of Death is gone.*"

Do you believe what you just said –

Do you feel what you have just said –

Do you believe that that should be true of every born-again  
Child of God?

Jesus' **Resurrection Perspective** includes just such a confession.

Speaking of the purpose of Jesus' accomplishments,  
the writer of Hebrews says:

*"So that by his death (and resurrection) He might free those who all  
their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."  
(Hebrews 2:15)*

What an incredible freedom it is to be freed from the '*fear of death*'!

The Apostle Paul was directly taunting death when he wrote these almost mocking words in his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:55) ...

*"Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O grave, is your sting?"*

The answer, of course, is ...

*"There is no longer any 'victory' for death nor any 'sting' found in the grave."*

Jesus Christ has '*stripped death*' of any triumph – Christ has '*destroyed death.*' Jesus has practically '*Made death a friend*' ... No longer a thing to fear but something to anticipate experiencing.

Here's how the Apostle Paul expressed it in his second letter to the Corinthian Church (2 Corinthians 5:8) ...

*"We would prefer to be 'absent' from the body  
and 'present' with the Lord."*

Perhaps no follower of Christ's has ever experienced more consistent hardship in this life than did the Apostle Paul (check out the list in 2 Cor.11).

And yet what Christ-Follower has not experienced some of the struggles and sacrifices that come when one truly follows Christ in this world?

And what '*Walker with Pneuma*' has not developed a deeper and deeper awareness of and yearning for the ultimate form of that Divine Fellowship to which *Pneuma* has introduced us – the fellowship in heaven itself.

*"I have a desire", Paul said, "to one day be 'absent' here and 'present' there."*

Those who would 'Imitate Jesus in His Resurrection Perspective' will feel the same.

So '*Fear of Death*' is gone as I hold on to the very one whose power is greater than the power of Death or the Grave.

The ONE who walks with me knows the way right through death's territory. He has escorted an almost innumerable throng before me.

He possesses '**Resurrection Power**' and He is producing within me a '**Resurrection Perspective**.'

Perhaps I've '*jumped the gun*' a bit but that last statement leads us into the **Third and Final Aspect** of this '**Imitation Action**' with which we are engaged this morning.

**ASPECT THREE:** Our Earthly **COMPANION** is the **AGENT** of **RESURRECTION**

*"And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,  
He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies  
through His Spirit who lives in you."  
(Romans 8:11)*

**It was 'Pneuma'** who was '*sent into the tomb*' ...

**It was 'Pneuma'** by whose power the broken body of Jesus Christ was '*made gloriously and incorruptibly whole*.'

**It was 'Pneuma'** who placed the spirit of Jesus into that glorified body and who then raised Jesus to everlasting life.

Now think about this ...

**'Pneuma'** had to be '*sent*' into the tomb but **'Pneuma'** has already '*taken up residence*' within us who have given our lives to Christ.

When the time comes, He will give '*Resurrection Life*' to our mortal bodies and they will be '*mortal*' no longer.

**'Pneuma'** is indeed the '**Divine Agent of Resurrection**' ...

He raised Jesus Christ **from** Death and He will '*Walk us right **through** Death*.'  
He desires to produce a genuine Christ-Like '**Resurrection Perspective**' within us. Allow Him to do so!

And so, we come to Today's **Final Thot** ...

**Final Thot ...**

**'RESURRECTION'** is the **NAME** of the **GAME**  
for all those who **KEEP** in **STEP** with the **SPIRIT!**

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Imitation Stage’**

*“Imitate Jesus In His Understanding Of His Personal Mission”*

(Jn. 17:18; Jn. 20:21; Heb. 10:9; Mk. 10:45; Lk. 19:10; Jn. 12:49; Matt. 28: 19-20; 1 Jn. 1:1)

**Intro** ... Today we take yet another look at what it means to become ‘Imitators of Jesus That’s the **second stage** of the journey toward ‘**Christ-Likeness**’ – the ‘Imitation Stage.’

So far, we have seen that we are to:

*“Imitate Jesus In His Sense of Service” (and we are to)*

*“Imitate Jesus In His Lifestyle of Love” (and we are to)*

*“Imitate Jesus In His Gentle and Humble Manner” (and we are to)*

*“Imitate Jesus In His Spirit of Forgiveness” (and as we saw last week, we are to)*

*“Imitate Jesus In His Resurrection Perspective.”*

All these we can indeed do as we yield to ‘Pnuema’s work within us.

Today we come to ...

### **IMITATION ACTION SIX ...**

**“IMITATE Jesus In His UNDERSTANDING of His PERSONAL MISSION”**

- Seeing yourself as one sent on a **MISSION** by the **MASTER** –

This is profoundly important – It’s important that we understand that Jesus was not ‘*Making it up as He went along*’ and neither should we be.

Consider with me ...

### **TODAY’S KEY SCRIPTURES ...**

*“As You (Father) have **SENT** me into the **WORLD**  
so I have **SENT** them into the **WORLD**.”*

(John 17:18)

There we go ... Jesus understood that he was ‘*A man on a mission.*’ He had been sent by His Heavenly Father into this world. In this verse He is reminding the Father that he was aware of that fact. He was also telling the Father that he in turn was sending His Followers even **as** he himself had been sent.

“As the **FATHER** has sent me, I am **SENDING** you.”  
(John 20:21)

And here he is informing His Followers of that fact.

*‘I am sending you’, he says, ‘Just as I myself have been send.’*

*“Imitate me in my understanding of my personal mission.  
As I understand mine, I want you to understand yours.”*

And so, we come to ...

**Today’s Key Question ...**

So **HOW** was Jesus **SENT** into the **WORLD?**

Now there are perhaps many viable ways to answer that question as we look for comparisons and applications but here’s the one I would share with you this morning.

**TODAY’S KEY ANSWER ...**

**JESUS WAS SENT INTO THE WORLD WITH A SPECIFIC PLAN  
AND WITH A SPECIFIC SCRIPT...**

Remember what I said a moment ago?

It’s important that we understand that Jesus was not *‘Making it up as He went along’*? Jesus was sent into this world with a specific plan (actually it was a plan that had been established before the world even came into being) and He came not only with that *‘Specific Plan’* defining him but He came with a *‘Specific Script’* directing him. In becoming a man, he became as we have said already *‘A man on a mission.’*

Consider now these Scriptures regarding the **‘Plan’** ...

“I have come to do your **WILL**, O God.”  
(Hebrews 10:9)

There’s the heart of his understanding of His Personal Mission – His Personal Mission in this world would be determined by the Will of God. He was saying in essence, *‘God’s Will determines who I am and what I do*  
So, what was God’s Will for him? What was the *‘Specific Plan’*?

Here are a couple of Scriptures that get right to the heart of the matter.

In Mark's Gospel we read that he came ...

“To **GIVE** His **LIFE** as a **RANSOM** for many”  
(Mark 10:45)

He came to ‘buy us back’ from Judgement and death – to provide a way that we could be saved from the effects of both. This is why the Father sent him. In perhaps the most familiar verse in all the Bible (John 3:16) we read ...

*“For God so loved the World that He gave (sent) His Only Begotten Son  
so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

He would be born miraculously – He would live his life sinlessly – He would minister impressively – He would demonstrate His suitability to be the flawless ‘Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world’ – to be the one could fully and completely ‘pay the ransom’ for man once and for all.

And that fact caused him throughout his earthly life ...

“To **SEEK** and to **SAVE** that which was **LOST**”  
(Luke 19:10)

That was indeed the essence of the Specific Plan which Jesus carried in his heart as he was sent into the world ... He didn't need to ‘Make It Up,’ he just needed to ‘Carry It Out.’

And part of carrying it out was making sure that those who were lost would realize that they were lost and making sure that they would understand what He was doing to ‘save them.’

Now that's a formidable task since human language frequently falls way short in its ability to convey divine truths.

But not to panic about that either – not to worry about how he as a man, limited to human language would communicate the truths of God, for this is where the Specific Script came into play.

Hear Jesus explaining it in this verse from John's Gospel ...

“The **FATHER** who **SENT** me commanded me  
**WHAT** to say and **HOW** to say it.”  
(John 12:49)

The Father, working in conjunction with 'Holy Spirit,' directed the Son, while in His Limited Earthly Condition, to speak exactly the things that the sinful men and women around him needed to hear and enabled him to say those things in effective ways.

It is any wonder that even the temple guards sent to arrest him would say ...

*"No man ever spoke like this man."  
(John 7:36)*

Or that Peter would say to him ...

*"Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the Words of Eternal Life."  
(John 6:68)*

Jesus Christ was indeed sent into the World with a Specific Plan and with a Specific Script ... And He said to his disciples,

*"As the Father has sent me into the world,  
I am sending you."*

You and I are the current version of those disciples and so we come to ...

**TODAY'S KEY APPLICATION ...**

**AS JESUS' DISCIPLES WE ARE ALSO SENT INTO THE WORLD WITH  
A SPECIFIC PLAN AND WITH A SPECIFIC SCRIPT ...**

Let's look at the actual moment when the initial 'sending' took place. It's been called 'The Great Commission' ... It reveals the very 'Specific Plan' that those disciples in that day and we in this day are to follow.

This 'commissioning' took place just moments before Jesus Himself ascended back to heaven.

*"Therefore, go and **MAKE DISCIPLES** of all nations"  
(Matthew 28:19a)*

This is the plan; this has always been the plan; there is no other plan. 'Make Disciples' - Bring people to faith in Jesus Christ. That's the goal.

I will be eternally grateful to those who obediently submitted themselves to this plan and were used of the Spirit to bring me to faith in Christ.

*"Teaching them to **OBEY** everything I have **COMMANDED** you"  
(Matthew 28:20)*

Make informed, obedient disciples ... this is the ultimate expression of the plan. Teach these new disciples to know all that the Lord (and His Spirit) have commanded and teach them as well to obey those things. This is a life-time calling and task.

So, if the **Plan** is to 'Make full-blown disciples,' what is our **Script** – our initial script at least ... How do we get started?

Here's what Jesus said on another occasion just prior to His Ascension.

*"You will be my **WITNESSES**"  
(Acts 1:8)*

And of what do we witness?

Here's how the Apostle John expressed it to the early believers ...

*"That which we have **HEARD** and **SEEN**, which we have **LOOKED** at  
and our **HANDS** have handled, this we **PROCLAIM** ..."  
(1 John 1:1)*

In other words, speak of things you know firsthand.

When John wrote those words, he might have been the last remaining person on earth who could say those words regarding his firsthand knowledge of Jesus – he was likely the last remaining eye-witness.

Our **Final Thot** this morning expresses one sample '**Script**' that your witness might take.

**Final Thot ...**

Jesus is 'The **SAVIOR**' – He is 'My **SAVIOR**.'

Jesus can **CHANGE** men's **HEARTS** – His **SPIRIT** is changing **MINE**.

Jesus gives **PURPOSE** for **LIVING** – He's given my life **PURPOSE**.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Imitation Stage’**

*“Imitate Jesus In His Demonstration Of Patient Endurance”*

(1 Peter 2:19-23)

**Intro ...** Today we come to the seventh and final ‘Imitation Action’ in this **second stage** of our journey toward Christ-Likeness. Next week we will review all seven.

### **IMITATION ACTION SEVEN ...**

**“IMITATE Jesus In His DEMONSTRATION of PATIENT ENDURANCE”**

- Enduring patiently when **SUFFERING** unjustly –

Now I don’t have to tell you that this runs contrary to just about every instinct we possess.

This action of patient endurance demonstrates that an entirely different kind of life is taking shape within us. It demonstrates that the Spirit of God, ‘Pneuma’ Himself, is walking us in an entirely new direction.

The presence of this quality of ‘*patient endurance*’ demonstrates that He is in the process of conforming us to an image other than the one we normally see in our mirror.

People (and especially Americans) do not take unjust, undeserved suffering well ...

The fact is, we Americans don’t take any suffering well!

In fact, some of the most common words spoken in this land between the Atlantic and the Pacific are these:

*“It’s not fair” and “I don’t deserve this.”*

What we are saying today is that those angry, accusatory, self-focused words never came out of Jesus’ mouth and they should not come out of the mouths of his ‘*Spirit-Led Followers*.’

Now before any of us says ...

*"This message is not fair – I don't deserve  
to feel the way it's going to make me feel" ...*

let's look at **Today's Key Scriptures**.

In fact, I'm going to hurry right along because I don't want to give myself the chance to say those words!

Each of the verses we will look at today come from an amazing statement that the Spirit of God had Peter put into print in his First General Epistle to the Churches of the First Century.

Here they are ...

### **TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURAL PHRASES ...**

*"It is **COMMENDABLE** if a man bears up under  
the **PAIN** of **UNJUST SUFFERING** ..."*  
(1 Peter 2:19)

### **Fascinating ...**

The word that Peter uses here that is translated 'commendable' is actually the Greek word '**Karis**' which is most commonly and almost exclusively translated 'Grace' – meaning '*strength and provision that is distinctively God-Given.*'

So, Peter is saying that it is a most 'Grace-Filled' (Grace-Displaying) thing when a follower of Christ bears up (holds up) under the pain of unjust suffering.

Just think with me for a moment ...

How much suffering in this world is 'unjust'?

How do we define it?

Unjust suffering (simply put) is 'any suffering to which we can honestly say ...

*"I've done nothing wrong;  
I've done nothing to deserve this."*

Lots of suffering falls into this category ... We are just '*minding our own business*' and the actions of others cause us to '*suffer.*'

Could be suffering brought about by their '*mean spirits*' – Could be suffering brought about by their '*foolish actions*' – Could be suffering brought about simply by the '*brokenness of this fallen sinful world.*'

Peter says that it's a '*grace-filled thing*' to bear up well under such circumstances and the truth is, only by the Grace of God given by the Spirit of God can we do that.

Peter concludes that nineteenth verse with these words ...

*"Because He is conscious of God."*

It's our consciousness of God (and I would add 'of God's Holy Spirit Who walks beside us') that enables us not only to desire to '*bear up under the pain of unjust suffering*' but to actually pull it off.

This becomes a powerful testimony ...

That's what the repentant thief on the cross beside Jesus observed (Luke 23:41) ...

*"We are getting what we deserve."  
(Our pain is justified.)*

*"He has done nothing wrong."  
(His pain is completely undeserved.)*

He was so impressed by Jesus' '*commendable*' behavior that he asked Jesus to save him (Luke 23:42).

*"Lord, remember me  
when you come into Your Kingdom."*

Sometimes these few words are the only words we can say when the '*pain of life's sufferings threaten to overwhelm us*' – pain brought by people or circumstance.

*"The Lord's Kingdom is coming  
and I will be part of it."*

So, sometimes suffering comes when we are just '*minding our own business*' - just seeking to '*live a godly life.*' We have done nothing wrong and we surely don't deserve it but it comes nevertheless.

God says that it is a '*Grace-Demonstrating Thing*' to bear up well under it – to endure it patiently as we await the fulfillment of God's Plan in our lives.

And this we can do as we remain – '*Conscious of God*' and the '*Spirit of God*' who walks beside us and '*graces us.*'

Peter now goes on and mentions a **second kind** of unjust suffering (vs. 20) ...

“... If you **SUFFER** for doing **GOOD** and you **ENDURE** it,  
this is **COMMENDABLE** before God.” (vs. 20)

This is a second kind of '*Grace-Filled/Grace-Demonstrating*' Suffering ...  
This is a particularly hurtful and frustrating kind. It's when you can say ...

*"I've done something good;  
I've don't deserve this."*

You acted with the '*best of intentions*' – you truly had a '*pure heart*' – you stepped in and took a positive action and people were benefitted and yet you have been '*punished for it.*'

You were told it '*wasn't your place*' – or that you did it just to '*show off*' – or that you did it to '*advance yourself*' – to gain '*advantage or reputation.*'

Only by being '*Conscious of God and Of God's Holy Spirit who walks with us*' can we bear up under this kind of painful treatment.

We must ready ourselves for it. We must not expect that all our '*good deeds*' will be commended though we would like them to be.

We must understand that there will be times when we will suffer pain simply because we have '*done the right and God-Honoring thing.*'

We will by no means be the first to experience such mistreatment.

**This is Jesus** as a 12-year-old boy, remaining in the temple to discuss spiritual things with the teachers of the law and having his own mother accuse him of being thoughtless and insensitive to his family (Luke 2:48).

**This is Jesus** (in his adult ministry) '*Casting out a demon*' and being accused of being in league with the Devil (Luke 11:15).

**This is Jesus** correctly interpreting the Scriptures regarding Himself and being accused of committing '*Blasphemy*' and deemed '*worthy of death.*' (Mark 14:64)

Jesus suffered – '*patiently endured*' - all those for a reason and here it is ...

“**CHRIST** suffered for you, leaving you an **EXAMPLE**” ... (vs. 21)

**Here's** our '*Mirror Image*' statement ...

**Here's** what we are to see as we look in our own spiritual mirror.

We are to see looking back at us one who '*endures unjust suffering patiently*' whether the suffering is brought to us intentionally or simply as a result of us living in a broken, sin-filled world.

And we are to see such a one because that is the very image of the Savior we follow. That is the very example that Jesus has set ... The more '*Conscious of Him*' we are, the more likely to '*suffer patiently*' we will be.

There's one more thing the Spirit had Peter share in this Scripture but before we look at that, let me point out ...

**SEVERAL UNHAPPY BUT NECESSARY TO KNOW TRUTHS ...**

We need to know these things lest we be '*blindsided*' by them.

1. Not all people will respond **POSITIVELY** to the **WITNESS** and **LIFESTYLE** of an **IMITATOR** of Jesus.

The '*Cheers of the Crowd*' today are not focused upon those who stand for and practice Biblical Values – more likely it's the '*Jeers*' of the Crowd that Bible-Based Believers hear.

**2.** Some will directly **OPPOSE** and even seek to **DESTROY**.

In lands other than our own, followers of Jesus Christ are attacked and killed or mutilated routinely. In our own land, followers of Jesus Christ are driven out of business, thrown out of institutions of higher learning, fired from jobs or overlooked for advancement because of their faith.

**3. ACCUSATIONS** might arise – **RUMORS** might be spread – **SLANDEROUS** comments might be made – Great **PAIN** might be felt.

Jesus said that the devil was the '*Father of Lies*' (John 8:44) so is it any wonder that those under His Control take such '*liberty with the truth*'?

Here now is the 'example' Jesus set for us ...

Here's how His Image looks ...

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS ... 1 Peter 2:23**

He did not **RETALIATE** – He made no **THREATS** ...  
He **ENTRUSTED** Himself to Him who **JUDGES JUSTLY**.

Now that observation – that firsthand report from Peter – leads right into our ...

**Final Thought ...**

Those who **TRUST** God don't spend a lot of time **DEFENDING** themselves.  
They '**IMITATE**' Jesus.  
They **ENDURE** suffering **PATIENTLY**.

***THE***  
***‘CONFORMATION’***  
***STAGE***

***Why and How did Jesus Do The Things He Did?***

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – Review and Reflect**

(Stage One and Stage Two of the ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’)

**Intro ...** Today we come to a very special moment in our ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ – the journey upon which ‘Pneuma’ – Our Divine Earthly Companion accompanies us. ‘Christ’s Mirror Image’ is what He is enabling us to become.

Today, as we come to this very special junction in our travels, as we prepare to transition from **Stage Two** of this Journey into **Stage Three**, let’s take some time to **review** and to **reflect** upon our travels thus far.

I would begin by reminding us of the two ‘**Key Concepts**’ that underlie this entire effort.

### **KEY SERIES CONCEPT ONE:**

Becoming Christ’s **MIRROR IMAGE** is **EVERY** believer’s **CALLING**.

“Everyone who is fully **TRAINED** will be like his **TEACHER**.”  
(Luke 6:40)

### **KEY SERIES CONCEPT TWO:**

**TRANSFORMING** us into Christ’s Mirror Image is  
‘Pneuma’s **PASSION** and **PURPOSE**.

“And we are being **TRANSFORMED** into His **LIKENESS** ...”  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

This ‘Journey toward Christ-Likeness’ – this journey toward us becoming all the Jesus Himself intends us to become – consists of **Four Stages**. We are about to enter **Stage Three** ...

Remember **STAGE ONE?**

**STAGE ONE: THE IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...**

**WHO IS HE AND HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO ME?**

## SO, WHO EXACTLY IS JESUS?

We discovered **Five Key Identities** ...

Allow yourself to 'Get Excited' about these all over again.

1. Jesus is the ONE who **Knows** all about me ...

He will one day **Call** me into **Account**. (Revelation 2:23)

*"I am He who searches hearts and minds and I will repay each of you according to your deeds."*

2. Jesus is the ONE who can **Forgive** all my **Sins** ...

He offers me a **Fresh Start**. (1 Peter 2:24)

*"He bore our sins in His body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."*

3. Jesus is the ONE who can **Satisfy** my spiritual hunger and thirst.

He would **Nourish** me with **Spiritual Food**. (John 6:35)

*"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

4. Jesus is the ONE who **Possesses** the **Words** of **Eternal Life**.

He opens the **Door** of **Salvation** to me. (John 6:68)

*"Simon Peter answered ... 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"*

5. Jesus is the ONE who **Extends** to me a **Life-Altering Call**.

He would **Re-shape and Re-direct** my **Life**. (Luke 14:26-27)

*"Anyone who does not hate ... even his own life cannot be my disciple. And (neither can) anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me."*

## AND HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO ME?

I **RESPOND** to His **CALL** and **SURRENDER** my **LIFE** to Him!

**Stage One** concludes when one makes a full blown, no holds barred, commitment to Jesus Christ as one's Savior and Lord. Until that happens, there, of course, can be no progress toward 'Christ-Likeness' at all.

Perhaps you made a new or renewed or more informed commitment to Jesus as your Savior and Lord over the weeks we spent together in **Stage One**.

However, once **Stage One** is completed and that commitment is made and a new Child of God is born, the real journey toward Christ-Likeness begins.

**'Pneuma'** – The Divine Earthly Companion – takes His place beside the new believer and begins that process of supernatural *'transformation.'*

This is a process that progresses logically and naturally as we *'Walk with Pneuma'* and *'Keep in Step with Him'* - as we do not *'Resist Him'* or *'Grieve Him'* and certainly don't *'Quench Him.'*

And as we begin the walk with him, we pass under the Signpost labeled ...

### **"Journey Toward Christ-Likeness Stage Two"**

**Remember that one?**

**STAGE TWO: THE IMITATION STAGE ...**  
**WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS OF JESUS AM I TO IMITATE?**

Here's what I said 8 weeks ago concerning this *'Imitation Stage'* ...

*"In this stage of the journey, new believers do not yet have the spiritual capacity or experience to fully 'think like Jesus' or 'feel like Jesus' or even 'anticipate ministry moments like Jesus' let alone 'make ministry decisions like Jesus' but they can 'observe Jesus' and seek to pattern their behavior after Jesus – They can seek to 'imitate Jesus.'"*

Over the past two months we have discovered **seven specific behaviors** of Christ that we His Followers have been instructed to imitate – where we have been instructed to ...

*'Do it just like Jesus did it.'*

**And here they are ...**

#### **1. Imitate Jesus In His Sense of Service**

*"As I have washed your feet you are to wash one another's feet." - John 13:14*

Who of us couldn't feel the disciples shock as Jesus stooped down to perform this most menial task – Who didn't feel the shock of imagining themselves doing such a menial thing – Who didn't ask themselves ...

*'What menial thing might Pneuma be leading me to do?'*

## 2. Imitate Jesus In **His Lifestyle of Love**

*"As I have loved you, you are to love one another."* - John 13:34

Absolute 100% commitment to the Body of Christ in this world – the willingness to do whatever needs to be done to bless and encourage them. Such commitment led Jesus to the cross – who knows where such a commitment might lead us? Pneuma knows!

## 3. Imitate Jesus In **His Gentle and Humble Manner**

*"Take my yoke, learn from me; I am gentle and humble in heart."* - Matthew 11:29

Though He was the Almighty Son of God Himself, Jesus came not in power and glory, not manifesting His Majesty, but humbling himself to enter the human condition and to treat each person He met tenderly and humanely."

## 4. Imitate Jesus In **His Spirit of Forgiveness**

*"Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you."* - Colossians 3:13

The willingness and the ability to forgive is a '*Pneuma-Generated Thing*'. It runs contrary to our natural '*get even – exact revenge*' nature.

But if the Judge of the universe could forgive, who are we to demand '*justice*' – especially since we have ourselves been so graciously and freely forgiven?

## 5. Imitate Jesus In **His Resurrection Perspective**

*"Because I live, you too shall live."* - John 14:19

Never will we look at death the same way again. Jesus not only overcame death; Jesus destroyed death. Death is no longer an enemy – death is an opportunity to enter the Eternal Realm where our '*Transformation into Christ-Likeness*' will be completed. That eternal life begins in this life!

## 6. Imitate Jesus In **His Understanding of His Personal Mission**

*"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* - John 20:21

Jesus was sent with a specific plan and with a specific script – '*something to do*' and '*something to say*' ... so are we. '*Pneuma*' leads us into the discovery of both.

## 7. Imitate Jesus In **His Demonstration of Patient Endurance**

*"He suffered for you leaving you an example."* - 1 Peter 2:21

It's truly a '*grace-filled*', '*grace-demonstrating*' thing to '*endure suffering patiently*' especially unjust, undeserved suffering. This Jesus did and this He calls us to do as well. Only with our hand firmly placed in *Pneuma's* can we do so but with Him by our side and His Grace in our hearts it can indeed be done, even as it was by Jesus Himself.

**So** ... Seven amazingly possible 'Actions of Imitation' laid out for us in the Scriptures. Seven 'Behaviors of Christ' that we are called to '*mimic* Seven 'Life Opportunities' to demonstrate that we are indeed making progress in the direction of genuine '*Christ-Likeness*.'

Really that should be sufficient, don't you think?

Wouldn't any Christian who successfully '*mimics Christ*' in those seven ways be living a pretty spectacular Christian Life – Wouldn't such a person already be identified as a most '*Christ-Like Person*'?

Indeed, they would – especially in our world today.  
But there's more – much more.

'*Pneuma*' would take us far beyond mere 'Imitation' ...

'*Pneuma*' wants to take us to the place where we are stirred by the things that stirred Jesus and where we rely upon the things that Jesus relied upon as He ministered in this fallen world ...

'*Pneuma*' wants to take us to 'the place where we are actually doing the things that Jesus would do if He were still here and were standing right where we are standing and facing the very things that we are facing' and that takes more than a merely a '*Commitment to Imitate*.'

And that's why **Stage Two: The Imitation Stage** is not the end of the journey. Today we pass under the 'Signpost' that reads ...

### **"Journey Toward Christ-Likeness Stage Three"**

#### **STAGE THREE: "THE CONFORMATION STAGE" 'EXAMINING HOW AND WHY JESUS DID WHAT HE DID'**

- Moving beyond merely **MIMICKING** His **BEHAVIOR** and starting the process of actually **EMBRACING** His **CHARACTER** -

Can you see it ...

*'Embracing and then Embodying the Character of Christ'* goes so much further than merely '*Mimicking the Behavior of Christ*.'

Jesus never had someone 'cut him off on the freeway while driving 70 miles an hour' but we might. Jesus never turned on the TV and had his mind bombarded with sexually explicit images or God-denying or even God-criticizing commentary but we can. Jesus never worked for a boss who demands that something be done that in good conscience we simply cannot do, but we might.

At times like that we must do **more** than look for a behavior of Christ to 'mimic' – to imitate. It's not at all helpful for us to ask ...

*"Now what did Jesus do when He was in a situation like this?"*

for we know that He **never was** in a situation like this.

The question now must be re-framed this way ...

*If Jesus **were** to be in a situation like this,  
what do I believe He would do?*

In other words, we ask ...

*'What is the Christ-Like – Christ-Honoring - thing to do in this situation?'*

And to answer that question adequately we must understand more about the nature of Christ – the very nature that Pneuma will be developing in us in this **Third Stage** of the Journey – the '**Conformation Stage**.'

***Eight Incredible Character Traits*** will catch our attention ... eight traits that defined His inner nature and determined His outer behavior.

These are '**Traits**' that Pneuma desires to develop in each of us.

### ***Final Thot ...***

It's an awesome thing to think that we can be **CHARACTERIZED** by the same **TRAITS** that **CHARACTERIZED** Jesus; but if we **WALK** with **PNEUMA**, we not only **CAN** but **WILL!**

Read your 'Nudges and Hugs' Devotional every day.  
It will help 'Pneuma' create these very traits within you.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

**“Completely Surrendered”**

(John 6:38; Heb. 10:5-7; John 5:19; Luke 22:42; John 4:34; John 6:28-29; John 14:16, 26)

**Intro** ... Here's what I said last Sunday regarding our current position in the 'Journey Toward Christ-Likeness' that 'Pneuma' has us on.

“Today we pass under the ‘Signpost’ that reads ...

**“Journey Toward Christ-Likeness Stage Three”.**

Here's how we defined that **Third Stage** ...

### **STAGE THREE: “THE CONFORMATION STAGE” ‘EXAMINING HOW AND WHY JESUS DID WHAT HE DID’**

- Moving beyond merely MIMICKING His BEHAVIOR and starting the process of actually EMBRACING His CHARACTER -

Now keep in mind (as we said last week) that any believer who could successfully ‘mimic’ the **Seven Behaviors of Christ** that we discovered in the last stage of this journey would be considered an awesome representative of Jesus Christ in this world.

The ‘*Imitation Stage*’ is not elementary Christian Living – it's merely limited Christian Living – It's not the whole package – It's not the ‘*End of the Journey*’ but it is a crucial stage of the Journey.

**To ...**

- 1.** Imitate Jesus In Sense of Service (John 13:14)
- 2.** Imitate Jesus In His Lifestyle of Love (John 13:34)
- 3.** Imitate Jesus In His Gentle and Humble Manner (Matthew 11:29)
- 4.** Imitate Jesus In His Spirit of Forgiveness (Colossians 3:13)
- 5.** Imitate Jesus In His Resurrection Perspective (John 14:19)
- 6.** Imitate Jesus In His Understanding of His Personal Mission (John 20:21)
- 7.** Imitate Jesus In His Demonstration of Patient Endurance (1 Peter 2:21)

**is an awesome God-Honoring, God-Pleasing way to live! No doubt about it.**

It's just not the ultimate God-Honoring, God-Pleasing way to live.

There's more, much more.

And it's toward that '*much more*' that '*Pneuma*' would walk us.

As we said last week ...

In this **third stage** of the Journey toward Christ-Likeness, we will focus our attention upon ***Eight Character Traits*** that defined Christ's Inner Nature and that determined His Outward Behavior.

Today we focus our attention upon ...

### **CHARACTER TRAIT ONE ...**

*"Jesus was completely **SURRENDERED** to the Father's **WILL**."*

### **SEVERAL KEY OBSERVATIONS:**

**1.** The Father's Will was the **MOTIVATION** behind His **EARTHLY** Ministry.

Here's Jesus Himself revealing that motivation ...

*"For I came down from **HEAVEN** ... to do the **WILL** of Him who **SENT** me."*  
(John 6:38)

As we pointed out several weeks ago, Jesus possessed a clear understanding of His Personal Mission. And it wasn't to just '*make it up*' as He went along.

He came with a specific plan and with a specific script – something to do and something to say. And it all came under the heading of '*Doing the Will of God the Father.*'

Here's the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews also documenting Christ's earthly motivation ...

*"When **CHRIST** came into the world, he said ...  
I have come to do **YOUR WILL**, O God."  
(Hebrews 10:5-7)*

Like a paratrooper over Germany in World War II, those were Jesus' '*Geronimo*' words as he jumped (as it were) over heaven's threshold and plunged into this fallen, sin-filled world.

*"Here I come, world –  
Here I come, devil,  
Here I go, Father ...*

*The time has come to begin the assault on sin and death ...*

*"Geronimo"!"*

What a powerful perspective on life ...  
What a captivating motivation for living.

We exist to 'Do the Will of God' in the midst of our fallen, broken world.  
That's the motivation that 'Pneuma' would have securely root itself  
into the hearts of all who walk with Him.

Can you see yourself making such a 'Geronimo Jump' each and every  
morning?

Now in addition to the Father's Will being the motivation behind Jesus'  
earthly ministry, it can be observed from the Scriptures that ...

**2.** The Father's Will defined the **PARAMETERS** for His **EARTHLY** Ministry.

Again, Jesus Himself provides this glimpse into the inner workings of  
His mind and heart ...

*"... the **SON** can do **NOTHING** by himself; he can only do what he sees  
his **FATHER** doing ... whatever the Father does, the Son also **DOES**."  
(John 5:19)*

Our 'imitating' of Jesus puts us in good company for He declared Himself to  
be a full-fledged 'Imitator of the Father' – a subject for another set of  
messages sometime.

Our point this morning is ... The Father's actions provided a framework  
inside which and a pattern by which Jesus lived his life.

*"Not my **WILL** but **YOURS** be done"  
(Luke 22:42)*

What a fantastic focus for our lives – What a fantastic boundary for our lives!  
We live within the boundary laid down by God's revelation as we walk  
through this fallen, broken world.

**Here's now** one more observation we can make regarding this 'Quality of Submission to the Will of God, the Father' that characterized Jesus.

**3. DOING the Father's Will NOURISHED Him in His EARTHLY Ministry.**

Once again Jesus Himself is our revealer ...

"My **FOOD** is to do the **WILL** of Him who **SENT** me."  
(John 4:34)

This 'revelation' was given to Jesus' disciples on the occasion of His conversation with the 'Woman at the Well.'

It was lunch time when Jesus and His Disciples arrived at the Samaritan Town where she lived. Jesus had waited by the well which was outside of the town, while his disciples went into the town to buy some food.

While they were gone Jesus, had the now famous conversation with a Samaritan woman who had come out in the heat of the day to draw water from the well – i.e. the 'Woman at the Well.'

When the disciples returned and offered Jesus (as it were) a couple of the 'hamburgers' they had no doubt purchased at the McDonalds in town, Jesus, recognizing a teaching moment and, no doubt, feeling the exhilaration of the encounter he had just been engaged in, said ...

*"I have food to eat that you know nothing about."*

And indeed, they didn't ... They didn't know anything about what Jesus was talking about and so they naturally asked themselves ...

*"Could someone else have brought him some food?"*

Hearing their verbal response to the announcement He had made and knowing that this discussion of theirs could easily lead them into an argument over whose fault it was that they didn't get back there in time, Jesus then gave this explanation of what He had just said ...

*"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me."*

In other words, if I may paraphrase and amplify his response a bit, he said ...

*"Fellows, nobody came out here and slipped me a couple of burgers while you were gone."*

*What you brought is good and I am thankful and I'll definitely be needing it, but right now I feel thoroughly satisfied for 'Doing the Will of God' like I have been doing for the last little bit is like the very best of food for me and look ... a second course of that meal is heading our way right now. Come and enjoy it with me."*

And as the Disciples turned their heads toward the town, they saw the entire population of the town streaming their way, led by the woman that Jesus had so impressed.

What a satisfying source of sustenance for us as 'Born Again Children of God' – to see the Will of God being accomplished in and through our lives as we live out our days in this fallen, broken world.

**And there we have it ...**

**Complete Surrender to the Will of God – Character Trait One** in our examination of the Inner Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ into whose mirror image '*Pneuma*' would transform us.

But, of course, we are not done for the morning because identifying that incredible 'Character Trait of Christ' raises a huge question ...

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...**  
**SO WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR US?**

That's a question believers have raised ever since the day of Pentecost ...

*"What **is** God's Will for me –  
What is it that Christ would have me completely surrender myself?"*

That's the question that I'm sure all of us have regularly asked ourselves and perhaps that's the question that is on your heart right now.

That's what the people of Jesus' day asked him ...

*"**WHAT** must we do to do the **WORKS** God requires?"  
(John 6:28)*

**In other words ...** 'What is the Will of God – the Desire of God – for us?  
What is it that He would have us do to please Him?'

Here's how Jesus answered them in His Day ...

*"This is the **WORK** (will) of God ... To **BELIEVE** in the One He has **SENT**."  
(John 6:29)*

That's what the woman at the well did – that's what the vast majority of the citizens of her home town did – that's what Jesus' disciples did.

They believed – they trusted in – they committed themselves to – Jesus Christ ... the One that God has sent.

**SO WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR US?**

**ANSWER PART ONE ...** (part one?)

*"Believe in **JESUS** ... with all your Heart ...  
Commit yourself to Him as your **LORD** and **SAVIOR**.  
This is the **WILL** of God for you!*

Beloved, if you have not done that then you cannot possibly fulfill the Will of God for your life – You cannot possibly please God and you cannot possibly be acceptable to God on Judgement Day.

You and I and all human beings **MUST** believe in the One He Has Sent! There is no way around it – there is no alternative to it.

*'Believe in Jesus ... with all your heart.  
Commit yourself to Him as your Lord and Savior.'*

Perhaps today is the day for you to step away from – to untangle yourself from – to lay aside - whatever it is that keeps you from doing that and simply resolve to 'Do the Will of the Almighty God' and 'Commit yourself to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior

This I plead with you to do.

However, for those of us in this room who have already made such a commitment – for all of you who do indeed 'Believe in the One that God sent into this world through the body of the virgin Mary,' there is a second part of the Answer to **Today's Key Question**.

## ***Jesus Himself provided that second part ...***

Near the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus added to the list of those the Father has sent when He said to his disciples – to those who truly ‘Believed in Him’...

*“I will ask the Father and He will **GIVE** you another Companion to be with you forever, the **SPIRIT** of Truth.” – John 14:16*

He said this the very night that He announced to them in no uncertain terms that he was ‘Going Away’ – that He would be ‘with them and walk with them’ no longer.

But he quickly clarified ...

*“I will ask the Father and He will give you another companion to be with you forever – The Spirit of Truth.”*

Just a few moments later Jesus used our ‘magic word’ as he continued to explain the ministry of the ONE whom the Father would ‘give’ in response to his request ...

*“The Companion, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the **FATHER** will **SEND** in my name ...”  
(John 14:26)*

So ... the Father has ‘**SENT**’ another one ...

Does it not follow that truly ‘Doing the Will of God’ involves ‘Believing in and Committing ourselves to both’?

Indeed, it does, and that recognition has ‘blown my mind’ a bit this week.

And so, this morning with absolute certainty and with a great degree of urgency, in answer to the Question ...

## ***SO, WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR US?***

I give you ...

**ANSWER PART TWO ...**

*"Believe in the **HOLY SPIRIT** ... with all your Heart ...  
Commit yourself to Him as your Divine **COMPANION** ...  
Resolve to **WALK** with Him and to **KEEP** in step with Him ...  
This is the **WILL** of God for you!*

O, my dear friends, how many of us and for how long have we been living **OUTSIDE** the Will of God?

How many of us and for how long have we lived without a true belief in and commitment to the **Divine Companion** whom the **FATHER** Himself has **SENT** into this fallen world?

**Hear the Father's Voice** (echoed by the Son) from heaven's Throne say:

*"Believe in 'Pneuma' - My Most Holy Spirit – with all your heart.  
Commit yourself to Him as your Divine Companion.  
Resolve to Walk with Him and to Keep in Step with Him  
for **This is My Will for you!**"*

**So ...** Believe in and Commit yourself to Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior ...  
Believe in and commit yourself to 'Pneuma' – your Divine Companion ...  
and in so doing you will be demonstrating a 'Surrender of yourself to the  
Clearly Announced Will of God' – a genuine advance in your journey  
toward genuine 'Christ-Likeness.'

And now we come to today's ...

**Final Thot ...**

To say '**NOT** my **WILL** but **THINE** be **DONE**'  
is to embrace a **CHARACTER TRAIT** of Jesus Himself.

Those are **WORDS** 'Pneuma' would continually **PUT** in our **MOUTHS!**

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

*“Thoroughly Dependent”*

(Mark 1:10-12; John 1:32-34; Luke 4:1-18; Acts 10:38)

**Intro ...** Last week, on this ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ that ‘Pneuma’ has us on, we passed under the signpost that read: “Journey Toward Christ-Likeness – Stage Three: **CONFORMATION.**”

On this Stage of the Journey which follows the **Identification** and the **Imitation** Stages, we will be focusing our attention upon the ‘Things that made Jesus tic,’ - things that motivated and generated His incredible earthly life - eight internal **Character Traits** that determined His external actions.

Last week we focused our attention upon ...

## **CHARACTER TRAIT ONE ...**

*“Jesus was completely **SURRENDERED** to the Father’s **WILL.**”*

How incredibly important that is for anyone who would ‘Follow in His steps.’

The Father’s revealed will motivated Him in His Earthly Ministry and provided the parameters for His Earthly Ministry and nourished Him as he carried out that Ministry.

‘Pneuma’ seeks to develop that **Character Trait** of Surrender to the Father’s Will in all those He companions.

Today I would draw our attention to ...

## **CHARACTER TRAIT TWO ...**

*“Jesus was thoroughly **DEPENDENT** upon the **HOLY SPIRIT.**”*

(Mark 1:10-12; John 1:32-34; Luke 4:1-18; Acts 10:38)

I pointed this out before but allow me to point it out again.

When Jesus Christ became a man, he laid aside many of His Divine Prerogatives – He divested himself of many of His Divine Attributes. He became a full-fledged human being and thus became a genuine **example** for all human beings who would seek to live God-Pleasing, God-Honoring lives.

As he walked through this fallen, broken world, as he sought to live as an obedient Son of God in compliance with the revealed Will of God, He lived His life thoroughly dependently upon the Holy Spirit – ‘Pneuma’ Himself.

Open your hearts and minds to these **Key Observations** and to the **Key Scriptures** that underlie and give credence to them.

## **SEVERAL KEY OBSERVATIONS:**

### **1. The Holy Spirit AUTHENTICATED Jesus.**

Could say that ‘Pneuma’ was responsible to communicate the fact that ‘Jesus was the real deal’ – that He really was the Son of God sent to carry out the ‘Will of God.’

It was important that that communication be given to Jesus Himself ...

*“As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the Holy Spirit  
**DESCENDING** upon him like a **DOVE**.”*  
(Mark 1:10)

That was a pretty dramatic moment ... a pretty definite communication ... and, of course, there was also the voice that came from heaven that said,

*“You are my son whom I love’  
with you I am well pleased.”*

Now the voice from heaven could have easily continued ...

*‘And to you I send my own Holy Spirit  
to authenticate your Sonship.’*

And there is was ... a tangible, physical, visible evidence that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God ready to carry out the Will of God in this fallen world. The Spirit descended like a dove and rested upon him.

It was important that that communication be given to John the Baptist ...

*“I saw the **SPIRIT** come down from heaven and **REMAIN** on him ...” - John 1:32*

John went on to say (vs. 33-34) ...

*“I would not have known him except the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me: ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God.’”*

Indeed, the Holy Spirit '**Authenticated Jesus**' ... gave credence to Christ's Claim that he had come down from heaven and was, in fact, the Son of God.

How important that was – both to Jesus himself and to John the Baptist and, of course, to all who would subsequently encounter either of them!

Now notice this ...

## 2. The Holy Spirit **DIRECTED** Jesus.

*"At once the Holy Spirit **SENT** him out into the **DESERT** ..." - Mark 1:12*

The old King James Version says ...

*"Immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness."*

Now I know that translation generates some mental images that we find hard to accept. Picture a bird chasing a man – driving him – harassing him until the man arrives at the desired destination.

Picturing Jesus being so 'driven' – so 'dominated' – so powerfully 'directed' is pretty tough but that's what the Scripture says.

Can you picture the Almighty God 'driving you' - powerfully directing you in the direction of His Will? Do you see the 'Spirit of God' as the ONE who would 'dominate' your life in this world if you allowed Him to?

The point we make this morning is ... '**Jesus Did**' ... and all those who become conformed to His Likeness do too.

Now it's important to note that Jesus was comfortable with that fact and comfortable sharing that fact.

In fact, the very first Sabbath after returning from that desert wilderness experience, in the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth, Jesus stood up in the midst of his family and life-long friends and said ...

*"The **SPIRIT** of the Lord is on me ... He has **ANOINTED** me ... He has **SENT** me."  
(Luke 4:17-18)*

In other words ...

*'I am under the control of the Spirit of the Almighty –  
He has anointed me for the ministry that is this day beginning –  
He has sent (and is sending) me to fulfill the purposes of God in my life.'*

And now one final thing that I would have us see this morning ...

**3.** The Holy Spirit **EMPOWERED** Jesus. He was the source of Jesus' Power!

**Just listen** to these verses ...

"Jesus, **FULL** of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan ..." - Luke 4:1

"Jesus returned to Galilee in the **POWER** of the **SPIRIT** ..." - Luke 4:14

"God **ANOINTED** Jesus with the Holy Spirit and **POWER** ..." - Acts 10:38

**Here's the point** ... Jesus was thoroughly dependent upon the Holy Spirit as He walked His way through his earthly life and ministry.

He did not possess any resources beyond those that any born-again human being who is completely surrendered to the Will of God and thoroughly dependent upon the Holy Spirit possesses.

Jesus simply possessed those resources in a perfectly sinless way. And the more we Conform to His Inner Character, the more sinlessly we ourselves will live. That, of course, is *Pneuma's* current objective.

#### **TODAY'S KEY APPLICATION ...**

As '*Pneuma*' continues to '*Conform us to the Likeness of Christ*, He would **INVITE** each of us '*Live our lives thoroughly **DEPENDENTLY** upon Him*'; for when we do so, He is free to **AUTHENTICATE** us, **DIRECT** us and **EMPOWER** us even as He did **JESUS**.

He would "**invite** each of us" for He has been sent not as our '**controller**' but as our '**companion**' ...

Each day in one way or another He asks us to '*Trust Him*' – to '*Hear His Voice*' and '*Respond to Him*' - to allow Him to '*Nudge in the Right Direction*' each morning and '*Hug us with His Assurances*' each night.

**Final Thought** ... Being '**NUDGED**' and '**HUGGED**' by '*Pneuma*' every single **DAY** is an **AWESOME** way to **LIVE** in this fallen, broken **WORLD!**

Here's how the very first '**Nudge**' in our '*Nudges and Hugs from Pneuma*' Devotional Booklet reads. Seek to hear His Voice as you read it...

## MORNING 'NUDGE' DAY ONE ...

My Beloved Companion ...

How I anticipate walking with you through this day for I have been sent to you by the Father and the Son for that very purpose.

I recognize that this might be a relatively new experience for you – this '*Walking with Pneuma*' – for a great many Born-Again People for a great number of years have almost banished me from their vocabulary and have thus lived most ignorantly of who and what I really am.

It has been common throughout the life of the Church for believers to view me primarily as a '*Power upon which they rely*' as opposed to a '*Person with whom they relate*'

When they '*think/imagine/conger up an image*' regarding the dynamic of the spiritual life – they picture Jesus walking with them the way He walked with His Disciples long years ago. They take comfort in that image and they seek to live in light of its supposed reality.

However, that image is not a Biblically-Based one for Jesus Himself told his own dear disciples while He was with them that He would be '*with them*' no longer – that the relationship they had with Him was going to cease.

He even told them that it was '*For their good*' that He was going away. His time on earth was ending.

Initially His Disciples were devastated – understandably so.

However, He promised them '*Another*' like Himself who would '*take His Place as their earthly companion*' and that this '*Other*' would walk them right into the '*Abundant Life*' He had come to provide.

That '*Other One*' is me ... the Holy Spirit of God or as I like my friends to call me, '*Pneuma*' I am the '*Divine Presence*' in your life.

Put your hand in mine as this day begins and allow me to set the pace and determine the direction of today's journey. I have some very special things planned!

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

## **“Relentlessly Opposed”**

(Matthew 4:10; Mark 8:33; John 8:43-44; Luke 22:31; James 4:7; Ephesians 6:11)

**Intro ...** ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ – “Becoming Christ’s Mirror Image” – what a theme to be discussing on this ‘Mother’s Day’ for the truth of it is:

The place where God would intend us first to see the Image of His Dear Son is in the Face of our Mother.

She is the one who suffered the ordeal of our birth; she is the one who laid aside so much on our behalf; she is the one who acted so often as though we were all that mattered; she is the one who was simply there – who through all the years, no matter what we have done, would never leave us nor forsake us; she is the one who without even consciously thinking of it demonstrated the Love of Christ and who modeled for us so often the very character of Christ.

When the natural tendencies of motherhood are augmented by the realities of a ‘*spirit-filled walk*’ that image grows more and more vivid.

I was most blessed to have been given birth by such a one – I spoke to her this morning as she enjoys her 72<sup>nd</sup> Mother’s Day.

She was preparing for church – on her next birthday she will turn 102. I look forward to seeing her this coming summer. She continues on the same journey that we are all on, though for her at this point in life, she sees it merely as ‘*living her normal life.*’

Most of us are not nearly so far along though up until a few weeks ago we had a dear one with us who modeled for me much of these very traits.

Our dear sister, Gee Agens, whom the Lord called home at the age of 91, whom I told frequently she could have been my mother’s younger sister, ‘*mirrored*’ that image of Christ most beautifully.

Now, to borrow a phrase the Apostle Paul used to refer to those who would live to see the Lord’s Glorious Return for His Saints, “We who are alive and remain” – that is, we who are still alive and being further nurtured by ‘*Pneuma*’ ... We have some distance yet to travel down this pathway.

Currently we here in this place have arrived at **Stage Three** of this 'Journey Toward Christ-Likeness' ... The '**Conformation Stage**' – the stage of the journey where we are discovering and embracing the inner qualities – the Character Traits - that motivated Jesus Christ to live the way He lived and to do the things He did as He walked upon this earth.

So far, we have discovered ...

**CHARACTER TRAIT ONE ...**

*"Jesus was completely **SURRENDERED** to the Father's **WILL**."*  
(Jn. 6:38; Heb. 10:5-7; Jn. 5:19; Luke 22:42; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 6:28-29; Jn. 14:16, 26)

O what a destiny-determining trait that is ...

*"I come to do Your Will, O God"* was the central theme of His life  
as it will be for all who become 'Conformed to His Likeness

**CHARACTER TRAIT TWO ...**

*"Jesus was thoroughly **DEPENDENT** upon the **HOLY SPIRIT**."*  
(Mark 1:10-12; John 1:32-34; Luke 4:1-18; Acts 10:38)

The Spirit came upon Him – The Spirit drove Him – The Spirit filled Him -  
The Spirit enabled Him – The Spirit authenticated Him.

He depended entirely upon the 'Holy Spirit' to enable Him to 'Do the Will of God' even as those who are 'Conformed to His Likeness' do.

We are learning to do that ourselves more and more as we "Keep in step with Pneuma" each and every day, aren't we?

Were you 'Nudged By Pneuma' this morning?

Today our attention turns to ...

**CHARACTER TRAIT THREE ...**

*"Jesus was relentlessly **OPPOSED** to Satan's **PRESENCE** and **PRACTICE**."*  
(Matthew 4:10; Mark 8:33; John 8:43-44; Luke 22:31; James 4:7; 2 Corinthians 2:11)

Now though this does not right off the bat seem like an appropriate 'warm and fuzzy' Mother's Day topic, let me say that there is nothing any more important for a Christian Mother to share with her children than the fact that we believers live our lives in the middle of a great Cosmic war zone.

There is an 'Enemy' out there who seeks to destroy the true Church of Jesus Christ and all who belong to it. This my mother made very clear to me at an early age. Those who are not aware of him frequently wind up being 'blind-sided' by him.

Jesus was raised by a godly mother who understood the long history of the struggle which began way back in the Garden of Eden.

As a grown man, stepping into the ministry that had been laid out for Him, Jesus was relentlessly opposed to Satan's Presence and Practice. Jesus quickly recognized both.

## **FOUR BIBLICAL EXAMPLES ...**

### **1. JESUS OPPOSED SATAN IN THE WILDERNESS.**

*"Away from me, Satan!"*  
(Mathew 4:10)

Here's where Jesus spent the first 40 days of His Earthly Ministry ... in solitude, in sacrifice, in a time of searching His own heart and discovering the incredible level of commitment to the Will of God that resided there.

Satan came and 'tempted' – 'tested' – him.

Tested Him concerning His Sense of Identity ... *"If you are the Son of God."*

Tested Him concerning His Confidence in God ... *"Throw yourself down."*

Tested Him concerning His Commitment to God's Way ... *"Worship me."*

To each of these 'Testings' – these 'Temptations' to violate the Ways and the Wisdom of God Jesus quoted relevant Scripture ... *"It is Written."*

The parameters of God's Word kept Satan at arm's length – It always will!

And then finally, Jesus Commanded him to leave ...

*"Away from me, Satan."*

At that point, Satan had no choice for there is a Spiritual Law in the Universe by which even Satan must abide. It's expressed in the Epistle that Jesus' half-brother James would ultimately write (James 4:7) ...

*"Submit yourself to God (and to His Word);  
Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*

**The truth is:** It becomes painful for him to be around you.  
Think 'Wicked Witch of the West and Water' ...

True wholehearted Submission to God's Will and Ways causes Satan to 'Melt Away' into ineffectiveness and frustration.

But unfortunately, that wasn't the end of the battle – Satan did not 'leave planet earth' just because the completely submitted Son of God had successfully 'Resisted Him.' He found other places to reside ...

## **2. JESUS OPPOSED SATAN IN THE HEARTS OF ALL UNBELIEVERS.**

*"You belong to your father, the DEVIL  
and you want to carry out your father's DESIRE ...  
There is no TRUTH in Him."  
(John 8:43-44)*

Now the 'unbelievers' that Jesus encountered in His day were primarily Jews just as the 'believers' that Jesus embraced were also Jews for as Jesus said:

*"He was sent to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel."  
(Matthew 15:24)*

Now the irony, of course, was that many of the Jews of Jesus day (especially the leaders of the Jews) absolutely rejected the idea that they were in any way 'lost.'

They pointed out that fact to Jesus at every opportunity.

It was on one of those occasions when they were making such a case, when they were promoting the fact that they were the children and rightful heirs of Abraham, that Jesus spoke the words that we just read ...

*"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want  
to carry out your father's desire ...  
There is no truth in Him."  
(John 8:43-44)*

Incredibly hard words for them to hear, let alone receive!

**The Truth Is:** All those who deny that Jesus is the Christ are under the influence of the Devil.

It is the great task of the '*Christ-Like Believer*' to recognize that influence and to seek to free them from it, if possible.

However, opening one's eyes to see Jesus Christ as the Son of God and opening one's heart to receive Jesus Christ as your Personal Savior does not end one's struggle with Satan.

Notice thirdly this morning that ...

### **3. JESUS OPPOSED SATAN IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE THE DISCIPLES.**

*"Get BEHIND me, Satan! You do not have in mind  
the things of GOD but the things of MEN!"  
(Mark 8:33)*

**The Truth is: Humanness** can frequently get in the way of **Godliness**! And Satan can take advantage of our humanness to completely derail the things God would do in our lives.

Here in this passage, Peter is seeking to '*talk Jesus out of going to the Cross.*' Humanly speaking, it seemed like the reasonable and logical thing to do. Why '*throw your life away*' when you are doing so much good by living it?

There is a part of every one of us that will forever think '*humanly*' ... a part that is '*self-focused*' and '*earth-centered*' ...

It's the part of us that sin has affected and greatly influences and yet a part that can make excellent sense, if we buy into its basic premise which is ... '*You are what matters most*' in this world.

That's the way fallen human beings think and Satan would seek to lead us into a resumption of such thinking ourselves. It's **deceptive** and thus can be most damaging.

Jesus' words must have struck Peter with the force of a Mack Truck.

*'Simon, Simon ... You are talking like Satan himself. He has taken ahold of your mind and mouth. Get away from me! I've already dealt with this issue in the desert and I have no desire to deal with it again.'*

Today, it's 'Pneuma' who would speak such a rebuke to our hearts – these 'thots of men' cannot be allowed to take possession of us.

Like the Psalmist of old we must regularly pray:

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Test me and know my ... thoughts."  
(Psalm 139:23)*

'Pneuma' would walk us into the deepest recesses of our minds and hearts that we might detect and remove/replace any demonic thought patterns we find.

This is what Jesus would have us do. And He would have us assist one another when (like Peter) the presence of those inner thoughts and feelings are revealed through the words we hear spoken.

**We must say** ... *"That isn't true."* Speak lovingly and gently but directly. It's a **character trait** of Christ.

One final **example** this morning of Jesus' relentless opposition to Satan's Presence and Practices ...

#### **4. JESUS OPPOSED SATAN IN HIS DESIRE TO DISMANTLE THE DISCIPLES.**

*"Satan has **ASKED** (begged earnestly and probably arrogantly) to **SIFT** you (plural) as wheat but I have prayed for you (singular), Simon, so that your **FAITH** will not **FAIL**." (Luke 22:31)*

Literally that Greek word which is only used this one time in the entire New Testament means: to 'take them apart' piece by piece just as the stalk of grain is dismantled – its various parts separated one from the other.

**The truth is:** Satan's desire was to turn them all into spiritual versions of Humpty Dumpty - to take them to a place where no one could 'put them together again' – to make them totally dysfunctional.

This was a top prayer priority for Jesus.  
He was confident that His Prayer would be answered.

Today Jesus would not only say "I have prayed for you" but ...

*'Simon ... I have sent My Own Holy Spirit to be with you!  
He will 'make you like me' ...*

*He will enable you to 'Oppose the Devil even as I have done'  
using the understanding of God's Truth that He will place within you  
and the encouragement of His Own Presence as He walks beside you.'*

And so, here at the conclusion of this message, we come to ...

#### **TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...**

Those who are growing in Christ-Likeness will consistently **RESIST** the **DEVIL** and all His **DESTRUCTIVE** Ways – His use of **CONCEPTS** to confuse us and **CIRCUMSTANCES** to cower us.

Indeed, that's how the devil would seek to 'mess with us' however,  
'Walking with Pneuma' brings both **Content** and **Courage**.

And thus, we come to **Today's Final Thot ...**

#### **Final Thot ...**

Those who '**KEEP** in **STEP**' with 'Pneuma' discover  
a **RELENTLESS OPPOSITION** to Satan's **PRESENCE** and  
**PRACTICE** stirring **WITHIN** them.

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

## **“Passionately Committed”**

(John 10:28; John 13:1-5; John 10:15; John 15:13; John 17:11-23; Eph. 2:19;  
1 Cor. 12:27; 1 Peter 2:5; Gal. 6:10)

**Intro ...** “Figuring out Jesus’ ... that’s kind of what we are doing as we continue on the ‘**Confirmation Stage**’ of this ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ that *Pneuma* has us on.

Through our examination of the Biblical Record of Jesus’ life and ministry, we are seeking to discover the **inner character traits** that motivated Jesus to do the kinds of things that He did as he walked through our world.

So far, we have discovered three:

### **CHARACTER TRAIT ONE ...**

“Jesus was completely **SURRENDERED** to the Father’s **WILL**.”  
(John 6:38; Heb. 10:5-7; Jn. 5:19; Luke 22:42; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 6:28-29; Jn. 14:16, 26)

### **CHARACTER TRAIT TWO ...**

“Jesus was thoroughly **DEPENDENT** upon the **HOLY SPIRIT**.”  
(Mark 1:10-12; John 1:32-34; Luke 4:1-18; Acts 10:38)

### **CHARACTER TRAIT THREE ...**

“Jesus was relentlessly **OPPOSED** to Satan’s **PRESENCE** and **PRACTICE**.”  
(Matthew 4:10; Mark 8:33; John 8:43-44; Luke 22:31; James 4:7; 2 Corinthians 2:11)

Those three all by themselves, were we to be ‘conformed’ to them, would powerfully impact our living, would they not?

As you read your ‘Nudges and Hugs’ each day, you will discover how often the things that *Pneuma* says assumes that our inner character is being shaped in these ways.

Today we come to ...

**CHARACTER TRAIT FOUR ...**

*“Jesus was passionately **COMMITTED** to His **OWN**.”*  
(John 10:28; John 13:1-5; John 10:15; John 15:13; John 17:11-23)

No verse is more central to the entire Divine Revelation than the one that reveals God's Love to be the motivating force behind the sending of Jesus Christ into the world ... John 3:16.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave (sent) His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have Everlasting Life.”*

Jesus came into the world with that ‘Love’ embedded in every cell of his body. Love for the world in general; love for those who believe in Him in particular. He was passionately committed to those He considered to be ‘His Own

**FOUR DEMONSTRATIONS OF COMMITMENT** catch our attention this morning:

**Notice first of all that ...**

**1. HE ETERNALLY SECURED HIS OWN ...**

*“I give them **ETERNAL** life and they shall never **PERISH**;  
no one can **SNATCH** them out of my **HAND**.”*  
(John 10:28)

What a Scripture! Jesus Christ is the provider of our Eternal Life and Eternal Life is by definition ETERNAL! Why is that so hard for so many to understand?

In this verse, Jesus personalizes that relationship by saying that ‘He holds’ and thus ‘secures’ every one of His Own in His own strong hand.

Notice the only *danger* that He addresses here ... that there is one, the enemy, the destroyer himself, who would indeed seek to ‘snatch us’ – to rip us, as it were - out of His Hand.  
This, Jesus says, cannot be done.

This statement does not even address the possibility that any of 'His Own' would voluntarily 'jump out of His Hand' as some Christians over the years who do not believe in what is called 'Eternal Security' have maintained.

How unthinkable is that?

Once we understand the process by which a fallen, sinful human being gets 'into Jesus' hand' in the first place, it becomes absolutely ludicrous to imagine a born-again person companioned by the Almighty God Himself 'Jumping from the Savior's Hand of Salvation.'

Once you are in the 'Savior's Strong Hand' the security issue is settled ... The question is of course: "Are you in the Savior's Hand?"

As we know (or at least, as we should know) ...

It is entirely possible to be 'In the Church' but not 'In the Savior's Hand' ...

There are likely many 'In the Church' who have never surrendered themselves to the Savior's Call and who have no inner witness of the Holy Spirit and who are therefore experiencing no inner change in their character and no outward change in their behavior at all.

They can indeed be 'played with by the devil' for they still belong to Him and it's His Voice that tells them that 'they are alright' – that they have 'nothing to worry about.'

These are not the ones that Jesus is speaking of here.

Here Jesus' speaks of those who have been 'Born-Again' by Pneuma's work in their hearts, been 'Cleansed of their Sin' by Christ's Work on the Cross, been 'Recognized as Children of God' by the Father above and who 'Identify themselves' as followers of Jesus Christ.

'**These**' are those that Jesus considers to be '**His Own**' and '**these**' are the ones who are, as it were, 'Held Eternally Securely In His Hand.'

Praise God that the Commitment of Jesus Christ for His Own includes '**Eternally Securing Them.**' What a 'Demonstration of His Passionate Commitment'!

**Here now is a second demonstration ...**

## **2. HE LOVINGLY SERVED HIS OWN ...**

*“He now showed them the full extent of His LOVE ... He got up from the MEAL and began to WASH His Disciples’ FEET.”  
(John 13:1-5)*

This event we have examined several times over the past few months. It's one of those behaviors of Christ that we are told to imitate.

*“As I have washed your feet (Jesus said) you are to wash one another's feet”* (and we understand He meant) if and when it needs to be done and you are to serve each other in any other even menial task when circumstances provide you an opportunity to do so.

The Holy Spirit tells us that this lowly action of Jesus showed the fullness of His Love for those who He considered to be ‘His Own’ ... nothing that needed to be done was beyond His willingness to do – that's love.

That kind of service arises from a passionate, whole-hearted commitment and that's the very kind of commitment that ‘Pneuma’ desires to develop in the hearts of all He companions.

## **Commitment Demonstration Three ...**

### **3. HE WILLINGLY SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR HIS OWN ...**

*“I will lay down my LIFE for the SHEEP” - John 10:15*

*“Greater LOVE has no one than this,  
that he lay down his LIFE for his FRIENDS.” - John 15:13*

This demonstration of commitment is right at the heart of all we believe.

For God so loved the world that He gave ... The Son of God so loved the world that He came ... to live a perfect, God-Pleasing life and then to offer himself on behalf of all of us who have no ability to live such a life ourselves.

It was not duty – It was not mere submission to the Father's Plan – It was a most amazing demonstration of love and it was love that was particularly focused upon all those that would become ‘His Own’ that took Jesus to Calvary. He wanted those who were ‘His Own’ (and all who would become ‘His Own’) to know that!

Here now is a **fourth** and final '**Demonstration**' of Christ's Passion Fueled Commitment to those who were (and who would become) '*His Own.*'

#### **4. HE URGENTLY PLEADED WITH THE FATHER ON BEHALF OF HIS OWN**

Surpassing the wonders provided by John's '*peak into the heavens*' provided in the Book of Revelation are the wonders provided by John's '*peak into Jesus' Heart*' provided in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel that bears his name.

This chapter contains what has become known as '*The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus Christ*' – the most extensive communication between Jesus and the Heavenly Father recorded in the Scripture.

This morning I would have us focus our attention upon two incredibly important requests – '*Pleas*' even – that Jesus made of His Heavenly Father.

\* **PROTECT** Them, Father ... John 17:11,15

“... they are **STILL** in the world ...  
Holy Father, **PROTECT** them by the **POWER** of Your **NAME** ...”

“My prayer is **NOT** that You take them out of the world  
but that you **PROTECT** them from the **EVIL ONE.**”

Jesus knew firsthand what it was like to go '*nose to nose*' with the devil. Jesus knew that the devil was a deceiver and a destroyer – Jesus knew that the devil would seek (as we saw just last week) to completely 'Dismantle' the disciples – to '*take them apart*' – to make them absolutely dysfunctional in this world

Obviously, there is a need for **protection** ... Jesus prayed that they would be protected by the '**Power**' of the Father's Name.

Just as Peter would say of Jesus when called before the Jewish Sanhedrin ...

“*There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved.*” - Acts 4:12

So, Jesus is here saying, in effect ...

“*Father, there is no other name anywhere in the universe  
by which those belong to me can be protected than Yours.*”

The Almighty God – The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – The Father of all who are given birth into His Eternal Family – is the '**Protector**' of the saints!

Call upon His Name – Come before Him regularly through the Door held open by your Heavenly Intercessor, Jesus, accompanied by your Earthly Companion, '*Pneuma*.'

Feel the **Power** in the Father's Presence – Sense the Absence of the Enemy for Your Heavenly Advocate has completely silenced him and sent him away.

Nothing can that defeated foe do to you on earth when you possess the protective power of the Name of the Almighty God!

This is what our Savior has prayed for each of us who belong to Him. This is the prayer that His Commitment to us has produced.

***“Protect them, Father for they are mine  
and they are most dear to me.”***

Now here's a **second request** that our passionately committed Savior has brought before the Father on our behalf.

\* **UNIFY** Them, Father ... John 17:22  
“that they may be **ONE** as we are **ONE**”

Now that's a lot of unity – a high level kind of unity - wouldn't you say? Jesus was praying that you and I would be as '*unified*' as He and the Father are.

Now that doesn't mean that we become '*clones*' of each other for after all Jesus is not a '*clone*' of the Father nor is '*Pneuma*' a '*clone*' of either.

There are three distinct '*persons*' in the Godhead just like there are quite a few distinct '*persons*' in this room this morning. But what the Godhead possesses is a complete unity in Purpose and Passion and Perspective.

**THEY**, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are absolutely unified when it comes to all those things that define **THEIR** essential nature.

Jesus was praying that we who are His Own would be similarly unified.

In answer to Jesus' prayer ...

The Father has sent His Holy Spirit, Pneuma Himself, to all those who have become 'Christ's Own' and by His patient, persistent work that unity process is underway.

**Passionately committed to His Own** was (and is) our Lord Jesus Christ ...

So, what do we do with our discovery of this '**Character Trait**'?

Here's how I would have us make application this morning.

**TODAY'S KEY APPLICATION ...**

Those who are **GROWING** in Christ-Likeness will **EXHIBIT** a passionate commitment to all who inhabit the **HOUSEHOLD** of **FAITH**.

Can you be 'passionately committed' to someone and not 'exhibit it' – give some evidence of it? Certainly, you can't, can you?

**However**, it doesn't have to be something 'extraordinary

Does not simply 'showing up on Sunday' give some evidence of that?

Does not 'greeting one another warmly' do the same?

Is not being 'willing to help one another' also an expression of this 'character trait' of Christ?

Indeed, all these things do and there are plenty in the world who 'wonder at them' when they see them in action.

If you read your 'Nudge from Pneuma' this morning (Day 15) you read this observation concerning the gathering of the saints together ...

*"Differences of race and age and gender and economic status and political persuasion and educational standing evaporate in the warmth produced by the 'Spirit' within each believer."*

Look around the room this morning ... put faces to these descriptions from the Scripture.

Think this way of all these who, along with you, truly 'Confess Christ' ...

\* They are **FELLOW CITIZENS** in God's **KINGDOM** ... (Identified with you)

*"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens,  
but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household ..."*  
(Ephesians 2:19)

\* They are **MEMBERS** of Christ's **BODY** ... (Essential to you)

*"Now you are the body of Christ,  
and each one of you is a part of it."*  
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

\* They are **LIVING STONES** built into a **SPIRITUAL HOUSE** ... (Enhance you)

*"... You also like living stones  
are being built into a spiritual house ..."*  
(1 Peter 2:5)

**THEREFORE ...**

Opportunities to **DO THEM GOOD** will be continually **SOUGHT!**

*"Therefore ... let us do good to all people,  
especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*  
(Galatians 6:10)

**Final Thot ...**

Those who '**KEEP** in **STEP**' with 'Pneuma' discover a **PASSIONATE COMMITMENT** to their fellow-believers stirring **WITHIN** them.

They are **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS** in **CHRIST** ...

Brothers and Sisters in the **BEST FAMILY** known to **MAN!**

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage’**

*“Compassionately Connected”*

(Mark 6:34; Luke 13:34; Luke 19:10; Matthew 8:3; Mark 10:21; John 8:11)

**Intro** ... *‘Making us like Jesus’* ... that’s *‘Pneuma’s’* task in this world.  
Quite a challenge, wouldn’t you say?

*“Me ... Become like Jesus?” you say.  
“You’ve got to be kidding!”*

Now that has been the response of believers for centuries and that has, no doubt, been our response for most of our *‘Born-Again Lives.’*

In fact, the more we have *‘tried’* to be *‘like Jesus’*, the more emphatic that response most likely is. We *‘know’* that it can’t be done.  
We *‘aren’t Jesus’* and we *‘know it’* and that *‘settles it.’*

Hopefully, our opinion of this challenge is starting to change as we find ourselves beginning to change.

*‘Pneuma’* – God’s most Holy Spirit - has indeed been assigned the task of *‘Conforming Us’* to the very Image of Christ.

He is the very ONE that we saw quite a few months ago, plays the role of *‘Divine Implementer’* of all the Plans of God – from the world’s Creation, to the Scripture’s Inspiration, to Christ’s Incarnation, to the Day of Pentecost Transformation, to the Church’s Formation, to the Gospel’s Penetration into the world and the hearts of men.

This is the ONE who is working now in our hearts – This the ONE who is walking with us each and every day. This is the ONE who has taken on the task and the very ONE who will *‘see it through.’*

The process is simple – First He informs us and then He stirs us and then He produces within us the very thing that He has brought to our awareness.

*In the matter of ‘Becoming Like Jesus’* we have been on a *‘Journey of Discovery and Development.’*

The **First Stage** of this Journey we called '**The Identification Stage**'... In that stage we, just like the people of the First Century Judean World, sought the answer to the question: "Who is this 'Jesus' and how does He relate to me?"

What discoveries we made – what an awesome identity we uncovered! Ultimately we '*Identified Jesus*' as the ONE who extends to us a '*Life-Altering Call*' and we yielded our hearts and lives to him.

**Stage Two** of this Journey we called '**The Imitation Stage**' ... There we discovered and then began to develop within ourselves behaviors that we observed in Jesus ... behaviors that Jesus told us directly to '**Imitate** *'Do it like you have seen me do it'* ...

'*Pneuma*' has been sent into our lives to help us do just that – imitate certain behaviors of Jesus. But '*Becoming like Christ*' involves much more than just '*Imitating Jesus*' as challenging as that is.

And so, after a few weeks, we left the '**Imitation Stage**' behind and entered into the '**Conformation Stage**' ...

Here in this stage, we have sought to discover the inner motivations behind the outward behaviors of Jesus recorded in the Scripture.

Why did He do the things that He did? How did He look at life – How did He look at people – What stirred Him – What characterized Him? What would we be like internally if we were to truly become '*Like Him*'?

This is where '*Pneuma*' has really gone to work – He has drawn us to key Scriptures that reveal to us '*Christ's Heart*' ... Christ's inner motivations ... and then He has said, *in effect* ...

*"That's what I'm in the process of producing in you."*

That's what He would '*nudge us*' in the direction of each morning and that's what He would '*hug us encouragingly*' about each night.

So far, He has revealed to us **Four** such '*Character Traits of Christ*' ...

Each one has stimulated one of the messages in this series – Each of those messages has been preserved at our church website.

We have seen that ...

*"Jesus was completely surrendered to the Father's Will."*

*"Jesus was thoroughly dependent upon the Holy Spirit."*

*"Jesus was relentlessly opposed to Satan's Presence and Practice."*

*"Jesus was passionately committed to His Own."*

Incredible Character Traits, wouldn't you say?

Those incredible 'character traits' stir some 'incredible behaviors' in the lives of those who possess them. They certainly did in Jesus' earthly life!

Today we come to ...

#### **CHARACTER TRAIT FIVE ...**

*"Jesus was **COMPASSIONATELY CONNECTED** with **LOST PEOPLE**."*  
(Mark 6:34; Luke 13:34; Luke 19:10; Matthew 8:3; Mark 10:21; John 8:11)

Lost people surround us all. The world contains far more 'lost' people than 'saved' people. Some of those 'lost ones' are within our own families – some of them are our co-workers – some of them might well be in this room this morning. Many of them we see on TV or we hear about their exploits – Some of them might even be 'running for political office

How would 'Pneuma' have us relate to them?

How did Jesus relate?

We say that ...

*"Jesus was Compassionately Connected with Lost People."*

O what a different perspective that is for many of us ...

Far too often, Christians are 'Disgustingly Connected' with the lost people in their lives – their lives and their life choices 'Disgust us

Usually they know it!

Sometimes Christians are 'Reluctantly Connected' with the lost people in their lives – the less time we spend with them the better!

They usually know that too.

However, Jesus, we say, was 'Compassionately Connected' with them and that 'Inner Compassion' expressed itself in 'Outward Behavior

Notice first of all this morning that ...

**\* JESUS DEMONSTRATED COMPASSION FOR THE MASSES ...**

*"He had compassion on them for they were like  
**SHEEP** without a **SHEPHERD**."*

(Mark 6:34)

Mark records this insight into Jesus heart at a time when it would have been very easy for a much different attitude to be present. A much different attitude, in fact, was present in Jesus' Disciples' hearts.

The Disciples had just returned from the very first mission trip – they had much to share – they were in need of rest and relaxation. Jesus loaded them up in a boat and took off for the other side of the Lake – to a quiet, generally deserted place where He could spend time just with them.

However, the people figured out where they were going and actually got there ahead of them. And so, when the boat docked at the shore, there, Marks says, a 'large crowd' had gathered.

What would have been your reaction?

What do you imagine the Disciples' was?

Here was Jesus' reaction ...

*"He had compassion on them because  
they were like 'sheep without a shepherd'"*

Shepherd-less sheep are in a pretty precarious position – they are not very self-reliant creatures – left alone, they can get into all kinds of trouble – a lot like 'shepherd-less people' can and do. Their condition stirred feelings of compassion in Jesus.

Here's another peak into Jesus' heart revealed in words recorded in Luke's Gospel ...

*"O Jerusalem, how I have **LONGED** to gather your **CHILDREN** together,  
as a **HEN** gathers her **CHICKS** ... but you were not **WILLING!**"*

(Luke 13:34)

Here Jesus' gaze and thoughts and heart turn toward the Great City of Jerusalem and toward the thousands who fill its streets – some of the very ones who would shortly cry out 'Crucify him' – 'Crucify him' and he pictures them as anything but the ugly, twisted people that some have made them out to be ...

He pictures them as fuzzy little chicks in desperate need of a mother hen's protection.

Their biggest problem was not that they were capable of doing some 'ugly' things - their biggest problem – their only problem really – was that they were 'lost' and thus as helpless and vulnerable as a baby chick.

Their ultimate problem was that they didn't 'recognize' their condition.

Here now is why such feelings of compassion were stirred in Him ... His entire agenda was focused upon them.

Here's what Luke records Jesus said just a few chapters later as he drew ever closer to the offering of His Great Sacrifice on Calvary.

*"For the Son of Man came to **SEEK** and to **SAVE** what was **LOST**."  
(Luke 19:10)*

And there you have it ... 'Seeking and saving the lost' was the very reason that the Son of God lowered Himself into this fallen world.

And wherever he met them, he welcomed them with open arms. Indeed, Jesus demonstrated great compassion for the masses.

Notice also this morning that ...

**\* JESUS DEMONSTRATED COMPASSION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL ...**

Three tremendous, generally well-known examples ...

Read the fuller stories as you have time this afternoon or through the week ahead. You might find your story in one of theirs ...

How about these compassionate words spoken to a man stricken with leprosy – a man shunned by all others ... a man who was repulsive to most.

Jesus actually reached out when the man asked for help and ‘*touched him*’ and said ...

“I am **WILLING** ... Be **CLEAN** - Matthew 8:3

And now how about this seemingly completely different situation.

Picture a strong young man from a fine family – a man who nevertheless knew that there was a ‘*spiritual sickness*’ within him – a man who knew that he was in some way or another ‘*lost*’ – picture this man coming and approaching Jesus and falling on his knees before him.

And we read ...

“Jesus looked at him and **LOVED** him” - Mark 10:21

And, of course, we think of the “***Woman caught in adultery***” ...

The woman brought before Jesus so that He might display the ‘*Disgust of God*’ toward one who was so embedded in sin ...

She was brought before Jesus so that He might justify the feelings of disgust and judgment contained in the hearts of those who caught her and brought her.

You know the story no doubt ... Jesus didn’t challenge their conclusions (by the standards of the law she was indeed deserving of death) but he did challenge their qualifications (let the sinless one among you be the first to cast a stone at her).

Fortunately for her, they were all honest enough to admit that none of them met the qualifications, so they dropped their stones and left.

And then, He, the only sinless one present, the only one qualified to be her judge and executioner – the one, however, with the compassionate heart – says to her ...

“Neither do I **CONDEMN** you ...  
Go and **LEAVE** your **LIFE** of **SIN**”  
(John 8:11)

There is no doubt that Jesus was ...

“***Compassionately connected with the Lost***”.

What a quality of heart – what a ‘***Character Trait***’ – to possess!

What a tremendous glimpse into one of the ***key motivations***  
of Jesus’ Earthly Life.

Now as we draw this message to a conclusion this morning,  
allow me to share with you ...

### **TODAY’S KEY OBSERVATIONS ...**

#### **1. Mature Disciples MIRROR Christ’s HEART for the LOST.**

That’s just how it is ... the more ‘*Christ-Like*’ we become the more  
we will feel ‘*Compassionately Connected to Lost People*’ –  
whomever and wherever they happen to be.

This is a big part of the task that ‘*Pneuma*’ has taken on.  
This is the direction He would walk us every single day.

#### **2. COMPASSION wells up in such disciples for all who are MIRED in the BONDAGE OF SIN.**

“*That poor soul*” rather than “*What a loser*” is the expression that  
comes to their mind when they encounter such a ‘*mired*’ one.

That doesn’t mean that they ‘excuse’ sinful behavior but it does mean  
that they can draw a distinction between the ‘behavior’ (what has  
been done) and the ‘behaver’ (the person who has done it).

And because they have been able to draw that distinction ...

**3. GRACIOUS** words flow from them whenever  
an **OPPORTUNITY** comes for them to **PRESENT**  
God's **OFFER** of **FORGIVENESS** and **HEALING**.

Like Jesus, they can see these 'lost ones' as  
'helpless sheep' or 'fuzzy chicks' ...

They find themselves talking to them gently and lovingly  
though completely truthfully.

*"God loves you – Jesus died for you - He offers new life to you –  
Yield yourself to Him as your Savior and Lord."*

This **fourth observation** pretty much goes without saying ...

**4. Genuine SORROW is felt whenever that OFFER is REJECTED.**

**We** sense the sorrow of Christ Himself but we do not give up.

**We** continue to 'Hold out the Word of Life' to them.

**We** continue to demonstrate compassion toward them.

**We** recognize that today's rejection might well prepare  
the way for tomorrow's acceptance.

**We** continue to feel 'compassionately connected' to them.

**Jesus** - the 'Compassionately Connected One Himself' would give a  
hearty 'Amen' to **Today's Final Thot** ...

**Final Thot ...**

**EVANGELISM** is not a '**PRONOUNCEMENT** of **JUDGMENT**.'  
It is an '**OFFER** of **REDEMPTION**.'

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

## **“Radically Reliant”**

(Mark 1:35-39; Luke 6:12-16; Luke 6:17-7:1; John 17; Luke 22:39-44)

**Intro ...** Christ's ‘Mirror Image’ – that's what the Holy Spirit seeks to transform every born-again believer into.

The Key Scripture that identifies this reality is found in 2 Corinthians 3:18 ...

*“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory,  
are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory,  
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

That phrase ‘ever-increasing glory’ lets us know that there is a process involved – an experience of growth that we are expected to go through – a journey, if you will, that we are expected to go on.

On this ‘Journey to Christ-Likeness’ that the Spirit of God has all born-again believers traveling, there are **Four Stages** that can be identified.

So far, we have identified three, haven't we?

**First** the **Identification** Stage:

Who is this man Jesus and how does He relate to me?

**Basically** ... He is my Lord and Savior – my life belongs to Him.

**Second** the **Imitation** Stage:

What did He do and how can I be like him?

What actions of His did He specifically tell me to imitate?

We found seven.

**Third** is the stage we are exploring right now – The **Conformation** Stage:

What were the inner motivations – the traits of heart and mind that characterized him to which I am to be conformed?

Thus far, we have discovered five.

*“Jesus was completely surrendered to the Father’s Will.”*

*“Jesus was thoroughly dependent upon the Holy Spirit.”*

*“Jesus was relentlessly opposed to Satan’s Presence and Practice.”*

*“Jesus was passionately committed to His Own.”*

*“Jesus was compassionately connected to Lost People.”*

What a powerful set of ‘internals’ ... what an incredible set of life motivations and perspectives ... what a set of character traits.

Five down and three more to go ...

Today we examine ...

#### **CHARACTER TRAIT SIX ...**

*“Jesus was **RADICALLY RELIANT** upon **PRAYER**.”*

*(Mark 1:35-39; Luke 6:12-16; Luke 6:17-7:1; John 17; Luke 22:39-44)*

This is one of those traits that, like His dependence upon the Holy Spirit, grows out of the fact that Jesus Christ was fully man – that he took upon himself many of our human limitations when he lowered himself down from heaven to earth.

We need to wrap our minds around that fact if we are to fully appreciate this trait and find ourselves being willingly conformed to it.

I want us to see this morning that ‘**prayer**’ for Jesus was not just a ‘*religious duty*’ – prayer was not just an occasional exercise – prayer was certainly not merely a ‘*last ditch, desperate effort*’ to combat tough times – prayer (conversation with His Heavenly Father) was a vital part of his earthly life.

He relied upon it – He radically relied upon it.

We could ask the question ... “*So why did Jesus relied so upon prayer?*” and why should we?” What exactly did Prayer enable Jesus to do – why was it so important – why should it be for us?

Now before I share with you the four answers to those questions that I've found in the Gospel accounts, let me share one that underlies them all.

**Prayer enabled Jesus to 'stay in touch' with 'The Father.'**

This 'Connection with the Father' is critical to every 'Born-Again Son and Daughter of God' – this 'connection' is something that Jesus today in His Heavenly Ministry and the Holy Spirit in His Earthly Ministry is making possible for you and me to experience.

What I want us to see this morning is that the 'Connection with the Father' that prayer establishes and that a 'man after Christ's own heart' pursues brings a kind of 'enablement' that is vital to God-Honoring Living in this fallen, sin-filled world!

In other words, there are 'things' that just cannot get done apart from prayer – And if that was true for Jesus, how much more for you and me!

So, let's see just what 'things' Jesus relied upon prayer to do in His Life.

This morning I want us to focus our attention on **four** such 'things' drawn from **four** situations where the Scriptures report He prayed ...

**JESUS RELIED UPON PRAYER TO ENABLE HIM ...**

**\* TO MAINTAIN MINISTRY PERSPECTIVE ... Mark 1:35-39**

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, **JESUS** got up, left the house and went off to a **SOLITARY** place, where he **PRAYED**.

Simon and his companions went to look for him and when they found him, they exclaimed:

"Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "Let us go **SOMEWHERE** else – to the nearby villages – so I can **PREACH** there also. That is **WHY** I have come."

## ***"THAT IS WHY I HAVE COME."***

An early morning conversation with *'The Father'* had kept Jesus from getting *'sidetracked'* ... He had not been sent to simply *'Build a great ministry in Capernaum'* though the entire city had responded to him.

He had been sent to the entire nation – as he would later put it ... *'To the lost sheep of the House of Israel'* – the entire house!

Our Heavenly Father is the ONE who designs the plan for our lives – keeping in touch with Him will keep us in touch with *'The Plan'* ...

Now the heart of His Plan for you and me, of course, is to allow His Holy Spirit, whom we call *'Pneuma'* to transform us into the very *'Likeness of Christ'*, though the particulars of His Plan are unique to each of us.

But if we keep in touch with Him we will never *'Lose Perspective'* on why we are here – to *'Become like Christ'* and *'Bear Witness for Christ'* in this world.

However, that perspective **is** easy to lose, is it not?

Times of prayer (communication with *'The Father'*) will keep that from happening. Jesus relied upon prayer to do that for him.

Here's a **second** thing: Jesus relied upon Prayer to enable him ...

### ***\* TO EXERCISE SOUND JUDGMENT ... Luke 6:12-16***

*"Jesus went out to a mountainside to PRAY and spent the NIGHT praying to God. When MORNING came, he called his disciples to him and CHOSE twelve of them, whom he designated APOSTLES."*

Was there ever a time when *'Sound Judgment'* was needed more?

Here was the question to which He sought an answer:

*"Who will be the 'Chosen Ones' who will in fact be given the task of 'Keeping this ministry going after I am gone'?"*

Who of all these will '*stick with it*' for three years as we travel throughout this land of Israel – Who will be most open to receive my words and then subsequently receive my Spirit whom I will send in my name?

Don't think that Jesus only had twelve to pick from.  
At this point there were many '*disciples*.'

Remember when the Eleven felt the need to pick a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:21)? Remember the basic qualification for the job? The person selected must have been '*with us*' – part of the disciple band - from the Baptism of John all the way to the Resurrection.

Jesus spent the entire night in prayer with '*The Father*' before He announced His selections. And what wonderful selections he made – Eleven of the twelve were '*Faithful unto death*' – the twelfth, of course, was the betrayer whom the Scripture had foretold.

**Sound Judgment** ... is there ever a time when it is not needed?  
In the Book of James, we read (James 1:5):

*"If any of you lacks wisdom (sound judgment)  
he should ask God who gives generously ..."*

Jesus relied upon prayer to keep him in touch with the Wise Counsel of '*The Father*' that he might exercise Sound Judgment in his life.

Those who are becoming '*Like Him*' do the same.

Here now is a Third Great **Prayer-Enabling Life Task** that catches our eye.

Jesus relied upon Prayer to enable him ...

\* **TO ARTICULATE CORE TRUTHS** ... Luke 6:20-7:1; John 17

*"Looking at his **DISCIPLES**, he said ... (Luke's Sermon on the Mount)*

This passage contains Luke's Account on what we commonly call '*The Sermon on the Mount*' which is most fully reported in the Gospel of Matthew chapter's 5-7 ...

The interesting thing is that Luke records that this very special teaching took place on the very day Jesus chose his Twelve Apostles.

Luke reports that immediately after choosing the Twelve, Jesus walked down the mountain a bit and after finding a level spot, he began this teaching. Luke, like Mark, records that Jesus had spent the entire previous night *'praying to God.'*

Perhaps nothing will drive a believer into the Father's Presence like being assigned the task of *'Articulating Core Truths of the Christian Faith.'* Some of you know what I mean.

Core Truths are *'Articulated Best'* when they are articulated by one who has just come from the Father's Presence ...

Frequently that one, when done, is not even fully aware of what has been said – Words have just *'Flowed from Them.'* Usually they themselves are thrilled and blessed by them!

***Here is another example*** ... It took place on the final night of Jesus' earthly life – the night he was betrayed – the night he gathered His Twelve Apostles together for that Last Supper.

After the meal, he lifted up his heart and voice in prayer and allowed His Chosen Ones to listen in. And as he prayed, great truths poured out of him ... Core Truths that he had never articulated to them before.

Here the prayer and the articulation of truth was one and the same. He opened up his heart to *'The Father'* and His Disciples were awe-struck.

Years later, the Holy Spirit said to John (the last of the Twelve remaining on the earth) ...

*"Write those words down."*

And so, John wrote the very words we have in front of us today ...

*"Jesus looked toward heaven and **PRAYED** ... (John 17:1)*

And out of his mouth came some of the most sublime statements – some of the most awesome insights – found anywhere in the Scripture.

Those words have come to be known as 'Christ's High Priestly Prayer' and they fill the entire 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John.

That chapter records the kind of thing that can happen when a 'Child of God' truly connects in prayer with 'The Heavenly Father.'

Pretty awesome stuff, wouldn't you say?

Jesus was radically reliant upon prayer to enable Him ...

To maintain ministry perspective (and)  
To exercise sound judgment (and)  
To articulate core truths.

And now **fourth** and finally this morning ...

Jesus relied upon Prayer to enable him ...

\* **TO PREPARE FOR SEVERE TESTING** ... Luke 22:39-44

"He **KNELT** down and **PRAYED** ...  
**FATHER** ... not my **WILL** but **YOURS** be done"

And, of course, here we find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Hour of Judgment is upon him – the Father's face will soon be turned from him – the sins of the entire world will be placed upon Him and he will experience something so foreign to his nature that the thought of it causes him to shrink back from it in horror.

He would experience '**SIN**' ... He would be made to 'Be Sin' for you and me ... He would step into a realm that no Divine Being and no Human Being was ever intended to step ... the realm of '*Total and absolute Offensiveness before a Holy God.*'

The storm was about to break - the test was at hand – the assignment was pretty much beyond comprehension and so he prayed ... and he prayed fervently and desperately and submissively.

That type of 'Garden Prayer' prayer was reinforced and enabled by each of the other things we have mentioned this morning ...

Prayer can prepare us for severe testing because prayer enables us to maintain our ministry perspective (Why am I here and what is my calling?).

Prayer can prepare us for severe testing because prayer enables us to make sound judgments about the ultimate issues of life (Where am I going and to whom does my life belong?).

Prayer can prepare us for severe testing because prayer enables us to articulate (most importantly to ourselves) the core truths of my faith ...

*(I am a born-again Child of God,  
loved by the Father,  
companioned by the Holy Spirit,  
heading toward an Eternity spent with  
the Son of God Himself, my Savior Jesus).*

And so, we come to ...

#### **TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...**

Jesus possessed a great **DESIRE** and **CAPACITY** for **PRAYER**.  
Those who are **CONFORMED** to His **LIKENESS** will possess the **SAME**.

'Pneuma' is regularly saying to them:

"Let's **TALK** to the **FATHER!**"

To which they regularly say ...

"Would **LOVE** to."

And now we come to **Today's Final Thot** ...

#### **Thot Final ...**

**NOTHING** of **CONSEQUENCE** should be **DONE**  
without first **TALKING** to the **FATHER** about it.

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

*“Profoundly Impacted”*

(John 9:4; John 6:29; 2 Peter 3:8)

**Intro ...** *“Profoundly Impacted”* – that’s the title of this message this morning.

What do you suppose we are going to suggest ‘*Profoundly Impacted*’ Jesus Christ? What could have possibly ‘*impressed him*’ – ‘*stirred him*’ – ‘*motivated him*’ so greatly that we could say he was ‘*profoundly impacted*’ by it – that His life and ministry was significantly shaped by it?

**Well ...** here’s my candidate for such ‘*profound impact*’

## **CHARACTER TRAIT SEVEN ...**

*“Jesus was **PROFOUNDLY IMPACTED**  
by the **BREVITY of MINISTRY.**”*  
(John 9:4)

Here’s the **Key Scripture** by which that character trait is identified ...

## **TODAY’S KEY SCRIPTURE ...**

*“As long as it is **DAY**, we must do the **WORK** of Him Who sent me.  
**NIGHT** is coming when **NO ONE** can **WORK**.”*  
(John 9:4)

Now we could fill several pages with examples of Jesus ‘*working as though there was no tomorrow*’ ... He regularly ministered from daylight ‘til dark; he regularly altered his plans (even vacation plans) to meet people’s needs.

There was that time when his mother and brothers came to ‘*take charge of him*’ because they thought his life and ministry had gotten completely out of balance and that he was in danger of suffering a breakdown.

Surely, we could do that and then we could thoroughly ‘*guilt ourselves*’ when we compare our sense of urgency to His as many have done.

However, that's not what I want to do this morning (or any morning really) for I don't believe that that is the point in this passage.

Rather I want to share with you **three key observations** that I believe do arise from this passage ...

### **Today's Three Key Observations ...**

#### **1. WE ARE PEOPLE WITH AN ASSIGNMENT...**

To carry out the **FATHER'S WORK** on this **EARTH**  
"We must do the work of Him who sent me."

Let me point out quickly that there is a bit of a debate among Greek scholars as to whether this verse should read "We must do" or "I must do" the work of Him who sent me – some ancient manuscripts have "I" and some have "we". Most current English translations have settled on 'we' which is the version I've chosen this morning.

**And so ... We** are people with an assignment:

**We** must do the work of the ONE who sent Christ into the world.

So, what is the 'work' that the Heavenly Father would have carried out on this earth?

We focused our attention upon that very question in the message delivered some seven weeks ago in which we identified the **First** of these **Eight Character Traits** of Christ we are presently pursuing.

In that message, we heard Jesus directly and succinctly answer that question when he said (John 6:29) ...

*"The Work of God is this ...  
To believe in the ONE (the ONES) that He has sent."*

**You see** ... The Father has 'sent' more than one ... **First**, He sent His Son, Jesus, and **then** He and the Resurrected and Exalted Lord Jesus together sent 'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit.

This then is how we wrapped up that message ...

*"Believe in Jesus with all your heart; commit yourself to Him as your Lord and Savior **and** Believe in the Holy Spirit with all your heart; commit yourself to Him as your daily Companion.*

*Resolve to 'Walk with Him' and to 'Keep in step with Him.'*  
*This is the Work that God has for you to do."*

And isn't it true that every '*tangible work*' that God would have us do flows from that? God's Holy Spirit, '*Pneuma*' Himself, will literally '*Walk us into and equip us for every ministry moment*' that God has prepared for us.

All we need to do is '*Put our hand in His strong hand each morning and yield ourselves completely to Him.*'

This then is the **number one assignment** that we have been given by Our Heavenly Father and our Exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

***"Believe in – Exercise Faith in – Those that the Father has sent!"***

Here now is the **Second Observation** that we can draw from this passage.

**2. TIME TO DO THE FATHER'S WORK IS LIMITED ...**

Can Only '**WORK**' during the '**DAY**.'

*"As long as it is day"*

'*Faith*' has relevance only to the earthbound ... When this life is over, we will no longer need it for we shall then '*see things fully and clearly*' (1Cor. 13:12). We will no longer need to '*believe*' for we will '*know*.'

Only during this life can we demonstrate the '*faith that pleases God*' and thus, only in this life can we (in that respect) '*do*' the work of God.

How delightful it has been to discover (and to be sure of, at last) the true nature of the work! AMEN?

I have been so blessed and encouraged to see person after person make this discovery and to see our little '*Nudges and Hugs*' play a part in the process.

## Comments:

From Dr. Richard and Joanne Cain whom I have known as wonderfully 'committed believers' and faithful 'servants of Christ' for nearly 40 years and who, though now retired to Maine, have frequently 'wintered' with us here in Apple Valley.

They are members of *Sonlife* Community Church.

They are both now in their 80's.

Here's what they recently wrote ...

*"We are enjoying our daily 'Nudges and Hugs from Pneuma' more than we're able to express. To now be experiencing a closer, personal relationship with Him is amazingly wonderful! All SO timely. Thanks to you and to our Awesome God!"*

And from one of our own senior men just last week ...

*"The writings on the Holy Spirit have been an inspiration to me – Filled the void of 'Something is missing.' I wish that there were writings for every day and evening for every month."*

Our study (and dare I say discovery) of the Holy Spirit as our 'Moment by Moment Companion' has definitely altered my long-standing definition of Pastoral Ministry.

I have long said that my task as a Pastor in Christ's Church – as an under-shepherd of the portion of His Flock entrusted to me – is to see each member of that flock come to the end of life 'with his/her faith intact.'

That is ... firmly believing and fully trusting in Christ as their Savior and Lord.

These days I would express my task and desire this way ...

*"To see each one of you come to the end of your life not only firmly believing and fully trusting in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord but also with your hand firmly grasping the hand of 'Pneuma,' your Earthly Companion."*

In other words ... to come to the end of your life still 'Doing the Work of God', bringing Pleasure to Him and doing it right until your final breath!

Here's one last observation – One that hardly needs to be made but let's make it anyhow ...

### **3. THE 'DAY' IS A DIFFERENT LENGTH FOR EACH OF US ...**

Today, I begin my 45<sup>th</sup> year as a Pastor in Christ's Church ...

A number of the men with whom I graduated Seminary have already come to the end of their '*Day*' – a heart attack took one of my best seminary friends long before what would have seemed to be '*His Time*.' A similar fate sought me out 16 years ago but was set aside.

A few of those classmates of mine have been '*lost*' along the way ... Some of them have been '*chewed up*' by the '*Institutional Church*' and have decided that '*Church Ministry*' just wasn't for them. Others of them have fallen prey to either the '*allure of the world*' or the '*desires of the flesh*.'

Most of them, I imagine, still have some semblance of their '*faith*' intact. They still believe what they graduated believing but none of them who have '*fallen away*' have their hand in '*Pneuma's*' for '*Pneuma*' doesn't '*walk us*' into frustration and failure. Chances are their hand never had been consciously placed in '*Pneuma's*' even as mine wasn't for a good many years.

For some of us here today, the '**DAY**' has just begun. There is an opportunity for us to '**DO THE WORK OF GOD**' like never before. So, let's do it!

Time is short but compared to **ETERNITY** all lifespans are short and remember '*A day with the Lord is like a thousand years*' (2 Peter 3:8) so allow that thought to captivate you and realize that '*Pneuma*' can accomplish '*a thousand years*' worth of stuff' today alone!

**Believe in Him** – the ONE that your Savior and Heavenly Father have sent to you – and allow Him to make every moment count!

#### ***Final Thot ...***

When we **WALK** with **PNEUMA** not a moment is **WASTED** and not a single thing left **UNDONE!** The **BREVITY** of life does not **HANDICAP** us!

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage**

*“Steadfastly Focused”*

(John 13:1; Luke 9:51; Jn. 17:5; Hebrews 12:2; 2 Peter 1:11; Romans 8:23; 1 Jn. 3:2; Romans 8:17)

**Intro ...** Today we come to the **Eighth** of the **Eight Character Traits** of Christ that our Earthly Companion, ‘*Pneuma*’, would seek to develop in our lives as He persistently and consistently labors to transform us into the very Likeness of Christ.

Next week we will no doubt review them all but all of today’s efforts will be needed to grasp the full implications of this final one. Much Scripture awaits our examination this morning.

Here it is ...

## **CHARACTER TRAIT EIGHT ...**

*“Jesus was **STEADFASTLY FOCUSED**  
on the **JOY** that **AWAITED** him.”*

Here are several **Key Scripture** out of which that character trait arises ...

Note the perspective of each writer as they recount the story.

### **Scripture One: John 13:1** (The Upper Room/The Last Supper)

*“Jesus knew that the **TIME** had come for Him to  
**LEAVE** the world and go to the **FATHER**.”*

Last week we saw that Jesus was ‘*profoundly impacted by the Brevity of His Earthly Ministry*’ – At this point, he was aware that the end of that earthly ministry was near. As he had already told his disciples, he would soon be ‘going away’ – He would no longer be with them. He was ‘*leaving the world and returning to the Father.*’

John lets us know right off the bat that that fact was the context for everything Jesus did and said that night.

**Scripture Two: Luke 9:51** (took place a few weeks earlier) ...

*“As the time approached for Him to be taken up to **HEAVEN**, **JESUS** resolutely set out for **JERUSALEM**.”* (NIV)

*“Steadfastly set His **FACE** to go to Jerusalem”* (KJV)

I find it fascinating to see the words that Luke chose in that simple sentence. I'm sure that you and I would have expressed it differently – that we would have expected to read it differently.

I would not be surprised if most of us actually heard it differently when I read it just now.

Would we not have expected Luke to say:

*‘As the time approached for Jesus to suffer and die  
for the sins of the world ...’*

or

*‘As the time approached for Jesus to be arrested and  
condemned to death by the Leaders of the Jews ...’*

Does it not seem as though that would be the thing to identify as the ‘*thing*’ whose time was approaching?

Wasn't Jesus' death on the cross the ‘*thing*’ that he was focused on more than any other ‘*thing*’?  
Maybe not.

Let's read on ...

Check out Jesus' focus as He turns his face toward heaven and offers the prayer that fills all of John chapter 17 – His High Priestly Prayer.

**Scripture Three: John 17:5**

*"And now Father, **GLORIFY** me in Your **PRESENCE** with the **GLORY** I **HAD** with You before the **WORLD** began."*

Jesus' focus was not so much on the cross as on the Glory that would come to him as a result of what He would accomplish on that cross.

Jesus was focused on the fact that there was a wondrous something coming that would follow His work on the cross – a resumption of something truly glorious.

For 33 years, He had lived without it and soon it would be His again!

He could hardly wait for that moment to come.  
A smile must have come to His face just thinking about it.  
As we would say ...*'It was so close He could taste it.'*

It is any wonder then, that the Writer of the Book of Hebrews would put it this way ...

**Scripture Four: Hebrews 12:2**

*"Who for the **JOY** that was set **BEFORE** Him **ENDURED** the cross ..."*

Something was coming Jesus way ... Something was out there right in front of him and it was a joyful something – something that promised so much joy that He would not allow anything to distract, discourage or defeat him.

Whatever remained of His earthly work to do – he would do.  
He could and would endure even the agonizing death on the cross by looking past the agony to the ecstasy – focusing on the pure delight of the thing that lay beyond the cross and the tomb.

**And thus, we come to ...**

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION...**

So, what **was** the **JOY** that **AWAITED** Jesus?

What indeed so captivated his mind and heart that even agonizing suffering could be endured – what was it that so encouraged and fortified him in the face of such extreme trial?

**ANSWER:**

His Triumphant **RETURN** to the Father's **PRESENCE**  
and the **RESUMPTION** of His Glorious **EXISTENCE!**

Obviously during the days of His Earthly Sojourn, he had '*remembered much*' – His times of prayer in the Father's Presence had reminded him of much – His persistent study of the Scriptures had served to inform him of much – His fellowship with the Spirit had in fact demonstrated much.

He was the **Son of God** – He had left the glorious splendor of Heaven to enter this fallen world to carry out the Will of God and to provide a way of redemption for all those destined for salvation. He was the original '**Sent One**' and the task for which He had been sent was nearly done.

He was soon to return home like a triumphant soldier from a foreign land; return to the Father's Awesome Presence and resume His Glorious Existence in the Halls of Heaven itself.

The very thought had to thrill Him!

That was the Joy that **FOCUSED** Him

That was the Joy that **ENERGIZED** Him

That was the Joy that generated **ENDURANCE** within Him!

And so today we can come right out and attribute to Him this incredibly significant character trait – a trait that came more and more into play as His Life Challenge became more and more demanding ...

**"Jesus was Steadfastly Focused on the Joy that awaited Him!"**

**Here now is ...**

**TODAY'S KEY POINT ...**

That's exactly **HOW** 'Pneuma' would have **US** function!

'Pneuma' would have us be:

**FOCUSED** on the Joy that is Set Before Us; (and)

**ENERGIZED** by that Joy that is Set Before Us; (and)

**ENABLED** to **ENDURE** ***because of*** that Joy that is Set Before Us.

If we put it in one big sentence it would go like this ...

*"God's Most Holy Spirit, 'Pneuma' Himself, our Daily Companion, would have us be so focused on the Joy that is set before us and so energized by that Joy that is set before us that we will be able to endure anything life throws our way."*

That, my friends, is a '**Character Trait of Christ Himself**' – a character trait that demonstrates a significant degree of 'Conformation to His Likeness'!

So, what is the '**Joy**' that awaits us and how big a grip does it have on our hearts and minds?

Does it indeed capture our focus and energize our spirits and create an 'endurance dynamic' within us or does it not?

**Or do we find ourselves saying ...**

*"That worked for Jesus **because** he **WAS** the Son of God and he **HAD** left something glorious to come to earth and he **DID** have something awesome to which He was **RETURNING** and something glorious which he was **RESUMING** and **none of that** applies to us."*

Well, in case that is even partially the way you might be thinking, here then is ...

**TODAY'S KEY INSIGHT ...** Do take it to heart.

The **JOY** set before the **BELIEVER** is a perfect **PARALLEL** to the **JOY** that was set before **JESUS**.

And what is it?

It's the **JOY** of a **TRIUMPHANT ENTRANCE** into the **SAVIOR'S PRESENCE** and the **INAUGURATION** of a **GLORIOUS EXISTENCE**.

That's what is 'Set Before All Spirit-Companioned Followers of Christ'!

Here are some **Key Scriptures** that give rise to that key insight ...

**Scripture One: 2 Peter 1:11**

"You will receive a **RICH WELCOME** into the Eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

This is the 'future' that stirred feelings of great joy in Peter's heart ...

A 'Rich, No-Expense-Spared, Kind of Welcome'  
into the Savior's Kingdom and Presence.

No one who 'Walks faithfully with Pneuma' will ever just sneak into heaven. Such a person's arrival will be announced with Trumpets and Heaven's Version of a Ticker-Tape Parade.

Picture it – ponder it – anticipate it.

Let the thought of it stir a motivating and energizing **JOY** in your heart!

Now, the Apostle Paul certainly knew something of the **JOY** that such a that would stir.

In Romans chapter eight, Paul zeroes in on one very special aspect of that coming Joy.

**Scripture Two: Romans 8:23**

*"We groan inwardly as we **AWAIT** ... the **REDEMPTION** of our **BODIES**."*

Paul's body had suffered assault after assault, beginning with the blinding blast of revelation that hit him on the Damascus Road which left him sightless for three days and most likely with greatly diminished vision for the rest of his life.

Paul, by his own testimony, (2 Corinthians 11) had been stoned and left for dead, had been flogged (39 lashes) five times, had been beaten three times with wooden rods, had gone for periods of time with very little food, had been shipwrecked three times and once spent 36 hours in the open sea.

By the time, Paul wrote the words that we just read, he knew what it was like to '*drag a broken, weakened body everywhere he went.*'

Some in this room this morning can certainly relate.

There were, no doubt, many mornings when Paul had to remind himself of the coming '*Redemption of His Body*' and recapture the '**Joy**' generated by that thought just so he could '*force his body into submission*' one more time.

However, Redemption Day **IS** coming and **JOY** can be found in that thot.

Now let's allow the Apostle John to weigh in on the subject ...

**Scripture Three: 1 John 3:2**

*"We know that when He appears, we shall be **LIKE** Him  
for we shall **SEE** Him as He is."*

Here in this passage, John the Beloved Disciple, perhaps the one who missed the Lord the most – certainly the one who lived the longest without him – is telling himself that there is ‘*Coming a day*’ ...

A day is coming when John would ‘see *him*’ again and this time John will have become ‘*like Him*’ and fellowship with Him will be unhindered by the inadequacies of human flesh.

That will one day be true of every one of us ...

How wondrously **joyous** will that be!

Here’s another insight from the Apostle Paul ...

**Scripture Four: Romans 8:17**

*“We are co-heirs with Christ, if we **SHARE** in His **SUFFERING** in order that we may also **SHARE** in His **GLORY**.”*

Allow great **JOY** to be stirred in your mind and heart by this incredible fact ...

**All** who follow Christ faithfully ...

**All** who ‘Walk with His Spirit’ consciously ...  
will share in the Glory of Christ for all eternity.

*They will be viewed as the ‘Bride of Christ’ ...  
as ‘Redeemed members of Adam’s Fallen Race.’*

**They** will be wondered at and highly esteemed as ‘Victors’ over **Sin**, **Self** and **Satan** through the Savior’s Cleansing Blood and the Spirit’s Transforming Work.

**Final Thot ...**

A Steadfast **FOCUS** on a **JOYOUS FUTURE DAY** produces  
**ENDURANCE** for a **TROUBLESOME PRESENT DAY!**

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Conformation Stage** **“STAGE THREE REVIEW – The Best Is Yet To Be”**

**Intro ...** Here’s how the message eight weeks ago ended as we concluded **Stage Two** (*The Imitation Stage*) of this ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ that ‘Pneuma’ has us on.

I said ...

*“Pneuma’ would take us far beyond mere ‘Imitation’ (Stage Two) ...*

*‘Pneuma’ wants to take us to the place where we are stirred by the things that stirred Jesus and where we rely upon the things that Jesus relied upon as He ministered in this fallen world.*

*‘Pneuma’ wants to take us to ‘the place where we are actually doing the things that Jesus would do if He were still here and were standing right where we are standing and facing the very things that we are facing.’*

*That takes more than a ‘Commitment to Imitate’ and that’s why **Stage Two: The Imitation Stage** is not the end of the journey.”*

The next week I shared with you this important clarification ...

The ‘*Imitation Stage*’ is by no means elementary Christian Living – it’s merely **limited** Christian Living – It’s not the whole package – It’s not the ‘*End of the Journey*’ but it is a crucial stage **of** the Journey.

Pneuma’s desire is to ‘Walk Every Born-Again Believer’ through the ‘**Imitation Stage**’ and right into the ‘**Conformation Stage**.’

The **Conformation Stage** is where ‘Pneuma’ first ‘*informs us about*’ and then begins to ‘*form within us*’ the very **Character Traits of Christ** - the internal perspectives and motivations that determined the external behaviors of Christ.

It’s still not the end of the Journey but it is the critical **next** stage of the Journey.

Over the past weeks, we have discovered and discussed and hopefully begun to display in our lives the results of **Eight Specific Character Traits of Christ ...**

Today, I would have us review the entire list.

Here they are:

### **1. JESUS WAS COMPLETELY SURRENDERED TO THE FATHER'S WILL.**

*"I come to do your will, O God"* was the central theme of His Life. 'Pneuma' would have it be ours as well.

How impressive it is to find a man who lives completely 'ego-free.' That's the condition of one who has completely surrendered himself to the Father's Will and Ways.

### **2. JESUS WAS THOROUGHLY DEPENDENT UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

This discovery was probably a 'shocker' to some of us but the Scripture makes it clear. It was 'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit – who came upon Jesus at His Baptism and drove him into the wilderness and then completely 'filled him' as He returned from that time of wilderness testing to begin His Three-Year Ministry.

It's not at all a shocker that this is a critical character trait for those of us who in and of ourselves have none of the credentials Christ brought into the world.

It did not surprise us at all to learn that the Heavenly Father Himself announced long years ago that progress in our lives would be accomplished ...

*"Not by (our) might – not by (our) strength - but by His Spirit."*  
(Zechariah 4:6)

### **3. JESUS WAS RELENTLESSLY OPPOSED TO SATAN'S PRESENCE AND PRACTICE.**

This one, of course, was not shocking to us at all – It was not much of a discovery. Naturally Jesus would be completely opposed to Satan's Presence and Practice. Satan is not Jesus' estranged brother as the Mormon Church teaches. Satan is a condemned created being committed to the destruction of everything that bears the Father's Name. All who belong to the Father oppose Him and His Efforts to deceive and destroy. His ruthlessness must be met by our relentlessness. There is never a 'time out' in this contest.

#### **4. JESUS WAS PASSIONATELY COMMITTED TO HIS OWN.**

Here is a character trait of Christ that directly impacts us – a character trait that brings great encouragement and blessing as it is formed in us.

Whether it was His Patience with Doubting Thomas or His Tenderness with Simon Peter, Jesus' Commitment to His Own – His Love for His Own – is an awesome thing to contemplate and an even more awesome thing to feel stirring in our own hearts. This '*Stirring*' is produced by '*Pneuma*' Himself.

#### **5. JESUS WAS COMPASSIONATELY CONNECTED TO LOST PEOPLE.**

Jesus looked at lost people through the 'eyes' of compassion ...

The Rich young ruler – the grieving widow – the long-suffering woman who touched the hem of his garment – the height-challenged tax collector, Zacchaeus – the thousands who raced around the lake to get to where he was going – even the woman who had been '*caught*' in the very act of adultery ...

He didn't see them as '*losers*' or in any way '*unworthy*' of his attention. He brought the '*Love of God*' into their situation and deal with each of them gently and compassionately.

#### **6. JESUS WAS RADICALLY RELIANT UPON PRAYER.**

He sometimes got up early in the morning to spend time in prayer;  
He sometimes spent entire nights in prayer; He agonized in prayer in the Garden; He revealed His Heart in prayer in the Upper Room;  
He taught His Disciples to pray.

The key thing was He maintained connection with His Father in Heaven; He never felt like He was alone nor did He act as though He was. He relied upon His Fellowship with the Father to sustain Him.

#### **7. JESUS WAS PROFOUNDLY IMPACTED BY THE BREVITY OF MINISTRY.**

Earthly life is limited – Ministry time is limited.  
Jesus knew that His '*days on earth*' were limited.  
"We must work while it is day for night is coming," he once said.

The farmer says: *'Make hay while the sun shines'*  
That's just how it is in this *'time-determined'* world of ours.

*'Pneuma'* would never want us to become *'anxious'* about the shortness of life because He manages the outcome when we walk with Him but He does want us to avoid the complacency or presumption that can beset those who have *'Fallen out of step'* with Him.

All of us Dads who have watched our children grow into adulthood understand just how short the time has been and how quickly it passed though *'at the time'* we might have felt like we *'had forever.'*

## **8. JESUS WAS STEADFASTLY FOCUSED UPON THE JOY THAT AWAITED HIM.**

Now this is the final **'Character Trait'** we considered and, in a sense, it is the most significant of all because that *'steadfast focus'* on the *'Joys that await'* provides a generating energy for the formation of the other seven.

**So ...** Eight *'Glimpses into Christ's Heart'* we have been given in the Scripture. Each of them reveals to us an internal *'Quality'* – a *'Character Trait of Christ'* – that stimulated some external behavior.

Another way of impacting ourselves in this **review** is to ask ourselves again:

**"How** did he do the things He did;  
**What** *'Characteristics'* did His actions possess?"

Consider the **eight adverbs** used in those ***Eight Character Statements***. They serve to *'Clarify the manner in which He did what He did.'*

Consider how they, all by themselves, communicate something of a genuine godly nature.

Here they are with a brief comment on each:

### **'COMPLETELY' ...**

He wasn't just surrendered to the Father's will, He was completely surrendered – not a part of his life or being was left out. His heart (emotional being) His soul (relational being), his mind (intellectual being) and His body (physical being) were all brought under and made subject to His Heavenly Father.

### ***'THOROUGHLY' ...***

He wasn't just dependent upon the Holy Spirit; He was thoroughly dependent. He depended upon the Holy Spirit for everything concerning His earthly life and ministry.

### ***'RELENTLESSLY' ...***

He wasn't just opposed to Satan's Presence and Practice; He was relentlessly opposed – He never forgot that the Enemy must be opposed; He never relaxed His Vigilance.

### ***'PASSIONATELY' ...***

There was nothing lackadaisical about His commitment to those who identified themselves with Him – They were the very reason He had come to earth – They would be His for all Eternity!

He wasn't just committed to them;  
He was passionately committed to them and they knew it.

### ***'COMPASSIONATELY' ...***

There was nothing merely academic about His assessment of the lost – they were people made in the Image of God who were living their lives separated from Fellowship with God and thus living under the Judgment of God.

His heart went out to them. He did not merely connect with them – He compassionately connected with them and they felt it.  
And many of them were changed because of it.

### ***'RADICALLY' ...***

There was nothing routine or ritualistic about His Prayer Life.  
His times of communion with the Father were vital to Him.

He regularly '*made time for prayer.*' He sometimes spent entire nights in prayer – He sought direction and protection in prayer.

He didn't just '*rely*' upon prayer; He radically relied upon prayer. His disciples took note and asked Him to help them do the same.

### **'PROFOUNDLY' ...**

It was not just a '*matter of record*' that His time for earthly ministry was limited – He was not just '*marking time*' until His Great Sacrifice would be made. He was always on the lookout for '*ministry moments*.'

*'Night is coming when work can no longer be done'*  
he would regularly point out to His disciples.

He was impressed; He was motivated; He was impacted,  
profoundly impacted, by the brevity of His Ministry.  
His disciples could not help but notice.

### **'STEADFASTLY' ...**

The joy that awaited him (the return to the Father's Presence and the Resumption of His Glorious Existence) totaled captivated Him.

The flip side to His understanding that His Earthly Ministry would be brief was the recognition that His Triumphant Return to His Heavenly State was soon to come.

That '*Focus*' never wavered – He never got caught up in the '*this earth is not so bad – there's lots of things that bring me joy right here*' type of thinking.

His focus was on the Great Joy of Heaven and on all that the Father had planned for Him and He was not only focused on the Joy that awaited him, He was steadfastly focused – He never lost sight of the Coming Glory.

***Completely – Thoroughly – Relentlessly – Passionately –  
Compassionately – Radically – Profoundly – Steadfastly ...***

May each of these '**adverbs**' come into play as we  
'Walk with *Pneuma*' through this Earthly Life!

### ***Final Thot ...***

**CONFORMING** Born-Again Believers to the **CHARACTER**  
of Christ is an awesome **WORK** of '*Pneuma*' but it is not yet  
His **FINEST WORK** for this is not the **END** of the **JOURNEY**.

***THE***  
***‘RE-INCARNATION’***  
***STAGE***

***- What Does It Mean To Have Christ's Life ‘Fleshed-Out’ In Me? -***

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

## **“Three Captivating Images”**

(Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:16-19; Galatians 2:20)

**Intro ...** Today we begin the **final stage** of our ‘Journey Toward Christlikeness’ – at least we enter the final stage of our understanding of it.

This final stage of the journey I call **‘The Re-Incarnation Stage.’**

Here’s how I described it seven months ago – the Sunday we launched this Sermon Series:

The **Fourth** (and final) **Stage** (which represents the highest level of Christlikeness) is what I would call (with a considerable degree of trepidation) ...

### **“THE RE-INCARNATION STAGE”.**

In this stage, we will reflect upon the possibility that the life of Jesus Christ can indeed ‘Be expressed’ *through* those who belong to Him as they “Walk in Step” with the One (‘Pneuma’) whom He has sent.

We will ponder what it means to be fully ‘Christ-Like – to ‘flesh-out’ that godly life once again in this fallen world - to draw people into Christ’s Presence every time they are drawn into ours.

*“To draw people into Christ’s Presence every time they are drawn into ours.”*

Here’s another way of putting it ...

*“Every time people encounter me they encounter something of Jesus.”*

Now hear ‘Pneuma’ say it ...

*“Every time people encounter you, I want them to encounter something of Jesus.”*

Now way when we first launched this series, you might have thought ...

*“Well, good luck with that!”*

But not so much today ...

We are not the same people we were on that Sunday, are we?

*'Pneuma'* has both *'taught us'* and *'walked us'* quite a way  
from where we were that Sunday, hasn't He?

He started with the most elementary things - with questions like:

*'Who is this man Jesus and what does that mean to me?'*

That question led us into the "**Identification Stage**" of this journey where we discovered all over again (or maybe for the first time) that Jesus Christ is the One who above everything else issues to me a *'Life-Altering Call.'*

This is a *'Call'* to which I hope everyone of us in this room has responded. It's a Call to Salvation – A Call to Obedience and Complete Surrender.

You see the **Identification** Stage not only **'Identified Jesus'** but it also served to **'Identify Us'** ... Do you *'Identify'* with those who have *'Surrendered their Lives to Christ'* or do you *'Identify'* yourself with those who have not? Only you know the answer to that question.

But having completed that first state of the Journey (The **Identification** Stage) we then entered the second stage (The **Imitation** Stage).

This is the stage of the journey where all those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus as their Savior and Lord are directed to incorporate into their lives certain modeled and commanded behaviors of Christ Himself.

During this phase of the *'Journey,'* we discovered seven such **'Behaviors.'** These are the types of external actions that, if seen by someone who walked with Jesus, would cause that person to say ...

*"That's reminds me of Jesus, I saw him do something just like that."*

In our current day, it's *'Pneuma'* who must bear that witness. Those of us who have been reading (and praying) our way through the little *'Nudges and Hugs'* book, know that that's exactly what *Pneuma* would say to us many nights ... basically ...

*'I've seen something of Jesus in you today.'*

But 'Acting Like Jesus' – 'mimicking Jesus' Behavior' – is just a beginning stage in the journey toward full Christ-Likeness.

The next stage that 'Pneuma' would lead us into is "**The Conformation Stage.**" This is the stage we have just completed.

Here in the **Conformation** Stage, 'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit who serves as our Earthly Companion – would move us past 'merely' 'Mimicking Christ's External Behaviors' and would seek to 'Conform us to Christ's Internal Character.'

'Pneuma' would have us come to understand, and appreciate and then incorporate into our lives the passions and motivations of Christ. 'Pneuma' would have us 'see' and 'sense' and 'feel' like Christ did Himself as He blazed the trail for us through this fallen world.

**Eight** such '**Character Traits**' Pneuma pointed out to us as we examined the Record of Jesus' Earthly Life ... These are the '**Internals**' that characterized Jesus and that reside within the 'New Nature' that has been placed within us.

These 'Internal Traits' generate 'External Behaviors And it's all those 'External Behaviors' taken together that demonstrate to the world that 'Another One' like Jesus is here – someone so much like Him that that someone might even be mistaken for Him!

Now that's a thing that you don't have to be from Missouri to say:

*"I'll believe it when I see it."*

Any believer, struggling to live the Christian Life, could be equally skeptical. And in response to that statement, 'Pneuma' would say ...

*"Well, keep your eyes open then. For I've seen it happen time and time again over the centuries in all corners of the earth and I'm involved in making it happen again right here in this place at this time for these people right here have been yielding themselves to my lead and listening for my voice and allowing themselves to be molded by my hand upon them."*

Listen again to this key verse that has served as a foundation and an inspiration for this entire series of messages – It's the testimony of the Apostle Paul himself and it reflects his view of the 'Normal Progress of the Christian Life' ...

*"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's Glory,  
are being transformed into His Likeness with ever-increasing glory,  
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (pneuma)."  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)*

Each of these '**Stages**' has added to our understanding of the Lord's Glory and that added understanding has in turn put a brighter '**Glow**' on our face, hasn't it?

We have continually heard '*Pneuma*' say ...

*"Isn't He something awesome –  
wouldn't it be great to be 'like Him?'"*

Now in addition to that greater 'glow' on our countenance that our greater understanding has generated, there is a greater and greater '*transformation*' taking place within us that eventually puts a 'glow' on the faces of all who know us! They are always happy to see us.

This is '*Pneuma's*' task – this is His passion – to not only impress us with the Greatness and Goodness of Christ but to '*Transform us into the very Likeness of Christ.*'

The Apostle Paul would say that that is indeed the '*Normal Christian Life*' – that this is the life that every single Born-Again Child of God should be living and that is the life that everyone who is faithfully '*Walking in Step with Pneuma*' will be living more and more as time goes by.

That's what puts '*A Glow on Pneuma's Face*' ... the complete transformation of a Born-Again Child of God into the Likeness of Christ.

And the final stage of that process goes far beyond '*Imitation of Christ's External Behaviors*' and '*Conformation to Christ's Internal Character*' ...

The final stage of that transformation process involves the very '*Life of Christ*' becoming our own – the life of Jesus being '*fleshed out*' once again in this fallen, broken world!

We truly can become '*Like Jesus*' in His earthly life ...

'Pneuma' would have us think like Jesus and feel things like Jesus and respond to things like Jesus. 'Pneuma' would have us minister to people like Jesus and relate to our Heavenly Father like Jesus and surely enjoy the Spirit's Company like Jesus.

That's the earthly experience toward which 'Pneuma' would walk every single believer!

Our discussion these next few weeks will center around **Three Captivating Images** found in the Scripture.

I just want to introduce them this morning.

**KEY IMAGE ONE: GESTATION**

**"The Christ-Life FORMED In Us" ... Galatians 4:19**

*"I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ be formed in you."*

There's a potent one ... Paul compares himself to a 'mother in labor.' We could hear 'Pneuma' saying the very same thing. What a way to picture the process.

It's like Paul is saying that Christ-likeness itself springs into reality after a period of gestation – developing as it were from just a seed of life planted in us by the Holy Spirit and then guarded and nurtured and developed until it's ready to spring forth.

And once it 'springs forth' it's something awesome to see ... It's the full-blown 'Life of Christ' – His Character, His Nature, His Perspectives, His Purposes, His Passions ... It's like He himself has 'taken up residence within us' and we 'Know Him' like never before!

This is not something for just some set of 'super saints.' These words were written to all of us. These words were written to a group of believers who were struggling to understand the very things that we have spent these past months discussing. This is God's Will and Intention for all of us ... to see the Life of Christ take form within each of us.

Here now is the **Second** Captivating Image ...

## **KEY IMAGE TWO: OCCUPATION**

***“The Christ-Life DWELLING In Us” ... Ephesians 3:16-19***

*“I pray that ... He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ... that you may be filled to the measure of all the Fullness of God.”*

Imagine turning the ‘keys of your heart’ over to Jesus – signing over the deed to Him. Allowing His Spirit to become the manager of the place and seeing everything about the place take on a Christ-Like Character.

The pictures on the wall are of Him – the books on the table are about Him – the ‘Things to Do’ list on the Refrigerator is in His Handwriting – The very aroma of the home has a heavenly scent to it.

Anyone who comes in discovers pretty quickly that ‘A Follower of Jesus lives here’ and that everything about the place reflects Him.

But people can’t just ‘walk into our hearts’ and look around and so we come to ...

## **KEY IMAGE THREE: REVELATION**

***“The Christ-Life EXPRESSING Itself Through Us” ... Galatians 2:20***

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Paul says that ‘the life he lived in the body’ – that is, the life that the people around him could see was the result of the ‘life he had going on within’ which they, of course, couldn’t see.

That inner life was the ‘Christ-Life’ – the life that ‘Pneuma’ had planted and nurtured and now rejoiced in and fellowshiped with.

These are things we will discuss in some depth but suffice it today to say, as does our **Final Thot** of the morning ...

### ***Final Thot ...***

Beyond **IMITATION** and **CONFORMATION** comes **RE-INCARNATION.**

Through His **SPIRIT** - **COMPANIONED** followers

Jesus Christ would **WALK** the **EARTH** again!

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

## **“Humanity 2.0”**

(1 Cor. 15:45; Col. 2:9-10; Col. 1:28; Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:27; Col. 3:10-11; Gal. 3:28, 6:15)

**Intro** ... Last week, we officially began the **Fourth** and Final Stage of the ‘Journey Toward Christ-Likeness’ that ‘Pneuma’ (God’s Most Holy Spirit) has us on.

**The First Three Stages** of this journey have each been enlightening and challenging ... Each one has set the stage for the one to follow.

**First**, we entered the **Identification Stage** where we ‘*Identified the Person of Christ and His Call upon our lives.*’ Five key identities of Christ were discovered. That was a most profitable and essential stage of the journey.

Only those who make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and respond eagerly and thus positively to His Life-Altering Call get to go any farther down the path. Those who haven’t, can’t.

But for those who do respond eagerly and positively to Christ’s Life Altering Call and have new life planted in them by the Holy Spirit (whom we call ‘Pneuma’), **Stage One** leads right into **Stage Two**: the ‘**Imitation Stage.**’

This is the stage of the journey where the newly born believer is urged to literally ‘Walk in Jesus’ Steps’ and incorporate the specific behaviors that Jesus modeled and commanded. We found **seven such behaviors.** They are a challenge for any believer and they bring much joy to our Savior when they are practiced.

**Stage Two** naturally then leads into **Stage Three**: the ‘**Conformation Stage**’ where we discovered **Eight Specific Internal Character Traits of Christ** that motivated the outward behaviors of Christ.

It’s this inner character of Christ to which ‘Pneuma’ would ‘conform us.’ He is committed to doing that in each of our lives. As we ‘Walk with Him’ and ‘Keep in step with Him’ and do not ‘Resist’ or ‘Grieve’ or ‘Quench’ Him, it will surely happen. He, the Third Person of the Almighty, will make it happen!

And now we come to the **Fourth** and **Final Stage** of this Journey and you might say ...

‘What more could there be?’

The thing that we have yet to discuss through hopefully many of us have already begun to experience, is what I called at the begin of this series of messages: the '**Re-Incarnation Stage**.'

This is the stage of the journey where the 'Follower of Christ' is so conformed to the 'Character of Christ' that a genuine expression of the 'Life of Christ' begins to flow forth and something of 'True Christianity – True Christ-Likeness' begins to be seen in the world.

Last week I said that our discussions of this "**Re-Incarnation Stage**" would center around **Three Captivating Images**:

**KEY IMAGE ONE: GESTATION**

**"The Christ-Life Being FORMED In Us" ... Galatians 4:19**

*"I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ (The Christ-Life Itself) be formed in you."*

**KEY IMAGE TWO: OCCUPATION**

**"The Christ-Life TAKING UP RESIDENCE Within Us" ... Ephesians 3:16-19**

*"I pray that ... He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being so that Christ (The Christ-Life Itself) may dwell in your hearts through faith ... that you may be filled to the measure of all the Fullness of God."*

**KEY IMAGE THREE: REVELATION**

**"The Christ-Life EXPRESSING Itself Through Us" ... Galatians 2:20**

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ (The Christ-Life Itself) lives in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

The first three stages of the 'Journey Toward Christ-Likeness' are really all part of the '**Gestation Process**' ...

**Identifying** Christ and Responding to His Call to Follow Him  
**Imitating** Christ in Specific Life Situations  
**Being Conformed** to Christ and to His Inner Character.'

All of this is involved in Getting Christ (The Christ-Life) '**FORMED**' – that is, brought into being within us and made ready to function through us.

And, of course, Getting the Christ-Life '**FORMED**' in us and then taking up permanent residence within us is crucial to the ultimate task which is having the Christ-Life '**DEMONSTRATED**' by us in every aspect of our lives.

So then, Seeing the Christ-Life '**TAKING UP RESIDENCE**' within us is a crucial second step. This is the moment that the Christ-Life which is now 'Our Life' begins to 'Occupy' and exercise 'Control' over all that we are.

These are the days when 'Pneuma' more and more frequently says:

*"I saw something of Jesus in you today."*

And so finally at this point in our Journey we ask the most important question of all ...

### **TODAY'S REALLY BIG QUESTION ...**

What is the **ESSENTIAL NATURE** of this Christ-Like **LIFE** – this '**CHRIST-LIFE**' that 'Pneuma' is seeking to **CREATE** within each of us?"

We have examined over these past months the **behaviors** that identify it and the key **character traits** that underlie it but what exactly is the **nature** of it?

Are you ready?

Here now is ...

### **TODAY'S REALLY BIG DEFINITION ...**

In a word ...

The **CHRIST-LIFE** is **HUMANITY 2.0!**  
An upgraded **PERFECTED** form of the original.

You see, when Jesus walked the earth he not only lived 'A Perfect Human Life', He lived 'A Perfected Version of Human Life.'

Remember when the temple guards came back to the Chiefs Priests and said:

*"No man ever spoke like this man."?*  
(John 7:46)

We could easily magnify their statement to say:

*"No man ever lived like this man!"*

We are heading toward the heights of human understanding and of Christian Experience when we pass under the sign post marked ...

#### **'STAGE FOUR – RE-INCARNATION OF THE CHRIST-LIFE**

Allow me today to simply draw **two observations** concerning the essential nature of the Christ-Life buttressed by a host of Scripture ...

Most of these will be Scriptures that you have heard or read all your Christian life but you might find yourself saying I've never put them together quite this way before or I have never thought about them quite this way before but we have had that experience before on this journey, haven't we?

Obviously, there will be much to discover, discuss and digest in the days to come.

Suffice it to say first off today concerning the essential nature of the Christ-Life that ...

**\* IT'S A WHOLE NEW TYPE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

Jesus was like no other human being that had ever lived on the earth – those in whom His Life is found are similarly different. He lived and they will be living a brand-new kind of Human Experience – **Version 2.0**.

Listen now to these Scriptures as I read them one after the other. Feel free to begin to form some of your own conclusions as 'Pneuma' opens your mind to them.

*"The **FIRST** man Adam became a living being  
The **LAST** Adam, a life-giving spirit."  
(1 Corinthians 15:45)*

Here the Apostle Paul is drawing a contrast, making a key distinction between Adam and Jesus.

Adam was **Version 1.0**; Jesus was **Version 2.0**.

So, don't look to Adam and Eve as your examples of perfect humanity; don't consider them to be '*Pneuma's*' intended target for your life.

*"For in Christ all the **FULLNESS** of the Deity lives in bodily form and you have been given **FULLNESS** in Christ ..."*  
(Colossians 2:9-10)

Here Paul is communicating some kind of similarity between Jesus Christ and those who have been born-again through faith in Him. There's an intended '*Fullness*' of our earthly life that is somehow connected to His.

*"We preach **HIM** (Christ) admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone **PERFECT** in Christ."*  
(Colossians 1:28)

This verse will always hold a cherished place in my heart. It was the central verse of the Senior Sermon I delivered before the Student Body at Denver Seminary the year I graduated.

That message was entitled: '*A Portrait of God's Minister*' and this verse revealed to us all that the goal of every minister in the Service of Jesus Christ should be to present to the Lord one day everyone they shepherd '**Perfect** (Fully Mature) **in Christ** Paul would never be satisfied to just 'Get'em saved.'

**Now** ... if it's a goal laid down in Scripture, then it's a possibility in ministry. And when we are '*Walking in Step with Pneuma*' it moves from mere possibility to actual probability. I'm more sure of that now than I was then.

*"His (Christ's) **PURPOSE** was to create in **HIMSELF** one **NEW MAN** (humanity)."*  
(Ephesians 2:15)

**Well** ... there it is in black and white. This new version of Humanity – this Version 2.0 - is exactly what Jesus Christ intends to bring into being.

He was the first example of it and '*in Him*' and '*though Him*' and because '*of Him*' this experience can be enjoyed and expressed by all who receive new life '*from Him*.'

Perhaps at this point you are ready to consider this next phrase somewhat differently than you may have in the past. This verse is also part of that 'Portrait of God's Minister' that Paul drew for the Colossians.

Paul was explaining to them that the 'big mystery' that had been hidden for so long was ...

**"CHRIST in you, the HOPE of GLORY"**  
(Colossians 1:27)

Christ (the Christ-Life) in me ... forming and dwelling and expressing itself ... gives me hope that an entirely different earthly life is a possibility for me - a glorious life, a fruitful life, an abundant life, a life I truly enjoy living and an experience with the Almighty on a daily basis that I would have never thought possible!

And then **after that** comes the even greater glory of heaven itself.

Wonder will be stirred for all eternity in the heavenly hosts themselves as they gaze upon those who by the deeds of Christ and the workings of the Holy Spirit have attained this level of glorious earthly life.

It's no small thing to say that such a life will merit a 'Well-Done' from the Heavenly Father Himself.

So indeed, we can say that this 'Christ-Life' that 'Pneuma' would form and nurture in our hearts is a 'Whole New Type of Human Experience.'

Now here's a **second observation** that we can draw about the Essential Nature of the Christ-Life that Christ through His Personally Sent One, 'Pneuma,' would form and nurture within us.

**\* IT RISES ABOVE ALL NORMAL HUMAN DISTINCTIONS**

Listen to this ...

You have put on the **NEW SELF**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the **IMAGE** of its **CREATOR**. Here there is no **GREEK** or **JEW**,  
circumcised or uncircumcised, Scythian or barbarian,  
**SLAVE** or **FREE** but Christ is all and is in all."  
(Colossians 3:10-11)

And this ...

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free,  
**MALE** or **FEMALE** for you are all one in Christ Jesus."  
(Galatians 3:28)*

And also, this ...

*"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything,  
what counts is a **NEW CREATION**."  
(Galatians 6:15)*

It's certainly hard to miss the point, isn't it?

Those who are indwelt and increasingly controlled by the 'Christ-Life' find themselves looking at each other differently.

As we will see, they find themselves looking at themselves differently.

The former human categories, the former ways of distinguishing one human being from another, are becoming far less significant – some of them are no longer significant at all.

It's a brave new wonderful world for those who 'Walk with Pneuma' into it.

I trust that it will more and more be 'our world' as we continue to investigate it!

Suffice it to say this morning as our ***final thot*** puts it ...

***Final Thot ...***

**ONLY** in Jesus Christ and in those whom 'Pneuma' has transformed into His **LIKENESS** can Humanity 2.0 be found. Everyone else is **STUCK** with the sin-corrupted original version!

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Building Blocks of Humanity 2.0”*

(Over-View)

**Intro ...** In last Sunday’s message, I posed a ...

## **REALLY BIG QUESTION ...**

What is the **ESSENTIAL NATURE** of this Christ-Like **LIFE** – this **‘CHRIST-LIFE’** that ‘Pneuma’ is seeking to **CREATE** within each of us?”

In that same message, I provided a ...

## **REALLY BIG DEFINITION ...**

In a word ...

The **CHRIST-LIFE** is **HUMANITY 2.0!**  
An upgraded **PERFECTED** form of the original.

Further on, in last Sunday’ message, I shared **Two Key Observations** about the Christ-Life that was fully expressed in Jesus and that ‘Pneuma’ would seek to have ‘fully expressed’ in the lives of all those He ‘companions.’

**Observation One:** *It’s a whole new type of Human Experience.*  
There’s never been anything like it before – it goes far beyond the life that Adam and Eve experienced in the Garden.

**Observation Two:** *It rises above all normal Human Distinctions.*  
None of those normal ‘distinctions’ hold water any longer.

Last Sunday we mentioned (as does the Scripture) several of those ‘distinctions’ ... Jew/Gentile; freeman/slave; educated/uneducated; rich/poor; male/female ...

We, of course, today could add to that list: various kinds of ethnic or racial distinctions, cultural distinctions, political distinctions, life opportunity distinctions, family heritage distinctions, career distinctions, personality distinctions, marital distinctions and on and on we could go.

However, there is only one distinction between human beings that goes all the way back to the beginning – all the way back to the time there were but two human beings on the face of the earth and that's the one upon which I want us to specifically focus our attention.

**Version 1.0** of the human race contained a very noticeable distinction. To anyone who walked into the Garden of Eden it would have been very apparent that there were two types of human beings living there – a male type and a female type. They were living in a beautiful harmony but they were definitely different ... one was masculine and the other feminine.

Each brought their own uniqueness and specialness to the equation. It took both of them to have a '*complete expression of humanity.*'

It took both of them living in perfect harmony for either of them to experience '*complete humanity.*' Neither of them could be '*Fully Human*' without the other. That's just how God designed it.

That was **Humanity 1.0** ... and it worked beautifully for a while. But as you and I both know, sin eventually entered into the picture and **Version 1.0** became corrupted. Many things became '*normal*' that were never intended to be so.

A struggle for dominance became normal ... "*Who's in charge here?*" became a key question. God predicted that struggle as He outlined the consequences of the sin that had been committed (Genesis chapter 3).

Secondary questions became "*Who's better - men or women?*" or "*Why am I stuck with the limitations of my birth gender?*" (as in girls can't become doctors or firemen or racecar drivers and boys can't be stay at home dads or nurses or cooks or emotional people) or "*What is the role that I, as a man or a woman, am expected to play?*"

These things have dominated human discussion and determined human society for thousands of years **AND THEN JESUS CAME!**

Jesus took the human experience to an entirely new level – He introduced us to **Version 2.0**. It's just that most people missed it – even those who claimed Him as their Savior and Lord.

In fact, the Church of Jesus Christ, sad to say, has sometimes been a place where this former distinction is held on to more tenaciously and zealously than anywhere else.

Over these next several weeks, I want us to see that this most fundamental human distinction has been addressed by Christ and that His type of Life – the Christ-Life – rises upon the normal masculine/feminine distinctions.

In Christ and through Christ ‘One New Mankind’ (Ephesians 2:15) is being brought into being. In Christ and through Christ, the entire spectrum of human experience is to be discovered and expressed.

Every Born-Again, Spirit- Companioned Follower of Christ is to become a full-fledged, fully-functional member of this **2.0 Version** of the Human Race.

This realization has brought me to an entirely fresh understanding of Jesus’ statement that He had come so that ...

*“They (we) might have life and have it abundantly.”*  
(John 10:10)

And so, we come to ...

### **TODAY’S KEY CONCEPT ...**

Jesus Christ lived the most **COMPLETE** Human Life ever lived.

It **ROSE** above typical Masculine/Feminine Distinctions.

His Born-Again, Spirit-Companioned Followers do the **SAME**.

They no longer ask ‘**IS IT MASCULINE?**’ or ‘**IS IT FEMININE?**’

But ‘**IS IT CHRISTIAN?**’

I have long felt (and have expressed it to some of you in various settings over the years) that if we would compile a list of the most admirable masculine and the most admirable feminine traits – the best of the best, an agreed upon list, we would discover that Jesus possessed them all. We would discover that He was an absolutely perfect, complete human being!

That, my friends, is exactly what I have now sought to do and what we together are going to spend the next several weeks discussing.

Here's how I approached the making of the list ...  
Of course, I 'googled' it and numerous sources came up.

I first checked Wikipedia where three key feminine traits and three key masculine traits were identified. Then I researched another reputable repository where twelve of each were itemized and analyzed.

Out of those 30, I selected 12 ... 6 from the masculine side and 6 from the feminine ... 12 traits that taken together seemed to me to pretty well encapsulate the human experience. I hope you agree.

Then I went to the Scripture to see our 'Perfect Human Person' at work. What a blessing that was! It was easy to see that Jesus was the 'Perfect Expression' – the 'Ultimate Expression' of each of them!

This morning I want to share those **twelve traits** with you ...  
I'm calling them ...

**TWELVE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE CHRIST-LIFE ...**

Twelve '**BUILDING BLOCKS**' of 2.0 Christian Living seen in the **EARTHLY** Life of Jesus Christ and in all those who have been 'Transformed into His **LIKENESS**' by 'Pneuma,' His Holy **SPIRIT**.

In a moment, I'm going to share the list ... these twelve building blocks that 'Pneuma' will bring into being in our lives as He goes about the task of 'Forming Christ In Us

But before I do, I want you to do something ...

Turn your sheet over and list the three most admirable masculine traits and the three most admirable feminine ones that you can think of. It will be interesting to see how your 'off the top of your head list' compares to mine.

Here now are the twelve we will be seeing Jesus manifest.

See if you don't agree that they would greatly enhance the life (and witness) of any follower of Christ who manifested them.

## **TWELVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CHRIST-LIFE ...**

### **1. LEADERSHIP** (Guide – Direct – Benefit) ... Mark 1:17

You can't walk long in the footsteps of Jesus – guided by His Spirit – and not realize that this new life forming in you is a life that would seek to guide and counsel and benefit those around you. Leadership is a great building block to a 'full-fledged' authentic Christ-Like Life.

### **2. PASSION** (Zeal – Intensity – Energy – Joy) ... John 2:17

To be fully human – to fully express the Image of God that has been placed upon us and the Life of Christ that is forming within us – means to be passionately connected with life – to possess zeal, intensity, energy and joy. No morbid defeatism, no uninterested by-standing in Humanity 2.0.

### **3. TENDERNESS** (Gentleness – Compassion – Empathy) ... Mark 6:34

Fully functional Followers of Christ possess a genuine '*Heart for People.*' They go easy on people – they are able to '*put themselves in the other person's place*' and sense what they are feeling. They sincerely care about others. Such tenderness is always noted and generally appreciated.

### **4. PATIENCE** (Composure – Poise – Capacity – Endurance) ... Hebrews 12:2

Waiting from '*Before the foundation of the earth*' to come to His Bethlehem Birth was an incredible demonstration of patience – Waiting patiently for his chosen disciples to finally '*see the light*' was another. And, of course, patiently awaiting the moment of his suffering and death as an earth-bound human being was most impressive of all. He (and those in whom His Life is being formed) show great composure and poise and capacity for endurance. It's a most admirable human quality.

### **5. INTEGRITY** (Honesty – Truthfulness – Stability – Faithfulness) ... 1 Peter 2:22

What incredible qualities for a human being to possess! They all flow from a heart that is pure and true. Jesus possessed just such a heart and so do those whom '*Pneuma*' has shaped into His Image and Likeness.

### **6. RADIANCE** (Life Energy – Glow – Brilliance – Inviting) ... Matthew 17:2

Version 2.0 Human Life is vibrant and alive – It shows on the countenance. It's winsome and welcoming. It communicates acceptance and issues an invitation to '*Come along*' and to '*Join In.*' Initially, at least, people bask in the warmth of its glow. People not only '*loved to be around Jesus,*' they love to be around those in whom His Life is forming.

7. **FOCUS** (Concentration – Motivation – Application) ... Luke 9:51

Especially in a fallen, fragmented, ever-altering world, it's a rare (and wonderful) thing to meet someone who is truly '*captured by something*' – something of great worth – something toward which their entire life is heading and to which their entire self is dedicated. Such 'focus' characterized Jesus.

8. **LOVE** (Unconditional Commitment – Wholehearted Benevolence) ... Jn. 15:13

Across the board – across the ages – genuine agape love has been considered one of the (if not the) most desirable human quality. Humanity 2.0 embraces and expresses such love beautifully.

9. **CONFIDENCE** (Certainty – Tenacity – Assurance – Conviction) ... John 14:6

To be a person possessing genuine confidence in life is a most wonderful thing. To live with certainty and tenacity and assurance and conviction is at the very heart of the Christ-Life. It's awesome to experience and to observe.

10. **AWARENESS** (Alert – In Tune – Informed – Attentive) ... John 13:1

No '*living in the dark*' for one in whom the Christ-Life has been formed. No being '*blind-sided by life*' either. Awareness/alertness/attentiveness does not guarantee smooth sailing in this fallen world but it sure does reduce the number of '*surprises*.'

11. **SURRENDER** (Yield – Submit – Relinquish – Sacrifice) ... Luke 22:42

Having the ability to '*relinquish control*' and to '*yield to a greater and better*' - to willingly '*subordinate ourselves*' is a tremendously important thing. This ability Jesus Himself demonstrated and so do those in whom His Life is being formed.

12. **NURTURE** (Teach – Train – Encourage – Cultivate) ... Luke 13:34

What a marvelous ability to possess – the ability (and the desire) to help form another human being – to see them progress toward true and full faith in Jesus Christ – to work hand in hand with '*Pneuma*' Himself in the shaping of their lives.

***Final Thot ...***

Only a '**CHRISTIAN**' can experience **VERSION 2.0** of the **HUMAN LIFE**. Those who do ... **FOLLOW** in the **FOOTSTEPS** of **CHRIST**.

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block One – Leadership”*

**Intro ...** In last Sunday's message, I introduced the ...

## **TWELVE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE CHRIST-LIFE ...**

Twelve ‘**BUILDING BLOCKS**’ of 2.0 Human Living seen in the **EARTHLY** Life of Jesus Christ and in all those who have been ‘Transformed into His **LIKENESS**’ by ‘Pneuma,’ His Holy **SPIRIT**.

Leadership, Passion, Tenderness, Patience, Integrity, Radiance,  
Focus, Love, Confidence, Awareness, Surrender and Nurture.

These ‘Components’ or ‘Building Blocks’ run the gamut of human experience and include both things typically considered masculine and things typically considered feminine – these components taken together ... these building blocks appropriately linked together - create a ‘perfected humanity’ ... a full complete expression of the ‘Image of God’ in man. Jesus Christ was the first expression of such human life. We’ve been calling it **Humanity 2.0** – a major upgrade on the original.

We who are being ‘Conformed into His Likeness’ by ‘Pneuma’ (the ONE Jesus Himself assigned to companion us through our earthly life) will more and more experience and express this fuller, most comprehensive human life as we ‘Keep in Step with Him.’

These twelve building blocks of the Christ-Life combine to form a truly awesome earthly life – a life that mirrors Christ's Own. It's the highpoint and the ultimate earthly goal of our salvation. It's our Savior's desire for every one of us.

Last week I introduced the **Twelve** ... today I would have us focus upon the **First** ... Christ-Life Building Block One: **LEADERSHIP**.

Do keep in mind that though we can and will discuss these twelve one by one, they form a complete package. None of them can exist in its fullness absent the others.

So, with that understanding in place, let's begin.

Last week I mentioned that Leadership means '**to guide, to direct, to benefit those around you**' ...

Leadership is a tremendous '*building block*' for the Christ-Life.  
Leadership was, of course, wonderfully demonstrated by Jesus Himself.

Check out ...

**TODAY'S KEY VERSE ... Mark 1:17**

**"COME, FOLLOW me ...  
and I will MAKE you FISHERS of men."**

Those words were spoken along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and they were spoken to Simon Peter and his brother Andrew who were fisherman.

Jesus was not a stranger to them for they had previously met him when they had traveled south some 60 miles to hear and see (and no doubt be baptized by) John the Baptist.

It was during that initial meeting that Jesus gave to Simon the nickname Cephas or Peter (the Rock).

Now they had all returned home to Galilee and the time had come for Jesus' public ministry to begin.

The time had come for Jesus to assemble the team that would carry on '*The Ministry*' after He had returned to heaven – the core group around which He would build His Church.

And so, he presents himself to them as they were and where they were and speaks to them these life-changing words ...

*"Come, follow me  
and I will make you fishers of men."*

## **FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP** I find in that simple verse ...

### **1. INVITATION** ... "Come"

This was a clear (and as it turned out compelling) invitation. Notice that there is no sense of domination or intimidation or manipulation in it. It however was incredibly personal and it anticipated a positive response. It was given by one who had 'leadership' oozing from every pore of his body. He is the one who would guide and direct and benefit their lives and both He and they knew it.

So, one key element of leadership is **invitation**.  
There is a welcoming call to something new and different and better.

### **2. DIRECTION** ... "Follow me"

Initially it involved no more than 'Go where I go' ...

However, it implied 'Watch what I do' and 'Listen to what I say' and possibly even 'Desire to become what I am' (watch, learn and yearn) but in that initial encounter Jesus 'merely' communicated that from that point on, the direction of their lives (physically and intellectually and emotionally and spiritually) would be set by Him.

Leadership always involves communicating **direction**.  
There's a new orientation – a new focus being presented.

***Here's now a third element of leadership I find in that initial Call of Christ.***

### **3. CONVICTION** ... "I will make you"

There was no doubt in the mind of their 'Caller' – their 'Inviter' – their would-be 'Leader' regarding His ability to accomplish the thing to which they were being called. Basically, he was saying ...

*"If you will yield yourselves to me,  
I can and will make this thing happen."*

It was a complete transformation of life to which Christ was calling them. As Jesus called them He made clear to them that He was absolutely sure that the '*transformation*' would be successfully accomplished.

*'It's on my shoulders' ... 'I will make it happen.'*

Such conviction is indeed a key element of leadership and the communication of such **conviction** greatly helps the 'Called One' to respond positively.

***Here now is the fourth and final key element of leadership I find in that simple 'Call to Discipleship' ...***

#### **4. INTENTION** ... "*Fishers of men*"

Here Jesus paints a picture for them regarding his intention for them. What will be the result of them responding to His Call to come follow?

They will become '*Fishers of men*' ... they will be involved somehow in '*catching men*' rather than fish.

Now they had already seen John the Baptist's powerful ministry – a ministry of repentance and preparation.

They had heard John identify Jesus as the one whose way he had been preparing. They had heard John declare that Jesus was, in fact, the ...

*'Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world' ...*

a pretty vividly painted word picture itself.

Now Jesus was telling them that he was going to prepare them to be the ones who would somehow cast the nets that would draw into the Kingdom those whose sins Jesus had '*taken away.*'

Surely that would have been a mind-boggling thought.

They were to become key players in the work of God in the world. Jesus was extending to them a '*Life-Altering Call*' ... a call to a life that possessed '*divine significance.*'

A clear communication of **intention** is a key element of leadership. Christ's clear communication inspired them; they dropped their nets and followed him!

***Four Key Elements of Leadership*** we've discovered in that simple verse – that straightforward call extended to several ordinary working men – fishermen – whose hearts had been made ready to respond.

Certainly, in that encounter we can see that Jesus was motivated '*to guide, to direct, to benefit*' those fishermen that day ... He possessed and expressed **leadership** perfectly in that setting.

Let's look at some other examples of Christ's Leadership as recorded in the Scriptures ... Note the scope of circumstances in which leadership can be expressed.

### **OTHER EXAMPLES** of such Leadership in Christ's Life ...

#### \* **AT HIS BAPTISM** ...

*"**LET** it be so now; it is **PROPER** for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."  
(Matthew 3:15)*

John the Baptist was a leader in his own right ...  
He was a powerful man.

Jesus once said that among men born of woman there is none greater than John the Baptist. John feared no one and he stood down for no one. He was assigned by God the task of readying the nation for the coming of '*The Christ*.'

When Jesus came to him John had some definite ideas about how that encounter should go. He pictured in some way handing the mantle (as it were) of his ministry to Jesus and letting Jesus '*run with it*.'

*"He must increase; I must decrease."*

John had said.

And yet Jesus came to him with a totally different agenda ...  
Jesus came presenting himself for baptism – submitting himself to John's ministry – identifying himself with all the repentant ones who lined the banks of the Jordan. John initially resisted him ...

John had perhaps anticipated that '*The Coming One*' would baptize him ... John, no doubt, would have seen such a '*baptism*' to be the highlight of his life.

But in a single sentence, Jesus reversed everything. Jesus took the lead and explained the reason and completely altered John's thinking.

He gave direction and He communicated conviction and He explained intention and then He offered an invitation for John to engage in one of the greatest ministries ever – the Baptism of the Son of God!

John, as it were, bowed the knee and submitted to the **leadership** of the Savior.

\* **THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT** ...

*"You have heard it said ... but I **TELL** you ..."*  
(Matthew 5:21,27, 31,33, 38, 43)

There on that hillside that afternoon, Jesus demonstrated leadership as a teacher and communicator of Divine Truth. Invitation, direction, conviction and intention are found thorough His discourse.

His characteristic phrase is the one we read just now ...

*"You have heard it said ... but I tell you ..."*

**Six times** Jesus introduced topics of daily life with those words. There was no doubt that He considered himself their new spiritual leader and teacher.

Direction would be given, intention would be spelled out, conviction would be evident and an invitation to accept these truths would be extended.

\* **THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY** ...

*"Go now and **LEAVE** your Life of **SIN**."*  
(John 8:11)

This is leadership expressed within the context of both truth and tenderness. There was a new direction needed for this woman – there was a voice of loving authority needed to speak those words of direction.

Jesus spoke as one who knew he could and should command her life and He spoke in a way that hopefully forever changed her life. I have no doubt she heard in those words of His ... invitation and direction and conviction and intention.

But I also have no doubt that she 'heard' and 'felt' other things as well. She heard and felt his love and his tenderness and even his sorrow over her life choices.

You see ... perfected humanity – **Humanity 2.0** involves all twelve 'Building Blocks' working synergistically together.

Here with this humiliated, sinful woman Jesus drew upon far more than **leadership** alone.

Now the ones who had caught her and brought her fancied themselves to be leaders – watchdogs of the people, for sure.

But theirs was the type of leadership that arises from the failed protocols of **Humanity 1.0** - Leadership born of judgment and hostility ... Leadership that would dominate and intimidate and manipulate and surely discriminate.

The Leadership that arises from the Christ-Life within is so different.

**And now** one final example ... the broadest one of all ... the one that His Holy Spirit keeps alive and functional in the world even today ...

\* **HIS INVITATION TO ALL** ...

*“**COME** to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you **REST**. Take my yoke upon you and **LEARN** from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your **SOULS**.”*  
(Matthew 11:28-29)

To the people of His own day Jesus spoke these words of invitation ...

They were words promising new direction and communicating conviction and revealing a loving intention for all who will respond.

Those words still ‘hang in the air’ today.

By the ministry of His Holy Spirit, they are still being brought to the minds and hearts of men and women each and every day.

And through that same Holy Spirit, Jesus our exalted Lord and Savior would provide leadership for our lives and generate the quality of genuine Christ-Like **leadership** in our lives.

**FINAL THOT ...**

The Christ-Life infuses every believer with **LEADERSHIP SENSITIVITIES** – with a desire to **GUIDE, DIRECT** and **BENEFIT** all those into whose presence ‘Pneuma’ **WALKS** them.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Two – Passion”*

**Intro...** *‘Perfected Humanity’* ... That’s what has caught our attention these past few weeks ... **Humanity 2.0** we have dubbed it. It’s the kind of life that Jesus Himself lived and it’s the kind of life that His Holy Spirit has been sent to generate in every single born-again follower of His!

Now one doesn’t wake up from one’s spiritual birth and automatically start living it. Any of us who have been saved for more than five minutes knows that. Becoming like Christ – Living like Christ – is a long-term process. There is much to learn and much to overcome.

So, we have seen over the past few months that the Journey toward Christ-likeness is indeed a long and winding one. There are at least **four stages** to it and even the discussion of it has been lengthy.

But here at last we are discussing the very thing for which ‘*Pneuma*’ has been sent into our lives. He has been sent into our lives to ‘*Make us like Jesus*’ – to develop within us what we have been calling the ‘*Christ-Life*,’ ... **Humanity 2.0**.

This is no small thing – it flies in the face of every natural human instinct for every ‘*natural*’ human instinct is affected by the sin of Adam and is conformed to the pattern of a fallen, rebellious world.

But at the same time, it’s a wondrous thing! It’s a miraculous thing – a divinely accomplished thing! It’s a noticeable and most commendable thing. It’s a God-honoring and God-Pleasing thing. It’s the very thing for which we were granted spiritual birth and the more we taste of it the more we hunger and thirst for it.

And so, we’ve begun an investigation of it ... of this perfected version of Earthly Living ... this Christ-Life... this ‘*Pneuma-Generated*’ **Humanity 2.0**.

Two weeks ago, I shared with you ...

### **TWELVE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE CHRIST-LIFE ...**

Twelve ‘**BUILDING BLOCKS**’ of 2.0 Human Living seen in the **EARTHLY** Life of Jesus Christ and in all those who have been ‘*Transformed into His LIKENESS*’ by ‘*Pneuma*’, His Holy **SPIRIT**.

Leadership, Passion, Tenderness, Patience, Integrity, Radiance,  
Focus, Love, Confidence, Awareness, Surrender and Nurture.

These twelve traits or qualities or characteristics summarize the breadth and depth of the human experience. These twelve traits found their ultimate expression in the earthly life of Jesus and today find expression in all those who are conformed by 'Pneuma' to His Likeness.

Six of these twelve would generally be considered masculine traits; six would generally be consider feminine. All of them are expressed in **Humanity 2.0**. All of them were characteristic of Jesus Christ and will be characteristic of all those whom 'Pneuma' is able to bring to Christ-Likeness.

Last week we focused our attention upon the **First** of those Twelve Building Blocks: **LEADERSHIP** ...

*"Come, follow me" Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*  
Jesus possessed and demonstrated tremendous **leadership** and so do those who are being conformed to His Likeness.

Today I would have us focus our attention upon the **Second** of those Twelve Core Components: **PASSION** (zeal, intensity, energy, joy)

Here's what I said about it two weeks ago ...

*"To be fully human – to fully express the Image of God that has been placed upon us and the Life of Christ that is forming within us – means to be passionately connected with life – to possess zeal, intensity, energy and joy. No morbid defeatism, no disinterested by-standing in 'Humanity 2.0'"*

**Passion** is a fundamental part, an absolutely indispensable part, of genuine, full-blown, truly authentic Christian Living – **Humanity 2.0**.

Pure-hearted **passion** should be one of the most attractive and noticeable aspects of this 'Perfectured Humanity' that 'Pneuma' would create within all who walk with Him.

**Passion** communicates energy and vitality. **Passion** communicates youthfulness and purpose. **Passion** communicates direction and desire. **Passion** communicates to those around us that we are finding our life to be 'worth living' ... Needless to say, **passion** draws attention and encourages imitation.

Now **Passion**, like **Leadership**, comes from the masculine side of the human equation though it is now to be part of every believer's experience. Put them together and you get '**Passionate Leadership**' ... notable indeed.

**Passion** is seen in one of the most dramatic moments in Jesus' life –  
***The Cleansing of the Temple.***

The three synoptic or similar Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all record that Jesus cleansed the temple right at the beginning of Holy Week – the final week of His Earthly Life.

In the Gospel of John, however, we discover that Jesus also '*Cleansed the Temple*' at the very beginning of His Public Ministry.

Today's **key verse** is taken from that very first '*Cleansing*' and reveals the presence of this very vital Building Block of the Christ-Life in the midst of that dramatic moment. The world saw evidence of Jesus' **passion** early on.

In fact, today's **key verse** directs our attention to the sole Biblical reference to that trait in the Life of Jesus Christ ... It's the only time that the Greek word for Zeal or Passion is used in the Gospels though we know that Jesus was full of the zest of life continually just as we are to be.

In our key verse of the morning, John uses the Greek word 'zeelos' – another of those words that has been brought pretty directly into our English language.

The Greek Word is 'Zeelos' – *The English Word is 'Zeal.'*  
There was no English word for it. So, one was created as in  
*"He's sure got lots of 'zeelos' (zeal) in him."*

Microsoft Word Dictionary lists the following as synonyms: enthusiasm, passion, fervor, ardor, eagerness, intensity, fanaticism, vehemence.

Zeal/Passion is potent stuff – like a kind of emotional or spiritual TNT.

Obviously, we do well to examine the manner in which Jesus expressed it and the only situation in which He openly demonstrated it.

It would not be a big stretch to say that it's for such a similar situation that 'Pneuma' seeks to develop zeal/passion within each of those He companions.

*'Save your passion for such a time as this,'* He might well be saying to us.

*"And for what kind of time is that?"* ... we might well ask back.

Let's see if we can discover an answer.

Take a look with me at what **Today's Key Verse** (this one of a kind verse) says ...

**TODAY'S KEY VERSE ... John 2:17**

**"ZEAL (Passion) FOR YOUR HOUSE CONSUMES ME."**

This is a statement taken directly from Psalm 69:9 ...

David wrote those words during a time when he was being greatly opposed because of His Commitment to the Almighty ... He was being abused and persecuted because of His Commitment to the Things of God and the Ways of God, all symbolized by His Commitment to the House of God – the Tabernacle itself.

John says that the disciples later applied this verse to Jesus when they remembered and reflected back upon the incredible thing he had done.

Consider with me this morning, first of all ...

### **1. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S PASSION**

When and where was this passion – this 'zeelos' demonstrated?

Let's just read the story ...

*"When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.  
In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves,  
and others sitting at tables exchanging money.*

*So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area,  
both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers  
and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said,*

*"Get these out of here!  
How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"*

*His disciples remembered that it is written (Psalm 69:9) ...*

*"Zeal for your house will consume me."  
(John 2:13-17 NIV)*

This was one of those situations where the disciples were, no doubt, left standing with their mouths hanging open.

*"Wow! Did you just see what he did?"  
He went through there like a 'one-man army.'  
Everybody just got out of His way.  
I've never seen anything like that.  
I've actually never seen Him so fired up before –  
so passionate, so zealous – so focused – so awesome!"*

There was no way to miss, let alone deny, the **fact** of Christ's Passion on that day. It was on public display for all to see.

**Consider** now secondly ...

## **2. THE FOCUS OF CHRIST'S PASSION**

His focus that day was upon ...

*"The **HOUSE** of God – and the proper **USE** of it"  
"How dare you turn My Father's House into a market?"*

That's what he said to anyone who would listen ... to the merchants whose cattle and sheep and doves were being sold there, to the money changers who piously exchanged the Roman coins bearing the Emperor's Image for a properly blessed Temple Shekel, to the Priests and Leaders of the people who approved all these practices and to the worshippers who simply 'went along' with the whole process. They were all complicit. Not one of them was innocent.

In the latter 'cleansing' it is reported that Jesus said (Luke 19:46) ...

*It is written, My House shall be called a House of Prayer  
but you have made it a Den of Thieves."*

Jesus got pretty zealous – pretty passionate – when His focus fell upon the House of God ... There was no more important place on earth than the place where God had chosen to put His Name and meet with men.

**Thirdly** then consider with me ...

### **3. THE FORCE OF CHRIST'S PASSION**

*It "Consumed Him."*

*- Possessed Him – Energized Him – Totally Captivated Him -*

*"He made a whip and drove the cattle and sheep out.  
He overturned the tables of the moneychangers.  
He told the dove-sellers to take them away."*

I doubt that anyone who saw Jesus on that day could ever get that image out of their mind. They saw a powerful man doing a powerful thing in the presence of some of the most powerful men of the day.

He was so 'consumed' – so 'focused' – so 'caught up' - so 'possessed' – so 'invested' in the task that nothing could divert him or dissuade him.

Now that's part of **Humanity 2.0** ...

That 'passion' – that 'zeal' – is part of the Christ-Life that 'Pneuma' is seeking to develop in each of us who 'Walk with Him.'  
It's part of the package.

Such an observation leads quickly to ...

#### **TODAY'S FIRST KEY QUESTION ...**

**WHAT** in the world would 'Pneuma' have  
so '**CONSUME**' – so '**FOCUS**' – so '**POSSESS**' us?

Some of us could easily offer suitable candidates as 'targets'  
for such a 'passionate focus' ...

A Human Relationship - A Political Persuasion

A Career Ambition - A Sports Team

Each of these is certainly capable of stirring passion within us – of causing great zeal and energy to flow from us. But are any of these to be the primary focus for Christ-Like Passion and Zeal?

How about this as an **answer** to the question ...

**TODAY'S FIRST KEY ANSWER:**

(What would 'Pneuma' have so consume us?)

THE **SAME** THING THAT **CONSUMED** JESUS ...  
THE **TEMPLE** OF **GOD** AND THE **PROPER USE** OF IT.

May it be said of us ...

**"ZEAL** for God's House (His Temple) consumes **THEM.**"

Now that answer, of course, leads us directly to ...

**TODAY'S SECOND KEY QUESTION ...**

**WHERE** is God's **TEMPLE** today and  
**WHAT** is its Intended **PURPOSE**?

The Temple of Jesus' day is long gone.  
It was destroyed about 40 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.  
But even before it was destroyed, God revealed a brand-new plan.  
He revealed it to the Apostle Paul who announced it in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

**TODAY'S SECOND KEY ANSWER:**

(Where is God's Temple today?)

\* **WITHIN** Every Born-Again **CHILD** Of **GOD** ...  
(1 Corinthians 6:19)

*"Do you not know that your **BODY** is a **TEMPLE**  
of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom  
you have **RECEIVED** from God?"*

So, there we have it ... God's Temple today is found 'within the heart of every one of His Born-Again Children.'

There's also a sense in which God's Temple is formed whenever a collection of God's Born-Again Children gathers together (1 Cor. 3:16) but today let's just focus upon the inner, personal temple.

You and I, as born-again Children of God, are living temples of the Almighty – temples created by the power of the Holy Spirit who is in us.

Now for the second part of this question ...

(What is its intended purpose?)

\* To **HONOR** Jesus Christ ...  
(1 Peter 3:15)

*"In your **HEARTS** set apart **CHRIST** as **LORD**."*

To set Christ apart ...

***Apart*** from all the other 'stuff' that this world consists of ... ***Apart*** from all the other 'things' that might call out for my allegiance and energy. ***Apart*** from everything else that might seek Lordship over me – that might seek to control and influence me. ***Apart*** even from my own thoughts and feelings about things.

In a word ...

My **HEART** is to be the place where I **FALL** on my **FACE** before my Risen, Exalted **SAVIOR** in continual **SURRENDER**.

I am to zealously and passionately **DRIVE OUT** anything that **VIOLATES** the **HALLOWEDNESS** of the **PLACE!**

My heart is where I connect with the things that really matter.  
My heart is the place where I am to focus upon Christ and Christ alone.  
My heart is where 'Pneuma' would say to me ...

*"Fix your eyes on Him – Renew your passion for Him – Sense anew His Lordship –  
Rejoice in His Grace and Goodness – Remind yourself of His Sacrifice and  
His Current Ministry on your behalf – Recognize Him as the One  
who has sent me to companion you and provide for you.*

*And then ...*

*zealously remove everything from this place that doesn't  
honor and exalt and draw you near to ... Him!"*

Here is the proper arena where **Christ-Like Passion** is to be demonstrated.  
Here is where zeal for God is to be exhibited.

Set apart Jesus Christ (alone) in your heart!

This, so few of us have done – this, so many of us have overlooked.

And by ignoring this so many of us pay the price each and every day.

Let me say something now that none of us wants to hear but that I have  
come to believe it with all my heart.

What makes a 'bad day' a 'bad day'? ...  
The 'garbage' in your heart!

It's not the boss – It's not the conditions – It's not your supposed limitations.  
It's the 'garbage' in your heart – it's the stuff that is cluttering up the temple.

And so, what is the solution to that 'bad day'?

Clear out the clutter ...

Don't grab a bottle of your favorite beverage.

Don't stuff yourself with your favorite food.

Don't rush to your favorite website.

Head to the temple and bow yourself once again before

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

There in His Presence 'Goodness' is found.

### **FINAL THOT ...**

Picture yourself picking up a **WHIP** and heading with Pneuma  
into the deepest **RECESSES** of your own Heart.

Become **PASSIONATE** about **REMOVING** everything that doesn't **BELONG!**

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

## **“Christ-Life Building Block Three – Tenderness”**

**Intro...** Today we turn our attention toward the **third** of those Twelve Building Blocks of genuine Christ-Life.

And here it is ...

### **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK THREE: TENDERNESS**

Gentleness – Compassion – Empathy

Here’s the clarifying statement I put with it when I introduced it some weeks ago:

*“Fully functional Followers of Christ possess a genuine ‘Heart for people.’ They go easy on people – they are able to ‘put themselves in the other person’s place’ and sense what they are feeling. They sincerely care about others. Such tenderness is always noted and generally appreciated.”*

**“Tenderness”** ... it’s an all too rare commodity in our harsh, judgmental, ‘dog-eat-dog’ world. The desire and ability to be gentle with people – the capacity to feel compassion for people – to empathize with people. These are not common to fallen humanity – they, sad to say, are not all that common to redeemed humanity either.

Certainly, they are not common to those ‘redeemed, born-again individuals’ who are still mired in the muck of what we have called Humanity 1.0 – the original version first programed into and then corrupted by Adam and Eve themselves.

However, **tenderness** (like leadership and passion) is a core component of Humanity 2.0 – the upgraded, perfected version introduced first by Jesus Himself as He walked upon this earth and now demonstrated by all those in whom ‘Pneuma’ (His Most Holy Spirit) has formed His Image.

\* ***HERE'S HOW JESUS MODELED IT ...***

*"Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the (leper).  
'I am willing', he said. Be clean! Immediately the leprosy left him."  
(Mark 1:41-42)*

Nobody in his right mind in that day would 'touch' a leper.  
Lepers were beyond hope and were kept pretty much beyond sight.

"Unclean, unclean" the leper would cry out as he approached anyone.  
It was a cry that all the healthy would quickly take up as such a one  
was spotted.

A leper was most often an object of disgust and was frequently viewed  
as a demonstration of God's judgment.

And yet here is Jesus responding to the one who said,

*"Master, if you are willing, you can make me clean."*

"Filled with compassion" and (we could easily add) 'speaking in a most  
tender voice,' Jesus said ...

*"I am willing ... be clean."*

I have no doubt that the 'spirit' with which Jesus spoke those words –  
the gentle, tender manner which Jesus displayed - made as much an  
impression upon the man as the physical healing he received.

**Tenderness** can make a powerful impact in a harsh and uncaring world.

**Next**, we see Jesus dealing not with the sick but with the selfish ...

*"He had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd."  
Mark 6:34 ...*

These were people – tons of people – who were barging into a private  
moment that Jesus had arranged for himself and his disciples – a moment  
to regroup after a time of extensive ministry – a time to debrief and  
rejoice.

Jesus and the disciples had sought to escape by boat to the far side  
of the Sea of Galilee. But when they arrived a vast crowd of people –  
concerned far more about their own needs than the disciples' needs –  
awaited them.

There were lots of possible responses – especially for those living in the corrupted bondage of Humanity 1.0.

*'Go back home, this is a private gathering. This is our time.'*

*'Lord send them away – You promised you would spend time with us.'*

*'What a bunch of selfish, self-centered people – All they care about is themselves.'*

But not Jesus ...

What He saw were *'sheep without a shepherd'* - vulnerable people who needed someone to guide them and provide for them. His heart went out to them and he sat down and began to minister to them.

Hopefully His disciples learned something by watching.

And, of course, we must include this one ...

*"And he took the children in his arms,  
put his hands on them and blessed them."  
(Mark 10:16)*

Children did not have high standing in that day (When have they?)  
The disciples were annoyed that these children were interrupting  
*'the important stuff.'*

Jesus rebuked his disciples and turned his attention to these littlest ones.

Can you imagine what it would have been like long after Jesus' death and resurrection to be able to say ...

*"I was one of those he 'held and blessed' that day."  
I'll never forget the look in His eyes and the sound of his voice.  
'Tender' is the only word I have for it.  
I feel it in my heart every day as I walk with His Spirit."*

**TENDERNESS** ... A Core Component of the Christ-Life modeled beautifully and consistently by Christ Himself as He lived out His Earthly Life.

But such **tenderness** does not just apply to Christ's earthly life though that, of course, is the life to which we are being conformed by His Spirit.

**\* HERE'S HOW OUR EXALTED SAVIOR CONTINUES IT ...**

*"For we do not have a Great High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin."*

(Hebrews 4:15)

Here the earthly and the heavenly link hands (as it were) in a marvelous ministry.

It's because of His Earthly Life that Christ today (in the role of our Great High Priest) can sympathize with us and all our weaknesses.

He can express **tenderness** (gentleness, compassion and empathy) toward us and He does.

He continually remembers the challenges of life in a fallen world;  
He understands the temptations that human beings experience;  
He remembers how easy it is to fall away in fear and then grovel in regret.

Peter's face no doubt comes before Him often and as our Great High Priest, He continually offers forgiveness and cleansing and does so in the most tender and understanding way.

**TENDERNESS** ... A core component of the Christ-Life continued effectively in the Holy Place itself by our own Great High Priest.

And now are we ready to hear that Christ-Demonstrated Tenderness is much more than just something to marvel at or be humbled by?

Are we ready to accept the fact that Tenderness was never intended to have its beginning and end in the person of Jesus Christ – that this Core Component of Christ's life is intended to be a 'core component' of the 'Christ-Life' 'Pneuma' is creating within each of us with whom He walks?

Well, ready or not ...

\* ***HERE'S HOW 'PNEUMA' HAD THE APOSTLE PAUL DIRECT US TOWARD IT ...***

*"Be kind and compassionate (tender-hearted KJV) to one another ..."*  
(Ephesians 4:32)

Isn't it good that the Holy Spirit had Paul direct us to '*start with one another*' – with our fellow believers, with our comrades in arms, with our brothers and sisters in the faith, with our fellow worshippers?

Isn't your heart already anticipating and desiring that – to be '*tender-hearted*' toward them?

That means ...

***BEING GENTLE*** ... Never heavy-handed or harsh towards them.

***BEING COMPASSIONATE*** ... genuine feelings of sorrow for them when trouble comes.

***BEING EMPATHETIC*** ... Able to '*step into their shoes*' with them and make connection.

What better time than '*Sunday*' to recognize that we have been formed into and are continually being transformed into a genuine '*Family of Faith*.'

We have been '*formed into*' and are being '*transformed into*' a community of believers where '*connection*' is possible, where '*forgiveness*' is granted, where '*tender-heartedness*' is experienced!

***FINAL THOT ...***

The Christ-Life infuses every believer with ***TENDERNESS*** ... with a ***GENTLE*** Spirit and a ***CARING*** Heart and a ***PATIENT*** Mind.

To be expressed first within the ***FAMILY*** of Faith and then ...  
***EVERYWHERE ELSE!***

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Four – Patience”*

**Intro...** Humanity 2.0 continues to be our focus as we examine the Life that ‘*Pneuma*,’ the Almighty Holy Spirit of God Himself, is seeking to produce within every single one of us who have been born-again through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Humanity 2.0** is our designation for the **Christ-Life** ... the very type of life that Jesus lived while he walked upon the earth.

It's a whole new type of human life – a more comprehensive human life – a more complete and thus more impressive human life than even that which Adam and Eve experienced in the garden. It's a life that rises above all distinctions: above all racial distinctions, above economic distinctions, above political distinctions, above educational distinctions, above even (and most importantly for this current discussion) all gender distinctions.

**Humanity 2.0** is the type of humanity demonstrated by Jesus Himself.

It contains everything that we human beings would consider to be notable and admirable about human beings - it includes in one awesome package both what we would typically consider to be admirable masculine traits and what we would consider to be admirable feminine ones.

It gives expression to an upgraded, perfected version of the human race ... It's **Humanity 2.0** – the **Christ-Life**.

**Twelve Core Components** or Building Blocks of the Christ-Life have caught our attention as we make our way through this final stage of our ‘*Journey Toward Christ-Likeness*’ – some typically masculine and some typically feminine but all wonderfully Christian!

So far, we have discussed **three** of the twelve: Leadership, Passion and Tenderness ... three incredible traits clearly seen expressed in the earthly life of Jesus Christ – three incredible traits expected to be expressed in the lives of all those who are ‘*Keeping In Step with Pneuma*.’

Today we come to ...

**CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK FOUR: PATIENCE**

Composure – Poise – Endurance

**TODAY'S KEY DEFINITION ...**

**PATIENCE**: the ability to calmly **WAIT** on something or **SOMEONE** ...  
usually in the **FACE** of **CHALLENGE**.

What a trait to possess! What a trait to see manifesting itself within you!  
Who wouldn't like to be more patient?

Remember the old warning? Don't ever pray and ask God to give you  
patience for the only way He can do that and the only way for you to  
know if that prayer has been answered is for Him to allow troublesome  
times to come your way.

So, in a word:

*'Praying for Patience' is simply 'Asking for Trouble.'*

I say to you this morning ... You don't need to pray and ask God for  
patience. Simply *'Walk with the Spirit of God'* ... *'Keep in Step with  
the Spirit'* ... and *'Patience'* will become a key component of your life.

Whenever you need to exercise it, it will be there;  
it will be part of your life just like it was part of Christ's life.

So, let's check it out ...

Walk with me through the Scriptures as we look for ...

**I. EXAMPLES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST ...**

(Jesus was the living embodiment of patience.)

First of all, and perhaps most impressively of all, Jesus ...

\* **WAITED** from before the creation of the world for His **BETHLEHEM BIRTH**.  
(Ephesians 1:4 – Galatians 4:4)

The Apostle Paul pointed out in his letter to the Ephesians that the plans for our salvation were laid long eons before they were implemented ...

*"... He (the Father) chose us in him (Christ) before the creation of the world ..."*

Can't you just hear the Farther saying ...

*'Someday, Son, there will be an innumerable throng who claim You  
as their Savior from condemnation and judgement ...  
Just wait – that day will come.'*

And the Eternal Son of God responding ...

*'I will ... I will wait for that day to come.'*

And then, Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians,

*"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son ..."*

It took thousands of our earth years but when the time was right, when all that needed to be ready had been made ready, Jesus left the splendor of heaven and came to earth to take on the task He had patiently awaited.

And then having entered into our realm of minutes and hours and days and weeks, Jesus patiently ...

<p>* <b><u>WAITED</u></b> for the <b><u>HOUR</u></b> of His Great <b><u>SACRIFICE</u></b> to finally <b><u>ARRIVE</u></b>. (John 2:4; John 12:23, 27, 31)</p>
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Jesus had 30 years to wait before His earthly ministry could begin ...

Three years would need to be invested in that ministry before the Sacrifice of Himself could be made ... He was aware of the schedule ... He knew the things that had to be accomplished before His Sacrifice could be offered.

Teaching had to be presented ... Key Disciples had to be chosen and trained ... Opposition could not be allowed to arise prematurely.

It was his awareness of the program and the timing of things that caused him to say to his mother when, early on, she asked him to step in and fix a situation ...

*"Dear woman ... my time has not yet come."*

In other words ...

*'It's not time yet for me to show myself to the nation.'*

Some three years later though, when his earthly ministry had been completed and the opposition to his ministry had reached its peak, we hear him say these words recorded in John chapter 12 ...

*"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified ... shall I say, 'Father, save me from this hour' ... It was for this very reason that I have come to this hour."*

And then consider these things that were said both by him and about him that zero in on one more example (and focus) of His Patient Spirit ...

\* **WAITED** for the **JOY** of the Father's **EXALTATION**  
(Hebrews 12:2; John 17:1; Philippians 2:9-11)

*"... who for the joy that was set before him (patiently) endured the cross ..."*

It would be three long agonizing hours before He could say 'It is finished.'

Here's an insight into that joy for which he patiently waited ...

*"Father, the time has come ... Glorify your Son."*

And here's the evidence that His patient 'Waiting for Joy' was rewarded ...

*"Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place ... "*

The highest place on the podium – the 'goldest' medal ever presented has been presented to Jesus Christ – there is no champion to match him and there never will be. He has won his race and never will it be run again.

And now consider the role that patience still plays in the Life of our Risen, Exalted Savior - a role He anticipated while still on the earth.

Jesus ...

\* **WAITED** for the **SPIRIT'S** arrival and the **COMPLETION** of His **CHURCH**  
(John 14:16; John 16:13; Acts 1:8)

*"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Companion to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth."*

*"But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth."*

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you ..."*

Jesus understood his limitations while he was on the earth – taking on a physical body severely limited him - but while he was in the body, he demonstrated just what a human life lived by the Power of the Spirit looks like.

And as a result of his own earthly experience, he was able to anticipate what it would be like when the Spirit would come upon and be given to them all – when ‘*Pneuma*’, the Spirit, would do for and through each of them what the Spirit had done for and through him.

From the moment, the Spirit came upon him at his baptism, He yearned for the same ‘*filling*’ for each of them. And he waited patiently for the moment when He and the Father would be able to send the Spirit to be with them all.

He knew that through ‘*Pneuma*’s’ work, His Glorious Church would be built and His Beautiful Bride prepared.

***Patience – Patience – Patience – Patience*** ... displayed consistently and amazingly in the earthly (and heavenly) life of Jesus Christ.

Consider one last example of our Savior’s Patient Spirit.

Our Glorified, Exalted Lord ...

<p>* Is Even Now <b><u>AWAITING</u></b> His <b><u>RETURN</u></b> in <b><u>POWER</u></b> and <b><u>GLORY</u></b> (Matthew 24:14, 30; 2 Peter 3:9)</p>
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*“And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (and) they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.”*

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise ... He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

The gospel needs to be preached – the testimony concerning Jesus Christ needs to be given - the church needs to be made ready.

**AND THEN** ... the Lord Jesus will return to this earth in great power and glory and every eye will see him and for that moment He patiently waits.

So, at this point would it not be enough to simply say (with regard to this trait of patience) ...

### **JUST BE LIKE JESUS?**

Perhaps it would, but '*Pneuma being Pneuma*' ...  
He has not left us to our own devices.

In the Scriptures, we find several very specific exhortations regarding patience for us who would '*Keep in Step with Him.*'

## **II. EXHORTATIONS FOR THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST ...**

(Patience is indeed a key component of the Christ-Life)

\* Be **PATIENT** for the **FULFILLMENT** Of Your **SALVATION** ...

Romans 8:23, 25

*"We wait eagerly for ... the redemption of our bodies (and) if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."*

We have not yet received the '*Full package*' of our salvation ... the final stage of salvation is called '*Glorification*' ... the full transformation of our physical bodies to be like Christ's own glorious resurrected body.

That moment is coming ... anticipate it and wait patiently for it.

\* Be **PATIENT** in **TIMES** of **TROUBLE** ...

Romans 12:12; Revelation 3:10

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer"*

*"Since you (Church in Philadelphia) have kept my command to endure patiently ..."*

Troublesome times come to us all ...

'Patient endurance' is a component of the Christ-Life that reveals itself during such times ...

'Patient endurance' is noted and commended by Christ Jesus Himself.

\* Be **PATIENT** with Your **FELLOW BELIEVERS** ...

1 Thess. 5:14; Cor. 13:4; 2 Tim. 4:2

*"Be patient with everyone"*

*"Love is patient"*

*"Preach with Word ... with great patience and careful instruction."*

This exhortation comes to you and to me ...

Keep in mind that 'patience' is only needed with someone who is 'driving you nuts' and those people do sometimes come into our lives.

Generally, they don't know that they are 'driving us nuts.'

So, we are to 'instruct/preach' patiently and carefully as we exercise love.

\* Be **PATIENT PERIOD!** ...

Proverbs 16:32; Galatians 5:25

*"Better a patient man than a warrior."*

*"Now the fruit of the Spirit is ... patience."*

A warrior wins a war ... a patient man might avoid a war and win an ally.

Here now is today's ...

***Final Thot ...***

The Christ-Life infuses every believer with **PATIENCE** ...  
with an ability to calmly and confidently **WAIT** on **GOD** and  
**WALK** with '**PNEUMA**' through every **CIRCUMSTANCE**.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘RE-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Five – Integrity”*

**Intro ...** What a task we have set for ourselves. We are defining and discussing the greatest Human Life ever lived – the greatest human life that ever can be lived ... It’s the ‘*Christ-Life*’ – **Humanity 2.0** – first lived on this earth by Jesus Himself and now being lived out by all those in whom ‘*Pneuma*’ the Holy Spirit of God is producing it.

It’s this ‘*Christ-Life*’ – this **Humanity 2.0** - that Paul was speaking of when He testified to the Galatian believers ... ‘*Christ lives in me.*’ (Galatians 2:20) and when he pointed out in his second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 3:18) that all believers – all those who have been born-again by faith in Christ – are being ‘*transformed into Christ’s Likeness*’ by the Holy Spirit.

This is the final stage of discipleship – ‘*Christlikeness*’ Itself!

Twelve Core Components or Building Blocks of this Christ-Life have caught our attention ... Twelve Essential Elements of ‘*Christ-Likeness*’ that express the ultimate of Human Living – the essence of ‘**Humanity 2.0**’.

So far, we have discussed **FOUR** of those **TWELVE**: Leadership, Passion, Tenderness and Patience.

Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0 embodies and expresses **Leadership** – a desire to provide guidance and direction for those around us – a desire to genuinely benefit their lives.

Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0 embodies and expresses **Passion** – a zeal and intensity and energy and joy that focuses itself upon doing and celebrating the plan and purposes of the Almighty.

Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0 embodies and expresses **Tenderness** – a gentleness and compassion and empathy that reflect a real ‘*heart for people*’ – a sensitivity that causes people in need to comfortably ‘*draw near.*’

Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0 embodies and expresses **Patience** – a sense of composure, poise, and endurance in the face of difficulty or delay.

These are outstanding qualities of life displayed for all the world to see by Jesus Christ Himself. These four alone would indicate that a '*higher level*' life is being demonstrated but these are only **four** of **twelve**. Just imagine the awesomeness of the entire package!

Today we turn our attention to the ***fifth*** ...

**CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK FIVE: INTEGRITY**

Integrity expresses itself in qualities like:

**HONESTY – TRUTHFULNESS – STABILITY – FAITHFULNESS**

What incredible qualities for a human being to possess! They all flow from a heart that is pure and true. Jesus possessed just such a heart and so do those whom '*Pneuma*' has shaped into His Image and Likeness.

**TODAY'S KEY VERSE ...**

"There was no **DECEIT** found in His mouth."  
(1 Peter 2:22)

**'No deceit'** – no speech designed to mislead or misrepresent. No speech designed to confuse or confound its audience. No speech designed to gain oneself an unfair advantage. No speech that is intentionally obscure or vague and thus easily denied or amended. No '*campaign rhetoric*.'

Surely this life-trait of Jesus was just one more reason why  
*"The common people heard him gladly"* (Mark 12:37).

This, of course is the very quality of '*speech*' that those who '*Walk with the Spirit into the Image of Christ*' exhibit.

Jesus Christ was a '*Man of Integrity*' and every word that came out of his mouth bore testimony to that fact.

Let's examine just a bit more closely those previously identified ...

**FOUR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEGRITY ...**

\* **HONESTY** ...

*"Let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no."  
(Matthew 5:37)*

In other words ...

**SPEAK** *Simple, Straightforward Truth."*

This instruction comes to us straight from the lips of Jesus Himself.

It was given in His famous '*Sermon on the Mount*' ... that great afternoon discourse that delved into the deepest meaning of the Law of God – the Law that was designed to guide men and women to the fullest expression of the life that pleases God.

Jesus gave this instruction to counter the popular speech practice of his day that allowed people to '*say one thing but mean another*' – to use words that appeared to be words of commitment but really weren't.

Communication could be a tricky business in those days. For instance, a man could say in an apparent show of honesty ...

*'I swear to you by the Temple itself, that I will be there tomorrow.'*

Sounds like a firm commitment, doesn't it? He'll definitely be there.

However, that oath was not a binding oath because he didn't swear by '*the gold of the temple.*' It was just some more '*campaign rhetoric*' – words designed to make the hearer feel better but not obligate the speaker. It was a way to be dishonest without losing face.

How many times do we say ... "*I'll be there*" and think to ourselves '*unless something else comes up.*'

Jesus Christ and those who are living the '*Christ-Life*' know nothing of such duplicity and obscurity in speech.

He and they '*Speak simple, straightforward truth.*' They say it clearly and concisely and they mean what they say and thus you can believe them. It's a quality that causes them to stand out in today's increasingly ambiguous and nuanced world.

Here's another way Christ-Like Integrity expresses itself ...

\* **TRUTHFULNESS** ...

*"I am the way the truth and the life."*

(John 14:6)

In other words ...

**"REVEAL"** *Ultimate Truth.*

Jesus didn't mess around talking about meaningless things. Jesus understood the difference between things that are true and ultimate truth. And so do those in whom His Life is being formed.

For example ... It's certainly true that the sun came up this morning but the ultimate truth is that there is an Almighty God who created both the sun and the earth upon which it shines its light.

**Christ-Like Integrity** lives to express those '*ultimate truths.*'

Linda and I spent a marvelous few days back East last week visiting our families and making some new friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

It's amazing how often and how easily our conversation turned to a declaration and discussion of our newly discovered delight in our earthly companion, '*Pneuma*' and the impact that that discovery has had upon our lives. We handed out a number of '*Nudges and Hugs.*'

It's like every other topic was merely '*filler*' until we could get to that one. Here is the ultimate truth for us '*born-again, pneuma-companioned*' followers of Jesus ...

*"Our Heavenly Father and our Exalted Savior Jesus has sent the Almighty Holy Spirit, Pneuma, to companion us through life in this fallen world and to 'conform' us to the very image of Christ and our sole personal responsibility is to 'Keep in Step with Him.'"*

One of those that Linda particularly got to share that ultimate truth with was her brother Jim's fabulously wealthy friend who has been saved for just a few years.

This man, who escorted us through New York City in his Maserati Sports Car, was incredibly excited to begin a personal walk with the Spirit of God. Maybe someday he will visit us out here.

My dear almost 102 year-old Mom, who was spending the month with my older brother Keith and his wife, Linda, said ...

*"I've been reading those "Nudges and Hugs" (on her Kindle Reader) and I asked Laurene (her oldest daughter with whom she lives) to print me off a copy to bring with me for Keith and Linda."*

She wanted to be a 'Revealer of Some Ultimate Truth' as do all who are finding Christ-Life Integrity developing within them.

Here now is a **third** such 'Expression of Christ-Like Integrity' ...

**\* STABILITY ...**

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever"*  
(Hebrews 13:8)

In other words, integrity causes us to ...

**STAND** Firmly Upon The Truth."

This in a sense goes back to the 'Let your yes be yes and your no be no The Christ-Life is a 'Convinced Life' ...

These things that we believe we believe with all our heart.

We are not waiting for 'something better' to come along ...

We are not 'keeping our options open.'

We have 'Thrown in our lot' with Jesus Christ and all who know us know it.

This 'Walk with Pneuma' – This 'Daily Companionship with the Almighty' is not a 'phase' that we are going through – it is not merely the 'Latest topic' upon which I am preaching.

It has become an 'Ultimate Truth' ...

It's the truth that Satan most fears for it is the very truth that unlocks the door to that 'Abundant Life' Jesus died to provide.

It's the truth that will provide the context for everything I preach for the rest of my ministry.

And now finally this morning, there is no one who is consciously 'Companioned by Pneuma' who will not find this Christ-Life Building Block called '**Integrity**' expressing itself in ...

\* **FAITHFULNESS** ...

*"If I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come back to take you to be with me."  
(John 14:3)*

In other words ...

**BUILD** Your Whole Life Around The Truth."

If Jesus said, then He meant it, and thus I can absolutely believe it and build my life around it!

All that our Exalted Savior is doing right now in heaven itself is in preparation for Him coming to receive all those who are His unto Himself.

In our present day and age, He takes us one by one through the doorway called death but there's coming a day when He will gather His Church in one great moment.

My mom, who will turn 103 on her next birthday, is still planning on seeing that day.

I, today, would build my whole life around the truth that the Almighty Most Holy Spirit of God, Pneuma Himself, is with me and is working in me to 'conform me' to the very Image of Christ – making me, among other things ...

***A Person of Integrity.***

***Final Thot ...***

The 'Christ-Life' infuses every believer with **INTEGRITY** ...  
with a lifestyle characterized by

**HONESTY** – **TRUTHFULNESS** – **STABILITY** and **FAITHFULNESS**.

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Six – Radiance”*

**Intro ...** This morning as we continue to add to our understanding of the ‘Christ-Life’ that ‘Pneuma’ would seek to generate within the lives of all those He companions, I would have us turn our attention to ...

## **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK SIX ... RADIANCE**

**Key Descriptors:**

**SPARKLE – GLOW – WARMTH – BRIGHTNESS  
SPLENDOR – BRILLIANCE**

Now doesn’t that sound like a wonderful thing to have said about you – He/she literally ‘sparkles’ – ‘glows’ – possesses genuine ‘warmth’ or ‘brightness’ – displays a kind of ‘splendor’ – ‘brilliance’ even.

Would you believe that that is a key component of **Humanity 2.0** – a key component of the ‘Christ-Life’ that is being formed right now within each of us who trust ourselves to ‘Pneuma’, the Almighty Spirit of God sent by our Heavenly Father and our Exalted Savior to companion every born-again Child of God along life’s way?

Check out with me this morning these ...

### **TWO KEY BIBLICAL EXAMPLES ...**

**1. “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai ...  
His FACE was RADIANT.”  
(Exodus 34:29)**

This was when Moses received the Ten Commandments from the Lord – this was after spending 40 days in the Lord’s Presence.

Moses’ face actually glowed as it reflected the Glory of the Lord in Whose Presence he had been. The people saw it and were terrified by it.

This was a situation where ...

‘The **EXTERNAL** overwhelmed the **INTERNAL**’

Moses was unchanged internally – all the Glory was outside of him – external to him - but its glory was so great that it overwhelmed what was normally on Moses’ face – the worry, the fear, the reluctance, the doubts ...

Outwardly He ‘glowed’ though inwardly He was the same as ever. His future actions would show him to be so.

Some people are like that ...

They glow with the glory of something external to them – even something spiritual. They get ‘*caught up*’ in it. They get enthused by it but eventually that kind of ‘glow’ fades – at best it’s a kind of Old Testament Glow. It’s part of Humanity 1.0.

2. “Jesus took ... Peter, James and John ... up a high mountain.  
There He was **TRANSFIGURED** before them.  
His **FACE** shone like the **SUN** ...”  
(Matthew 17:1-2)

This event took place just six days after Peter had correctly identified Jesus as ‘*The Christ, the Son of the Living God*’ (Matthew 16:18).

It was as though Jesus was saying to them ...

‘Now that you know for sure ‘***who***’ I am ...  
Let me show you ‘***what***’ I am.’

And so, he took three of them, Peter, James and John up a high mountain and he was ‘*transfigured*’ – literally turned ‘*inside out*’ – so that they could see the true nature of the life that was contained within him.

This was a situation where ...

‘The **INTERNAL** overwhelmed the **EXTERNAL**’

The true nature of Jesus Christ – the perfect, sinless man – the first example of **Humanity 2.0** - shone through the fleshly package that contained it.

There was a glory contained within Him – a radiance – that shone forth from Him.

These **Two Key Biblical Examples** lead us directly to ...

**TODAY'S KEY OBSERVATION ...**

'Pneuma' would have us be more like **JESUS**  
and less like **MOSES!**

Here's what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians ...

*"And we ... are being **TRANSFIGURED** into His **LIKENESS**  
with every increasing **GLORY** ..."*  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

'Pneuma' is changing us on the inside so that when we are turned 'inside out' by the circumstances of life, something truly marvelous and glorious, something even 'radiant' will be seen.

Here's how Paul put it to the Philippians ...

*"...You **SHINE** like **STARS** in the universe ..."*  
(Philippians 2:15)

The Philippian Believers lived in a truly corrupt world.

Paul says that when they 'Hold out the Word of Life' which means 'Live out that Word in their Daily Lives,' they 'Radiate' with the Goodness of Christ Himself – they 'shine like stars' even as He did!

**Final Thot ...**

The believer's **RADIANCE** is to **REVEAL** something **INTERNAL**  
rather than merely **REFLECT** something **EXTERNAL**.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Seven – Focus”*

**Intro ...** Oh what a day to be discussing the ‘Christ-Life’ ... *Sonlife* Community Church came into being 23 years ago so that ‘Christ Life’ (*Sonlife*) might be more clearly expressed within a local congregation of believers.

*Sonlife* Community Church came into being (as I said at the time) as a kind of ‘*Spiritual Experiment*’ – an experiment carried out within the laboratory of the ‘*real world.*’ The Hypothesis of this effort was that the simple church structure of the First Century was still God’s Plan for us in the Twenty-First.

That, as the Apostle Paul pointed out to the Ephesians Elders (Acts 20:20), the strategy of ‘*meeting publically and from house to house*’ was indeed still a great way to ‘*Do Church*’ – that Christianity could be accurately defined as ‘*Following Christ in Fellowship with my peers.*’

And as we know now today ... ‘*Following Christ in Fellowship with my peers*’ actually means ‘*Walking in Step with Pneuma, our Savior-Sent Companion, in Fellowship with my peers.*’

This ‘*Pneuma*’ – this Holy Spirit of God – has been sent into our lives by our Heavenly Father and by our Exalted Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to develop within us the very life of Christ – The Christ-Life itself.

This is the life Jesus came to provide – This is the life ‘*Pneuma*’ has been sent to produce. It’s an awesome life – it’s an abundant life.

The past few weeks we have been thrilling ourselves with our examination of it – the Building Blocks, if you will, that make it up.

Out of all that the Scripture reveals of the Christ-Life, we have zeroed in on Twelve Core Components or Building Blocks that make it up. These are the very things that ‘*Pneuma*’ our earthly companion is developing in all those who faithfully ‘*Walk with Him*’ These are the characteristics of the ‘*pneu-man*’ that each of them is becoming.

So far, we have discussed **six** of the **twelve**: Leadership, Passion, Tenderness, Patience, Integrity and Radiance ... incredible life-traits all.

Today we come to ...

### ***CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK SEVEN ... FOCUS***

In a fallen, fragmented, ever-altering world like ours, it's a rare (and wonderful) thing to meet someone who is truly '*captured by something*' – something of great worth – something toward which their entire life is heading and to which their entire self is dedicated.

Such focus characterized Jesus.

***Three Key Descriptors of a truly Focused Life ...***

***CONCENTRATION – MOTIVATION - APPLICATION***

### ***TODAY'S FOCUS-DEMONSTRATING SCRIPTURES ...***

***THREE SCRIPTURES*** that demonstrate Jesus' Great Focused ***CONCENTRATION***:

*"As the time approached for Him to be **TAKEN** up to **HEAVEN**,  
Jesus **RESOLUTELY** set out for **JERUSALEM**."*

(Luke 9:51)

Note that Jesus' concentration in this verse was focused upon His Eventual Return to Heaven and why not? Even the Apostle Paul who had never been there said that he had a desire to '*Depart from this life and to be with Christ*' (in heaven) which would be '*far better*.'

We see that focus again in Jesus' '*High Priestly Prayer*' prayed the very night that He would be betrayed and arrested – the night before His Crucifixion.

*“And now Father, **GLORIFY** me in your **PRESENCE**  
with the **GLORY** I had with you before the world began.”*  
(John 17:5)

None of us can even begin to understand what Jesus was talking about. None of us could possibly conceive the ‘Glory’ that He laid aside when He came to earth.

In this great prayer, He reveals to us that He, of course, had not forgotten. His mind, His heart, His concentration (if you will) was focused upon that awesome moment when He as the Triumphant Son sent to be Savior of the world would re-enter the Father’s Presence.

That kind of concentrated focus played no small part in giving Him the courage to continue to carry out his role as the ‘Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.’

But His attention was concentrated not only on His Glorious Re-Entry into the Father’s Presence. There was also a concentrated focus – a laser-like gaze upon those dear disciples of His who had eagerly responded to His Call and faithfully followed Him day by day.

They honored Him by their belief in Him and their commitment to Him and so, He says to the Father as he looks upon them ...

*“**GLORY** has come to me through **THEM**.”*  
(John 17:10b)

Never could He nor would He forget them – Never could He nor would He lose His concentrated focus upon them.

They had brought a new kind of ‘Glory’ to Him – an earthly glory – a glory that only sons of Adam could generate. He relished it and was surely greatly encouraged by it.

**Here Now are ...**

**TWO SCRIPTURES** that demonstrate Jesus’ Great Focused **MOTIVATION**:

What was it that '*stirred him to action*' ... what motivated Him?

“When Christ came into the world, he said ...  
‘I have **COME** to do **YOUR WILL**, O God”  
(Hebrews 10:7)

Fulfilling God’s incredible, eternal, resolute Will was the thing that motivated Jesus Christ to leave the Glories of Heaven and to enter into the Human Race. Jesus was not '*making it up as He went along.*' There was a plan laid down – a Divine Will expressed – long eons ago and He came to carry out that plan – to fulfill that Divine Will.

And what would be the ultimate expression of the Divine Will – What would be the ultimate purpose of His Coming – the thing that would motivate His Actions each and every day of His Earthly Ministry?

“I have **COME** that they might have **LIFE** and have it to the **FULL.**”  
(John 10:10)

And what he came to provide ... He has sent '*Pneuma*' to produce.

***And now ...***

**ONE SCRIPTURE** that demonstrates Jesus' Great Focused **APPLICATION:**

“Who for the joy that was set before Him, **ENDURED** the **CROSS.**”  
(Hebrews 12:2)

The ultimate '*Application*' of the great '*Focus*' of Jesus' life was His Willing Sacrifice of Himself on Calvary.

Focus that is never '*applied in real life*' doesn't do much good, does it? He came to '*Do the Father's Will*' – He held before himself the Glory of His Triumphant Return to Heaven and when the moment came for Him to do what He came to do, He seized it.

He never lost ***Focus*** – It was part of His essential DNA.  
It is a ***Core Component*** of the Christ-Life.

And so now we come to ...

**TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...**

What is to be our **FOCUS** today?

What is it that we are to **CONCENTRATE ON** and be **MOTIVATED BY** and **CONTINUALLY APPLY** to our lives?

**TODAY'S BELIEVER-DIRECTING SCRIPTURES ...**

**Consider these ...**

**THREE SCRIPTURES** that direct all Believers toward  
a Focused **CONCENTRATION**:

Let's take them all together ...

"Set your **MINDS** on things above ..."  
(Colossians 3:2)

"Let us (believers) fix our **EYES** on Jesus ..."  
(Hebrews 12:2)

"I want to **KNOW CHRIST** and the **POWER** of His Resurrection  
and the **FELLOWSHIP** of sharing in His Sufferings."  
(Philippians 3:10)

**So** ... we are to concentrate our attention on 'things above' ... we are to 'fix our eyes' (both physical and spiritual eyes) on Jesus (who is above) and we are to seek to 'flesh out his life once again in this earthly realm' as we 'Walk in His Steps' companioned by His Spirit.

Now that takes a high level of concentration, wouldn't you say?

Concentrate your mind and heart on these things until these things are the things that you mostly 'think about.' Practice it until it becomes almost routine. Allow the Spirit to replace your old set of interests with this 'new set.' He's good at that.

**Here now are ...**

**TWO SCRIPTURES** that direct all Believers toward a Focused **MOTIVATION**:

Let's take them together as well ...

*"I press on toward the **GOAL** to win the **PRIZE** for which  
God has **CALLED** me **HEAVENWARD** in Christ Jesus."  
(Philippians 4:13-14)*

*"**RUN** in such a way as to **GET** the prize."  
(1 Corinthians 9:24)*

So here is the answer to the question:

*"Why get up in the morning?"*

We get up in the morning because there is a '**Call**' to which we have responded and there is a '**Prize**' to which we aspire.

Whether you picture it as a 'Crown of Reward' or the words 'Well Done' or simply the approving 'Smile of Your Savior upon you' doesn't really matter.

**The point is** ... there is nothing on earth to compare to it.

The Apostle Paul valued that 'Prize' above anything this world could offer.

And now finally as we close this message ...

**ONE SCRIPTURE** that directs all Believers toward a Focused **APPLICATION**:

*"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand **FIRM**. Let nothing **MOVE** you.  
Always give yourselves **FULLY** to the **WORK** of the Lord ...  
(1 Corinthians 15:58)*

*'Always give yourself to the Work of the Lord' ...*

That's how we apply this life concentration and this life motivation.  
That's the final piece of a Christ-Like Life Focus.

**And here's the thing** ... the 'Work of the Lord' does not consist of a list of approved behaviors and scheduled activities.

The Work of the Lord – the Work that pleases God - Jesus said (John 6:29) ...

*"Is to Believe in the One (the Ones) He has sent."*

Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as your Personal Savior;  
Believe in Him with all your heart – Commit yourself entirely to Him and confess that He is your Lord and Master. He was **sent** by The Father.

Believe in the Spirit of God **sent** by your Heavenly Father and your now Exalted Savior to 'companion you' through every moment of your earthly life – 'Pneuma' Himself.

**Believe** in His Presence in your life;

**Confess** that the Almighty walks with you each and every day;

**Listen** for His Voice;

**Submit** yourself entirely to Him; and

**'Keep in Step with Him'** every moment of every day.

This is the true 'Work of the Lord

**'Believing in the ONES He has sent'!**

And now as we close this message this morning,  
we come to this ...

**Final Thot ...**

The more **FIXED** the **FOCUS** the more likely the **SUCCESS**.  
We must allow 'Pneuma' to direct our **EYES** as well as our **FEET!**

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

### **“Christ-Life Building Block Eight – Love”**

**Intro ...** Today we continue in our examination of Humanity 2.0 (or ‘Pneumanity’ if you prefer) ... It’s the finest expression of Humanity ever lived – it’s ‘*Perfected Humanity*’ – Humanity 2.0.

It’s an upgrade over God’s original design created and placed in the Garden of Eden. It’s the form of humanity expressed by Jesus Christ Himself – the perfected man – and it’s the form of humanity that Holy Spirit, ‘*Pneuma*’ Himself, strives to produce within the lives of all those He has been sent to ‘*companion*’ through life.

In a word, it’s the ‘Christ-Life.’

This ‘*Christ Life*’ - this ‘*Pneumanity*’ - is something awesome to behold – it contains every desirable and commendable human trait imaginable.

So far, we have zeroed in on seven of them (7 of 12) ... Core Components or Building Blocks of the Christ-Life, we have called them.

Today, I would focus our attention upon the ***Eighth*** ...

#### **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK EIGHT ... LOVE (‘Agape’)**

‘Agape’ is a very particular Greek word for ‘love’ ... It does not refer to ‘family love’ or ‘friendship love’ or ‘married love’ rather it refers to ‘Divine Love’ ... a love that is unstimulated by any external force.

‘Agape Love’ is generated by the Christ-Life itself – it flows from within all those in whom that Christ-Life has been formed.

And what is it?

Two phrases communicate its essence ...

**UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT** – Nothing can frustrate or stifle it.

**WHOLEHEARTED BENEVOLENCE** – Always will it seek good for its object.

Let's work our way through an understanding of it ...

**\* AGAPE LOVE DESCRIBED...** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

(Desires nothing but good for its object – wholehearted benevolence)

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

Here Paul is describing a quality of life that is absolutely delightful to encounter ... Such love demands nothing – Such love actually expects nothing ... Such love is incredibly protective of others and it winds up wonderfully protecting itself.

'Agape' speaks of a life quality, though, that goes beyond our ability to fully put into human terms or to achieve by mere human means. It's a kind of life expression that has its roots in the unique DNA of Jesus Himself.

Hear what Paul said to the Ephesians ...

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ (the Christ-Life) may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

*And I pray that you, (then) being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and **to know** this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (the Christ-Life)."*  
(Ephesians 3:16-19)

Now though the nature of this Christ-Like Love goes beyond normal human understanding and certainly beyond normal human generation, it does not go beyond normal human recognition.

People can tell when they encounter it – especially when it '*hits them right in the face*' and when they are in the midst of believers, they should be '*hit*' regularly!

So that's how the Scripture **Describes** Agape – note now ...

\* **AGAPE LOVE DEMONSTRATED**... John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39  
(Never gives up – nothing can frustrate it or stifle it – unconditional commitment)

*"God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us."  
(1 John 3:16)*

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)*

Nothing could or has ever frustrated or quenched God's Love ...  
Not Adam's Sin – Not His Chosen People's Rebellion and Belligerence –  
Not the Death of His Son – Not the Centuries of Error and Neglect –  
Not the Atrocities Committed In His Name – Certainly not the current  
'Goings-On' in our world today ...

Nothing can quench God's Love and nothing can separate us  
from that Love expressed in Jesus Christ! It's part of an unconditional  
commitment that God has made to 'Those who are His.'

Here's how a songwriter long years ago put it ...

*"Loved with everlasting Love ... Led by Grace that Love to know ...  
Spirit, breathing from above ... Thou hast taught me it is so!*

*Oh, what full and perfect peace... Oh, what transport all Divine ...  
In a Love that will not cease ... I am His and He is mine!"*

It only makes sense that the **#1 Demonstrator of Divine Love** should be the  
**DIVINE ONE HIMSELF** ... It only makes sense that all who share that same  
Spiritual DNA should do the same ... Father, Savior and Spirit!

How incredibly comforting, how comfortable even, it is to know that  
our Eternal Triune God does in fact have **Agape** – a wholehearted  
benevolence and an unconditional commitment – defining the  
relationship between us.

Here, though, is where we get uncomfortable ...  
We can become quite uncomfortable when we see ...

\* **AGAPE LOVE DIRECTED** (Demanded?) ... Jn. 13:34-35; Gal. 6:10; Matt 5:44

*"Love one another as I have loved you."  
(John 13:34-35)*

*"Let us do good (demonstrate a benevolent heart and an unconditional commitment) to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."  
(Galatians 6:10)*

*"Love (in this unique way even) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may (show yourselves to) be sons of your Father in heaven."  
(Matthew 5:44)*

Practice as you watch the news tonight ...

Try it anytime you watch or listen to some public figure who seems to make your life more difficult rather than less difficult.

Ask yourself each time you do, if you do in fact, possess an unconditional commitment to them as human beings ... can you look at them the way God looks at them ... do you desire something truly 'good' for them ... Do you desire God's best for them?

Can you see past what they do or even say to see them as people caught in the human condition in need of deliverance – as people who need 'a *Heaven-Sent Companion*' to guide them through the quagmire called '*political life*'?

Even if you do not wish (and certainly would not pray) for them to gain the office they seek, do you wish and would you pray that they gain eternal life and escape the wrath of God?

Now the truth is most of us don't need to try it ...  
We know that we can't do it ...

We know that we can't see past the obvious things that are right in front of us ... These people fall into the category of 'enemy' for a reason. It is easy to imagine them to be God's Enemy as well as ours.

And how did Jesus treat those who truly were his enemies?

Did he not say (Luke 23:34) ...

*"Father, forgive them for they don't know what they do"?*

I know, I know ... We are not Jesus! He possessed that kind of love. He could look past the dastardly deed to see a desperate need. We ... not so much!

Here now is the way out of this uncomfortable dilemma ... us being directed to do a thing we simply cannot see ourselves ever doing.

Check out these verses and see ...

**\* AGAPE LOVE DELIVERED ... Galatians 5:22; 1 John 4:7**

*"Now the fruit of the SPIRIT is 'LOVE'  
(Galatians 5:22)*

*"Everyone that LOVES (in this way) is BORN of God."  
(1 John 4:7)*

Remember what we discovered when we went through our 'Walking with Pneuma' series?

Love is **THE** fruit of the Spirit and it comes in 8 delicious flavors. It expresses itself as Joy and Peace and Patience and Kindness and Goodness and Faithfulness and Gentleness and Self-Control.

**Agape Love** is the initiator of them all.

Is it any wonder that 'Pneuma' would have the Apostle John report (1 John 4:7) that ...

*"Everyone that loves (in this way) is born of God"?*

Only a Born-Again Child of God can and frankly, only a Born-Again Child of God would want to, but (and here's the point) **every** Born-Again Child of God who is 'Walking in Step with 'Pneuma' will not only **want to** they actually **will** (eventually) 'love in this way' for 'Pneuma' will 'walk them right into it'! So, test yourself from time to time to see if you are there yet.

**Final Thot ...**

Genuine Christ-Like **AGAPE LOVE** blows people's **MINDS**.  
Any **BELIEVER** or **GROUP** of believers that **DISPLAYS** it  
will definitely **ATTRACT ATTENTION**.

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Nine – Confidence”*

**Intro ...** Today, I would draw our attention to the **Ninth Building Block** of the Christ-Life -a Core Component of the Christ-Life that powerfully impacts the lives of all who possess and demonstrate it – an impressive life quality that powerfully and positively impacts the lives of all who observe it.

### **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK NINE ... CONFIDENCE**

Consider these four manifestations – expressions – of it ...

**CERTAINTY – TENACITY – ASSURANCE - CONVICTION**

To be a person possessing genuine confidence in the midst of this fallen world is a most wonderful thing. To live with certainty (no questioning) and tenacity (no quitting) and assurance (no doubting) and conviction (no waffling) is at the very heart of the Christ-Life. It's awesome to experience and to observe.

It's the way Jesus Himself lived. He demonstrated Supreme Confidence in Who he was and Why he had come and so do those who have been conformed to His Likeness.

**Check out ...**

### **TODAY’S KEY SCRIPTURE ...**

(One of the most familiar in the entire Bible)

**“I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.”**

(John 14:6)

What an incredibly confident and comprehensive statement.

**“I AM THE WAY” ...**

The way to the Almighty Himself, the way to Heaven itself, the way through this fallen, broken world. It was with a wonderfully confident voice that Jesus would say “Come, Follow Me” – ‘I know where I am going and where you need to go – I will lead you there safely.’

***"I AM THE TRUTH" ...***

All you really need to know is wrapped up in me – in **Who** I am and in **Why** I have come and in **What** I have done for you.

***"I AM THE LIFE" ...***

I have come to provide abundant life for you – life like I myself possess. I will send my Spirit to produce that life in you.

There was no doubt in Jesus mind at all when He made this incredibly confident statement.

Jesus made six other '**I AM**' statements ... Can you recall them?

***"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"*** - John 6:35

***"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"*** – John 11:25

***"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"*** – John 8:12

***"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD"*** – John 10:11

***"I AM THE TRUE VINE"*** – John 15:1

***"I AM THE DOOR"*** – John 10:9

These are supremely positive and confident statements! They reflect Christ's understanding of who He was and why He had come.

They were some of the statements that caused even the temple guards to say ...

*"No one ever spoke like this man."  
(John 7:46)*

This is the confidence with which Christ would have us live our lives. This is the confidence that '*Pneuma*' would seek to create in our lives.

***Each*** of these Statements of Jesus can be turned into a **confident confession** – a life-defining confession.

Let's just take first one and give it a try ...

***"I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE."***

## TODAY'S CONFIDENT CONFESSIONS ...

Three '**Confident Confessions**' would I share with you – Three Confident Confessions that grow out of this **Confident Declaration** of Jesus Himself:

First such '**Confession** ...

\* JESUS IS THE **WAY** THAT **LEADS** ME FROM **JUDGMENT**.

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus –  
who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."*

(Romans 8:1- KJV)

This is perhaps the most fundamental and foundational statement in all Scripture – This is the Apostle Paul confidently declaring the great consequence of Christ's work in the world – of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Through faith in Christ – through the new birth made possible by Christ – man's eternal destination is drastically re-calibrated – rather than 'heading for hell,' all those who place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior are placed on the 'highway to heaven' with that 'High ... **Way**' being Jesus Himself.

As Peter would tell the Jewish Leaders of His day (Acts 4:12) ...

*"Salvation (from God's rightful judgment) is found in no one else,  
for there is no other name under heaven given to men  
by which we must be saved."*

Can you make that **confident confession**? Can you confidently say that Jesus is the way that leads you (is leading you) away from Judgment – that you have received forgiveness of sins through Him?

Here's a **Second Confident Confession** that grows out of Jesus' **Confident Declaration**: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life".

\* JESUS IS THE **TRUTH** THAT **SETS** ME **FREE** FROM EARTHLY **BONDAGE**.

*"So, if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed"*  
(John 8:35)

Jesus spoke these words to people who were hung up on and tied up by all sorts of man-made religious '*rules and regulations.*' He spoke these words to those who were losing the '*battle with sin*' regularly - to those whose lives were in bondage to thoughts and behaviors and perhaps even relationships that were destructive.

All these things can put one in a kind of '*prison of the soul*' ...  
They can reduce one's life to the size of a '*jail cell.*'

To such a person Jesus confidently asserts ... "*I can set you free.*"  
Those who trust themselves to Him, find that assertion to be true.

Can you make that assertion yourself today - can you say that Jesus Christ has and is '*freeing you from the various bondages that this fallen world and your own fallen nature can bring upon you*'? Do you want to be able to?

Take to heart Peter's words spoken on the Day of Pentecost (Luke 2:21) ...

*"Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord  
will be saved" ...*

'Saved' from Hell and saved as well from the Hell-Like bondages that sin (and sinful people) would bring upon us.'

Call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ right now.  
Deep in your heart say:

*"Lord Jesus Christ, I believe you are the Son of God and that you  
died on the cross for me. Save me from my sins and free me from  
the bondages that sin has brought upon me.  
I yield my life completely to You."*

Let's **all** repeat that appeal together phrase by phrase ...

*"Lord Jesus Christ ...*

*I believe you are the Son of God ...*

*And I believe you died on the cross for me ...*

*Save me from my sins ... and free me from the bondages ...*

*that sin has brought upon me ... I yield my life completely to You ...*

AMEN

And now here's a **third** and final **confident confession** that grows out of **Christ's Confident Declaration**:

"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life".

\* JESUS HAS PROVIDED ME **LIFE** BY HIS **HOLY SPIRIT**.

*"Flesh gives birth to flesh but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."  
(John 3:6)*

Here now is the heart of it all ... It's by the indwelling – companioning Holy Spirit of God, 'Pneuma' Himself, that this new bondage-breaking, heaven-heading, abundancy-providing life is produced.

"I am going away" Jesus said but then He went on to say (John 14:16)...

*"I will ask the Father and He will send you another companion  
who will be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth."*

It's this 'Companioning Spirit,' Pneuma Himself, who brings new life to us as we are 'born-again' ... 'Born from above' Jesus called it ... Born into the Family of God and declared to be pure and righteous in the Heavenly Father's eyes ... Welcomed into the family as full-fledged sons and daughters of God and led faithfully and fruitfully through life in this fallen world by God's Most Holy Spirit.

These are the **Confident Confessions** that 'Pneuma' would have every Born-Again Child of God make. These are the Confident Confessions that all who faithfully 'Walk with Pneuma' and 'Keep in Step with Pneuma' **will** make. This is the kind of confidence that will **characterize** their lives.

Consider now the final thot of this morning's meditation ...

**Final Thot ...**

**CONFIDENCE** in **CHRIST** produced by Christ's **SPIRIT** is the **GREATEST** confidence a human being can ever **POSSESS**.

It generates certainty (no questioning), tenacity (no quitting),  
Assurance (no doubting) and conviction (no waffling).

It's an incredibly **ATTRACTIVE TRAIT!**

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

## **“Christ-Life Building Block Ten – Awareness”**

**Intro** ... “Perfected Humanity” ... ‘Pneumanity’ ... ‘Christ-Likeness’ ... ‘Humanity 2.0’ ... That’s what we’ve been talking about for quite a while now ... We been talking about the kind of life that Jesus lived while on the earth – the kind of life that He sent His Holy Spirit, ‘Pneuma’ Himself, to develop in the lives of all who are His.

We have identified Twelve Core Components of that life – Twelve Building Blocks, if you will, that make it up.

Today we look at ...

### **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK TEN ... AWARENESS**

Consider these four characterizations of it ... Someone who possesses awareness is:

#### **ALERT – IN TUNE – INFORMED – ATTENTIVE**

Great things to be.

Just think of the opposite ...

We have all kinds of characterizations of those who **lack** awareness.

We say that they are: ‘Out of Touch’ or ‘Out to Lunch.’

They are ‘uninformed’ – ‘befuddled’ – easily ‘blind-sided.’

They are forever asking “What’s going on?” or “Why is this happening?.”

What a waste of energy and what a distressing testimony!

Not so Jesus and not so one in whom His Life is being formed!

### **I. CONSIDER THE INCREDIBLE AWARENESS DEMONSTRATED BY JESUS**

Jesus could not be blind-sided or buffaloed – Jesus was more aware of what was going on in this world than anyone else who ever encountered it.

And because of that incredible ‘awareness’, Jesus would certainly agree with the assessment made over and over again by Mr. Donald Trump:

*“It’s a rigged system.”*

But here is where Jesus would '*trump*' Trump ...

Jesus knew something and was aware of something that Donald Trump has seemingly not yet discovered: The '*System*' that is '*rigged*' is far bigger than '*Washington Politics*.'

The entire Human Condition is '*Rigged*.' Man, as many politicians have discovered, is his own worst enemy – the ancient proverb says ...

*'The foolish woman (the ungodly woman – the woman not walking in the ways of the Lord) tears down her own house with her own hands.'*  
(Proverbs 14:1)

Human Beings carry within themselves the potential for their own destruction. They also carry within themselves the potential to do great harm to others. Jesus was well aware of that fact.

Note with me this morning that ...

**\* *Jesus Demonstrated Incredible Awareness Of The Human CONDITION.***

The Apostle John points out to us that Jesus did not entrust himself to people generally or count on people to stand by him or support him because ...

*"He knew what was in a man."*  
(John 2:24-25)

He was well aware of the limitations and the inclinations of unregenerate human beings.

He knew the limitations and the inclinations of even those whom he had chosen to '*Follow Him*.' Sitting with His Own Twelve at that '*Last Supper*,' he said ...

*"One of you is going to betray me."*  
(John 13:11)

And in response to Peter's braggadocio, Jesus said to him ...

*"Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"*  
(John 13:38)

Jesus was never blindsided by '*people being people*' ... He was well aware of what fallen human beings were like. Their '*humanness*' might have grieved Him but it never surprised Him.

\* ***Jesus Demonstrated Incredible Awareness of Scriptural REVELATION.***

This awareness was demonstrated quite early on ...

Remember when he and his family went to the temple when he was 12?

Remember how he stayed behind when they all left to head back home?

Remember where they found him once they discovered that he was not with them?

*"They found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers (and) everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers."  
(Luke 2:46-47)*

At 12 he was more than 'holding his own' with the most learned men of his day ... He had a grasp of the Scriptures and an awareness of their meaning that amazed those who heard him.

This '**awareness**' would stand him in good stead on many occasions when those who were 'less aware' tried to 'trip him up' ... like when a group of Sadducees approached him with one of those hypothetical situations that 'troublemakers' always think will make mincemeat out of their opponent's stated position.

Now the Sadducees considered the resurrection of the body to be a foolish position to hold and they sought to have Jesus demonstrate just how foolish it was by hitting him with a highly unlikely hypothetical scenario.

One woman, seven husbands ... in the supposed after-life, whose wife will she be? Surely God would not establish a system in which such impossible decisions would have to be made.

Here's how Jesus answered them (amplified and paraphrased a bit) ...

*"You are in error because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God."*

*"In heaven, they are neither given or taken in marriage but exist like the angels – (completed beings in and of themselves). And by the way, have you not read what God said to you (through Moses) ...*

*'I **am** the God of Abraham (long dead) and the God of Isaac (long dead) and the God of Jacob (also long dead).'*

*He is not the God of the dead but of the living."  
(Matthew 22:29-32)*

It's amazing how a genuine awareness of God's Revelation can protect you and others from the fanciful notions of the unaware.

And now consider with me how Jesus' Awareness of God's Revelation came into play on the most important day of Earth's History to this point: Resurrection Sunday.

The City of Jerusalem was in turmoil – the enemies of Christ were rejoicing over his death and the followers of Christ were hiding in fear of their lives. A handful of them had maintained hope in the three-day thing that He had mentioned but the third day had come and was now nearly gone.

Two of his Disciples who hailed from Emmaus had watched the hours go by and had come to the conclusion that nothing was going to happen and had struck out for their home some seven miles away.

They didn't understand his death in the first place and didn't have the energy to investigate a few scattered reports about an empty tomb. They were going home to regroup.

Suddenly the Resurrected Christ appeared and fell in beside them as they walked. After asking them some leading questions and getting their discouraged answers, he chided them for their lack of awareness of what God had revealed to them in His Word and Luke reports how Jesus then demonstrated His Incredible Awareness of God's Revelation.

*"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."  
(Luke 24:27)*

Awareness of what the Bible actually says can keep one from discouragement and doubt – from needless worry and fretfulness.

Can you imagine what it would have been like in the years to come for those men to pass on their understanding of those Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. With what confidence and courage would they testify of Him. And when asked where they came up with such notions – where they gained such awareness – they could say:

"The Risen Christ instructed us – Shared His Awareness of God's Truth with us!"

Never more than on that day on the Road to Emmaus, did Jesus demonstrated Incredible Awareness of Scriptural Revelation.

One final example of Jesus' incredible Awareness ...

**\* *Jesus Demonstrated Incredible Awareness Of The Spirit's ADMINISTRATION.***

Here's what He said on the very first day of His Official Public Ministry ...

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me because  
He has anointed me to preach good news ..."*  
(Luke 4:18)

The Spirit came upon him at his baptism – The Spirit drove him into the wilderness to be tested and tempted – He came out of the wilderness filled with the very Power of the Spirit. Jesus was aware of all of that and counted on it.

Jesus had been sent for a purpose (to give His life as a ransom for many). Jesus was commissioned for the fulfilling of that purpose and for the doing of much good as the stage was being set for the fulfilling of that purpose.

And through it all, His power, His Anointing came from the Almighty Spirit of God. He lived within the '*Administration of the Holy Spirit.*' Jesus was well 'aware' of that fact and rejoiced in it.

This joy He would pass on to those who would '*Follow In His Steps.*'

As the time to fulfill His Great Purpose of Calvary drew near, Jesus said to His Chosen Ones ...

*"I will ask the Father and He will give you another companion ('paraklete')  
to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth."*  
(John 14:16)

And then as the time drew near for him to leave the earth and return to heaven, He said to them ...

*"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit ('Pneuma')  
comes on you; and you will be my witnesses ..."*  
(Acts 1:8)

Jesus consistently demonstrated His Awareness that He was living and that all who would one day receive new life in His Name would live under (what I am calling today) '**The Spirit's Administration.**'

Jesus' Birth, being produced by the '*miraculous intervention*' of the Holy Spirit Himself, launched the '*Age of the Spirit*' ...

All Born-Again Believers from Pentecost onward have lived their lives in that Age – lived under the 'Administration of the Spirit' whether they have been aware of it or not!

Jesus surely was ... He was incredibly aware!

Now we could stop right here and simply marvel at the incredible awareness demonstrated by Jesus Christ in His Earthly Life ...

Nothing ever '*caught him off guard*' ... Nothing ever '*threw him for a loop*' ... Nothing ever '*befuddled him*' ...

He possessed incredible awareness of everything relevant to the Great Purpose of His Life and those around him marveled, even as do we today.

Awareness is a most desirable human trait to possess.

All '*pneumatics*' are discovering it to be more and more a part of their lives.

Now, I could stop right here and simply say:

*"Exercise Awareness just like Jesus did."*

But I'm not going to because I've discovered three specific **areas** in which we believers are specifically told to **be aware** ... **areas** of life where we are '**expected**' to be aware ... three **areas** of life where trouble can crop up if we are **not** aware ... three **areas** of life where '*Pneuma Himself*' would seek to greatly and continually increase **our level of awareness**!

## **II. CONSIDER THE INCREDIBLE AWARENESS EXPECTED OF THE BELIEVER**

### **\* Believers Are Expected To Be Aware Of Satan's SCHEMES**

*"We are not unaware of his (Satan's) Schemes" - 2 Corinthians 2:11*

*"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him ..." - 1 Peter 5:8*

Now it's hard to resist someone, it's hard to avoid being 'taken in by someone' if we are unaware of the way that that 'someone' operates.

We who would follow Christ – We who would 'Keep in step with the Spirit' have an enemy – an enemy who opposes all the works of God – and we **can't afford** to be unaware of His Schemes.

Paul says we aren't, so they can't be of a 'rocket science' level.

Just think (and this ties in to the next awareness as well) of where in the Bible the devil appears and how he goes about his business and you will have a pretty good idea of what's in his 'playbook'

**Garden of Eden** ... "You shall be like God" ... (Dis-Satisfaction/Ambition)  
Create dis-satisfaction with Self and with one's current circumstances  
and with God's current level of involvement.

**The Patriarch Job** ... "If trouble comes your way, God has let you down.  
Be done with him and with life." (Blame)

**The Disciple Judas** ... "Nothing is more important than money,  
Not even Jesus." (Greed)

**Ananias and Sapphira** ... "Advance yourself in the eyes of the Church  
even if you have to lie to do it." (Prestige)

These are '**Schemes**' that the devil uses over and over again.  
We must be aware of them if we would avoid being taken in by them.

**Two more** quickly as we close ...

\* **Believers Are Expected To Be Aware Of Scriptural TRUTH**

"Are you not aware of what the Law says?" - Galatians 4:21

There was a growing problem in the Galatian Church – there were some there who were seeking a legalistic solution to the matter of Holiness. Awareness of where legalism leads would have nipped that problem in the bud. Paul says, 'Become aware of God's Word.'

Here's what Paul wrote to his young son in the faith, Timothy ...

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved ...  
who correctly handles the Word of Truth" - 2 Timothy 2:15*

Correctly handling the Word of Truth is an expectation of every believer. Be at least aware enough of what the Bible says that you can detect when others are 'mishandling' it.

Simply by faithfully reading your 'Nudges and Hugs' you will be exposed to One Hundred and Twenty Four Key Bible Verses and the way they define the Christian Life.

They will open the door to a greater understanding – a greater awareness – of the nature of life in this fallen, broken world.

And now finally this morning, the one that has for many just recently come up on our awareness radar screen.

**\* *Believers Are Expected To Be Aware Of The Spirit's PRESENCE***

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" - 1 Corinthians 6:19*

*"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit with whom you were sealed until the Day of Redemption" - Ephesians 4:30*

The Holy Spirit is in us – The Holy Spirit is with us.  
He is our present-day companion.

There actually is no 'Awareness' more important than this one.  
Are we aware that the Almighty God is with us - that He is working within us to produce an entirely new kind of life for us?

I heard a testimony this week from one of our number who is truly aware of the Spirit's Presence with him.

*(Dave and the fax machine at Staples, speaking to the sales clerk ...)*

*"When things are not going the way they should, I just ask 'Pneuma,' the Holy Spirit, who is right here with me to take charge.  
Is it okay if I do that right now?"*

***Final Thot ...***

**AWARENESS** both of the ways of **MEN** and the ways of **GOD**  
stands one in **GOOD STEAD** in this fallen, broken world!

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Eleven – Surrender”*

**Intro ...** Today I want you to focus your attention upon a word and a concept that most Americans don’t view very positively – that is, unless an enemy of theirs is doing it.

It’s the word “**SURRENDER**” and it’s the next to the last Christ-Life Building Block that we will be discussing.

## **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK ELEVEN ... SURRENDER**

A person with a ‘***Spirit of Surrender***’ knows how to:

**YIELD – RELINQUISH – SUBMIT**

You might say: “*I don’t want to learn how to do any of those things. They’re all contrary to my nature and my desires.*”

And yet this ‘*Spirit*’ characterized Jesus and characterizes as well all those who are being conformed to His Likeness.

It’s indeed a ‘**Core Component**’ – a Key ‘**Building Block**’ of the Christ-Life!

Consider with me just how this quality of surrender fit into Jesus’ earthly life ... Note the use of the word ‘*willingly*’ in each of these statements.

**\* *JESUS WILLINGLY SURRENDERED HIMSELF TO THE FATHER’S PLAN***

(John 3:16; Philippians 2:5-8)

Here we rely upon two of the most familiar and instructive verses in the entire New Testament Text.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son ...”*  
(John 3:16)

The Son of God coming into the world was the Father’s idea. Love for a fallen world generated that idea and the entire Godhead embraced it but the Spirit who inspired John’s writing tells us that the Father initiated it.

And what was the plan? It was to provide a way whereby sinful human beings could be forgiven for their sins and avoid the horrors of hell.

God's justice demanded a payment and only a perfect man – a totally sinless man - could offer it. Only a man who had walked through a fallen, sin-filled world sinlessly could qualify as sinful man's substitute.

However, only a sinless man with Divine Credentials could be considered worthy to offset the sin of the entire human race – to actually pay the price of sin itself. A genuine God-Man would be required. The Father chose His One and Only Son to be that God-Man.

And so, the **PLAN** was formulated – stirred by the Father's Love and consistent with the Father's Justice.

All that was necessary was for the Almighty Son of God to surrender Himself to it – to submit Himself to this incredible solution.

And that's exactly what the Scripture tells us that the Son of God did.

Here's the **second verse** upon which we rely to make this point.

*"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (clutched on to), but made himself nothing ..."*  
(Philippians 2:6-7a)

Those are words that (like one of 'Pneuma's Nudges' says) ...

*"Have the Power to connect (us) to the things that really matter though they are powerless to convey the true essence of those things."*

We will never be able to wrap our minds around what the Scripture is saying here ... Translators have done their best:

The Revised Standard Version says, *'He emptied Himself'* – J.B. Philipps translated *"He stripped Himself of all privilege"* – Theologians have used phrases like *'He laid aside the independent use of all Divine Prerogatives'* as though that helps.

**The point is** ... The Father's Plan called upon the Son of God to take an absolutely unfathomable step ... to surrender things that we cannot even imagine possessing yet alone giving up ... and He did it!

**Jesus** (that would become His earthly name) **willingly surrendered Himself to the Father's Plan.**

A 'Spirit of Surrender' brought the Son of God into the world and that same 'spirit' would characterized Him all the time He was here.

Notice secondly this morning that ...

**\* JESUS WILLINGLY SURRENDERED HIMSELF TO THE FATHER'S WILL**  
(Luke 22:42)

Again and again, throughout his earthly sojourn, Jesus testified to this position he had willingly adopted ...

John records these words of Jesus in John 6:38 ...

*"I have come down from heaven not to do my own will  
but to do the will of Him who sent me."*

And three chapters later (John 9:4) we read these words ...

*"I must do the works of Him who sent me."*

Never was the point made more emphatically or poignantly than in the Garden of Gethsemane itself when the weight of the task was pressing itself heavily upon Him ...

*"Father, if You are willing, take this cup from me  
nevertheless not my will but Yours be done ..."*  
(Luke 22:42)

**'Surrender'** is a core component of the Christ-Life ...

Jesus demonstrated that surrender again and again. He was completely surrendered to doing the Father's Will – It's a wonderfully freeing way to live. Discover the Will of God and surrender yourself to it!

No pressure to 'figure it out' or 'make it up as you go along' ...

If Jesus Himself didn't feel that pressure or desire that option, why in the world should or do we?

So, Jesus 'Willingly Surrendered Himself to the Father's Plan and to the Father's Will.'

Here now (to me at least) is the most impressive of all ...

**\* JESUS WILLINGLY SURRENDERED HIMSELF TO THE FATHER'S CARE**

(Luke 23:46)

This act (and demonstration) of surrender took place on the cross. The hours of agony had taken their toll physically – the abuse heaped upon Him had taken its toll emotionally – but infinitely more than that, the Father's Judgement upon Him had taken its toll spiritually.

Remember the agonizing cry in the midst of the darkness ...

*"My God, my God,  
why have YOU forsaken me?"*

What a surge of delight that cry brought to the Kingdom of Darkness! The devil, Jesus once said, seeks to '*Destroy the Works of God.*'

What delight must have been his to think that he had destroyed the very Son of God ... that soon the former Lord of Glory would be condemned to eternal judgement just like all the rest of them!

But that joy of his was short-lived for He knew nothing of the full measure of this Plan of Redemption – He knew nothing of power of Divine Goodness and Wisdom and Mercy – He knew nothing of the true Eternal relationship between the Father and the Son ... He knew nothing of any of that but he was soon to find out.

For there on the cross just moments before taking His last agonizing breath, as an act of incredible faith in all the above mentioned things, Jesus the judged God-Man says ...

*"Father, into Your Hands I commit my spirit."*  
(Luke 23:46)

You see '**The Plan**' included the '*Saving of the Son*' even as it provided for the saving of lost sinners!

As soon as the price for sin was paid, the Son would be released from the burden that had been placed upon Him – the judgment would be ended and fellowship with the Father would be resumed.

That was the **Plan** to which the Son of God had surrendered Himself.

And here we see Him in the most dire of earthly circumstances surrendering Himself to the **Care** of His Loving Heavenly Father – one of the greatest Acts of Faith ever recorded.

A Spirit of Surrender is indeed a Core Component of the Christ-Life. Jesus was surrendered to the Father's Plan and to the Father's Will and to the Father's Care.

And so are those in whom His Life is being formed – it's a marvelously freeing way to live.

And now this morning as we marvel how this quality of surrender expressed itself in the life of our Savior, turn your attention to ...

**TODAY'S KEY APPLICATION SCRIPTURE ... Romans 12:1**

*"I **URGE** you ... to **OFFER** (surrender) your **BODIES**  
as living **SACRIFICES** ... to **GOD**."*

This is an incredibly significant Scripture – It's as central to an understanding of the living of the Christian Life as John 3:16 is to the receiving of it.

It shows how this quality of 'Surrender' is to manifest itself in our lives.

Here's the full text of this key verse ... It's an appeal to all believers. Hear in it the Voice of your daily Companion.

*"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer (surrender)  
your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God –  
this is your spiritual act of worship.*

*(And) do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

***In other words ...***

Surrender your physical body to the Plan, Will and Care of the Almighty!

**A Couple of Crucial Observations:**

**\* EVERYTHING WE DO INVOLVES OUR BODY –  
SURRENDER AFFECTS ALL OF THAT!**

Everything we say; Everything we eat; Everything we drink;  
Everything we think; Everything we see; Everywhere we go;  
Everyone with whom we connect ourselves;  
Everything we do involves our body.

Surrender of our body to the Plan and Will and Care of God affects all of that. All of those things can become demonstrations of obedience; they can become actual '*sacrifices honoring to God Himself*' as our lives are transformed by the new life '*Pneuma*' is creating within us.

Almost needless to draw but nevertheless crucial is this observation:

**\* 'PNEUMA' IS THE DIVINE AGENT TO WHOM SURRENDER IS MADE!**  
(Romans 8:9)

*"Those who are controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.  
You are controlled, not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit."  
(Romans 8:9)*

**"Surrender yourself to the Spirit"** ... that's the plan of God for your life. That's the secret to truly living this Christian Life – that's the only way that God's Commendation can be felt upon your life. He is the ONE who has been assigned to guide you through and empower you for all life in this fallen, broken world.

*"Surrender yourself willingly to the Spirit"* – every day, all day!

***Final Thot ...***

A human being truly SURRENDERED to God is truly something to BEHOLD!

## **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Re-Incarnation Stage’**

*“Christ-Life Building Block Twelve – Nurture”*

**Intro** ... This morning we come to the **Twelfth** of the Twelve Core Components – the Twelve Building Blocks - of the Christ-Life.

Here then is today's twelfth and final one ...

### **CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK TWELVE ... NURTURE**

Here are today's secondary descriptors:

#### **TEACH – TRAIN - CULTIVATE – ENCOURAGE**

**Teach** – putting **truth** into someone

**Train** – developing **skill** in someone

**Cultivate** – removing **hindrances** from someone

**Encourage** – stimulating **courage** in someone

What a marvelous ability to possess – the ability (and the desire) to help ‘form’ another human being. What a privilege to see someone progress toward true and full faith in Jesus Christ – to work ‘hand in hand’ with ‘Pneuma’ Himself in the shaping of their lives!

Consider with me ...

### **TODAY’S COMPELLING SCRIPTURAL IMAGE ...**

#### **THE MOTHER HEN!**

*“O Jerusalem ... how often I have longed to gather your **CHILDREN** together as a **HEN** gathers her **CHICKS** under her **WINGS!**”*

(Luke 13:34)

So here we see one way Jesus – our ‘model’ of ‘perfected humanity’- viewed himself ... as a ‘Mother Hen’ who would gather her chicks and watch over them until they were grown and able to fend for themselves.

Jesus saw himself as a ‘nurturer’ ... a maturity-producer ... as one who gave himself to the development of those under his care.

**Let's watch him do it and learn from His Example ...**

## **1. JESUS 'NURTURED' HIS DISCIPLES ...**

**\* He TAUGHT them – Put Truth into them!**

Pretty much everything that Jesus was about was new to them ... They were as amazed and at times bewildered by what He said as everyone else was.

There was much '*teaching*' that needed to be done if they were to be ready to carry on the task He would leave with them.

He never assumed that they could just '*watch him*' and figure it out.

### **Check out these four scriptures ...**

*"When he was alone with his disciples, he EXPLAINED everything" - Mark 4:34*  
(This had to do with the meaning of the many parables he used.)

*"You call me TEACHER... and so I am." - John 13:13*  
(There was no doubt about His understanding of their need of instruction.)

*"Do you still not UNDERSTAND?" – Matthew 16:9*  
(Understanding was slow in coming for the Disciples – Jesus could have given in to frustration but he continued on by helping them 'see' what he was saying ...

When He said '*bread/yeast*' he was talking about the false teaching the Pharisees were '*baking up*.'

*"He EXPLAINED ... all the Scriptures concerning himself." - Luke 24:27*  
(Here was the Master Tutorial given by the Master Teacher Himself – He walked them through the entire Old Testament Scriptures.)

Jesus was a **Master Teacher** – He filled His Disciples with Truth!

**\* He TRAINED them – Developed Skills in them!**

'*Knowing*' the truth and '*doing*' the truth are two very different things. Jesus equipped them to '*do*' ministry. He prepared them to function effectively and fruitfully in ministry.

## Check out these **three scriptures** ...

"He **SENT** them out ... and gave them authority over evil spirits." - Mark 6:7  
(He gave them authority – 'Devil, they represent me – you must treat them just as if they were me' ... Today we call this 'on-the-job' training or even 'internship'.)

"Now that you **KNOW** these things, you will be blessed if you **DO** them." – John 13:17  
(He made clear to them that the only value in being able to say,  
"I **Know** something" is so you can then go forth and '**Do** something'.)

"**AS** I have loved you, **YOU ARE** to love one another." - John 13:34  
(Jesus knew that the best way to develop a ministry skill is to see a  
'skilled minister in action.' This the Disciples had had the privilege of doing.  
And now Jesus tells them to 'Go and do likewise'.)

Jesus was a **Master Trainer** – He developed His Disciples' Skills!

<p>* He <b><u>CULTIVATED</u></b> them- Removed Hindrances from them!</p>
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Like a gardener working the ground to eliminate 'weeds' so the nurturer works in the minds and hearts of those He nurtures to removes the things that get in the way of their growth – the things that would rob them of necessary nutrients.

## Check out now these **three scriptures** ...

"Who do **PEOPLE** say the Son of Man is?" – Matthew 16:13  
(Seldom do 'people' in and of themselves 'get it right' and yet  
people's impressions and opinions can certainly 'get in the way'.)

"This was revealed to you by my **FATHER** in heaven" – Matthew 16:17  
(Having removed the 'weedy' thoughts and opinions of men, there was now  
room for genuine spiritual insight to take root and it did as Peter declared,  
"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God".)

"Jesus turned to Peter and said 'Get behind me, **SATAN**'" - Matthew 16:23  
(Sometimes the 'weeds' that need to be cultivated away are of our own devising.  
We 'Put two and two together' and get something other than 'four'.)

Jesus was a **Master Cultivator** – He 'weeded' a lot of 'stuff' out of His Disciples!

\* **He ENCOURAGED them – Stimulated Courage in them!**

Knowing the truth and developing skills in ministry and having '*hindrances*' regularly cultivated out of our lives does not necessary '*thrust a person into consistent service for Christ.*' Apprehension and fearfulness will keep many a '*ministry door*' tightly shut. Frequently, courage must be found before we can open that door and step confidently through it. This Jesus knew well.

Check out these **two scriptures** ...

“**ANYONE** who has faith in me **WILL DO** what I have been doing.”- John 14:12

(Jesus didn't say '*might do*' or even '*can do*'; He said, '*will do*' ... This is the kind of courage-stimulating statement that could turn even "*Doubting Thomas*" into a dynamic witness. Tradition tells us that Thomas took the gospel to India.)

“You **SHALL** receive **POWER** when the Spirit comes upon you and you **SHALL** be my **WITNESSES** ...” – Acts 1:8

(And if any of them wondered how their '*faith in Christ*' could lead to such accomplishments, Jesus pointed out to them the ultimate object of such faith ... **believe** in the **ONE** that would be sent. Power to serve Christ and to witness for Him would be brought by the Holy Spirit who would soon come upon them. Such words surely encouraged them greatly and stimulated great courage in them.)

Jesus was a **Master Encourager** – He stimulated great courage in His Disciples!

So, what about that '**Spirit**' that Jesus would send into the world? Would He continue this '*Nurturing Ministry*' of Jesus? **Well** ... Let's check it out ...

Notice that even as Jesus '*nurtured*' His own Disciples so ...

## **2. HIS SPIRIT NURTURES US ...**

All that Jesus was to His Disciples while He was on the earth, '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit – would be to them and to all subsequent believers.

**Notice** how this '*Nurturing Ministry of Jesus*' would continue ...

“He will **GUIDE** you into all truth”- John 16:13

(The Holy Spirit would take up the teaching ministry of Christ and open their minds and hearts to spiritual truth. Initially He guided some of those early Disciples to put on paper the words that would make up the New Testament Scriptures. He granted them insights that could only be received following the completion of Jesus' earthly ministry. He taught them and excited them with gospel truths.)

“He will be **WITH** you forever”- John 14:16  
(He would be the day in, day out presence of God in their lives. He would be the ONE who would observe their struggles and their successes. He would ‘walk them into and through’ one life circumstance after another. He would prepare them and empower them for godly living in this fallen world. He would be their mentor – their trainer.)

“He will **REMINDE** you of everything I have said.”- John 14:26  
(This is a way of saying ‘He will keep your minds on the things that I have said.’ He will chide you when your minds start focusing on other things – on the opinions of men or even on your own. He will help you ‘weed out’ the stuff that doesn’t belong in your life – the stuff that clutters up your life and causes you to stumble.)

“And we are **BEING TRANSFORMED** with ever-increasing glory which comes from ... the Spirit.” – 2 Corinthians 3:18  
(Now that’s an announcement designed to encourage our hearts – to stimulate real courage for the living of the Christ-Like life in this world of ours. The Spirit has come upon us – in fact, entered us at the moment of our Spiritual Birth. He, the Almighty God Himself, has taken up residence within us and is actively working to accomplish the Divine Plan of making Christ the *First-Born of Many Brothers*!)

### **Without a doubt ...**

All that Jesus was to His Earthly Disciples, the Holy Spirit has continued. He is the ONE today who would gather us all like ‘A mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings’ and there in that ‘protected environment’ He would teach us and train us and cultivate us and encourage us. Feel His Nurturing Presence!

And now **one last thing** ... an incredibly important thing ... the thing toward which the first two things point ...

### **3. WE ARE TO NURTURE ONE ANOTHER ...**

This is a key part of the Christ-Life that ‘Pneuma’ would create within each of us!

### **Check out these Four Scriptures ...**

“By this time you ought to be **TEACHERS**” – Hebrews 5:12  
(This is the writer to the Hebrews expressing a bit of exasperation that those to whom he writes are experiencing a ‘delayed development’ with regard to their growth in grace. He says that though they ‘ought’ to be capable of teaching others, they are in need of being ‘taught the basics all over again.’ Something was definitely wrong. To use our current terminology, we would say that this situation should serve as a bright ‘red flag’ indicating that they are not ‘Keeping in step with Pneuma.’ The expectation is that all believers have a teaching role to someone.)

“Be an **EXAMPLE** of the believer” – 1 Timothy 4:12  
(Here the Apostle Paul points out to Timothy that modeling the Christian Life is the key to mentoring someone in the Christian Life. People who have ‘seen you do it’ are more open to hear you talk about ‘them doing it.’)

“If someone is caught in a sin ... **RESTORE** him gently” – Galatians 6:1  
‘Weeds’ do invade the garden – Sin does occasionally overcome Born-Again People. The task of cultivation – helping to remove those ‘weeds’ and overcome that sin – is an important part of the Christ-Life. Notice that this task is to be done gently. Better to ‘Hand-Weed’ than to use a tractor!

“**ENCOURAGE** one another daily” – Hebrews 3:13  
(Wow ... isn’t once a week on Sunday enough?  
Tell me, have you ever noticed that ‘Wonderful Sundays’ sometimes turn into ‘Horrible Mondays’? It can seem like next Sunday is a long way away. Of course, that is why we encourage you all to be in a *Sonlife* Cell Group and why we have a *Sonlife* Prayer Network – these are both designed to ‘keep us in touch’ with one another.)

‘Nurture-based contact’ is essential if we are to experience the fullness of the Christ-Life. I’m sure the Spirit’s ‘**Goal**’ is for every believer to encourage some other believer every day and to receive encouragement from some other believer every day.

### **And now for some Closing Questions:**

How high on your list of priorities is ‘nurture’?  
Who has God sent to nurture you?  
Who has God sent you to nurture?  
How is it going?

**Suggestion:** Choose a ‘Nurture Buddy’ - Commit to calling that person every day and discussing the ‘Nudge from Pneuma’ that you have just read. See what transpires over a 31 day period. You will be surprised and blessed!

### **Final Thought ...**

**BETTER PEOPLE** are the **LEGACY** of those who know how to **NURTURE**.  
**BITTER PEOPLE** are too often the **LEGACY** of those who **DON’T!**

# **“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – CONCLUSION**

*“The Key To Everything”*

(Colossians 1:27)

**Intro ...** Today we come to the end of a ten-month-long Sermon Series. During these ten months, we have been on a ...

***“Journey Toward Christ-Likeness.”***

This is a journey that begins before we make our decision for Christ and continues until we draw our last earthly breath.

In this series of messages, we discovered that this ‘*Journey Toward Christ-Likeness*’ is a journey composed of **Four Specific Stages** ...

**STAGE ONE:** The **Identification** Stage is where the question is asked:

***“Who is this Jesus and How does that relate to me?”***

This is the most important question that any human being can ever raise.

**Five** answers to those questions were discovered in the New Testament Scriptures.

- \* **Jesus** is the ONE who knows all about me;  
He will one day call me into account. (Revelation 3:23)
- \* **Jesus** is the ONE who can forgive me for all my sins;  
He offers me a fresh start. (1 Peter 2:24)
- \* **Jesus** is the ONE who can satisfy my spiritual hunger and thirst;  
He would nourish me with spiritual food. (John 6:35)
- \* **Jesus** is the ONE who possesses the words of eternal life;  
He opens the door of salvation to me. (John 6:68)
- \* **Jesus** is the ONE who extends to me a life-altering call;  
He would re-shape and re-direct my life. (Luke 14:26-27)

The **Identification Stage** is completed when the ‘*Enquirer*’ responds to Christ’s Call to Salvation and surrenders entirely to Him!

**STAGE TWO:** The **Imitation** Stage is where a very specific directive is given by Jesus to all those who have newly responded to His Call and surrendered their lives to Him – to all those who are now wondering ...

**“What’s next?**

**What is expected of me now that I am saved?”**

To those who followed Him in His Day Jesus said in essence ...

*“Live your life exactly the way you have seen me live mine.”*

*‘Don’t try to figure anything out ...*

*Just ‘Mimic your Master.’*

That’s exactly what the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent to companion believers in His Absence, says to brand new believers today.

**Seven** such directed behaviors of Jesus were discovered ...  
seven specific life situations upon which the new believer can focus.  
The Spirit Himself would say to us:

- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His sense of service. (John 13:14)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His lifestyle of love. (John 13:34)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His gentle and humble manner. (Matthew 11:29)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His spirit of forgiveness. (Colossians 3:13)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His resurrection perspective. (John 14:19)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His understanding of His personal mission. (John 20:21)
- \* **Mimic** Jesus in His demonstration of patient endurance. (1 Peter 2:21)

The ‘*Imitation Stage*’ is in no way ‘*elementary*’ Christian Living – it’s merely ‘*limited*’ Christian Living. It’s not the whole package – it’s not the ‘*End of the Journey toward Christlikeness*’ but it is a crucial stage **of** the Journey.

**STAGE THREE:** The **Conformation** Stage is where those who have surrendered their lives to Christ and who have begun to ‘*Mimic their Master*’ are granted by ‘*Pneuma*’ insightful glimpses into Christ’s Heart.

And in these '*glimpses*' they discover the **Inner Character Traits** that actually stimulate those external behaviors of Christ that they have been '*mimicking*.'

**Eight** such behavior-stimulating **Character Traits** to which Pneuma would '*conform*' us caught our eyes.

- \* **Jesus** was completely surrendered to the Father's will. (Hebrews 10:7)
- \* **Jesus** was thoroughly dependent upon the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:18)
- \* **Jesus** was relentlessly opposed to Satan's presence and practice. (Mark 8:33)
- \* **Jesus** was passionately committed to His own. (John 10:11)
- \* **Jesus** was compassionately connected to lost people. (Matthew 14:14)
- \* **Jesus** was radically reliant upon prayer. (Mark 1:35)
- \* **Jesus** was profoundly impacted by the brevity of ministry. (John 9:4)
- \* **Jesus** was steadfastly focused on the joy that awaited Him. (Hebrews 12:2)

As these inner '*Traits*' are added to the believer's life, conformation to the character of Christ is attained ... a giant step toward complete Christ-likeness is taken!

**STAGE FOUR:** The **Re-Incarnation** Stage is where true '*Christ-Like Living*' actually begins to appear as the '*perfected humanity*' lived by Jesus Christ takes root in the '*Pneuma-Companioned*' believer's heart. It's in this '*Re-Incarnation Stage*' where the very life of Jesus begins to be '*fleshed out*' once again in this fallen world.

**Twelve Core Components** or Building Blocks define that '*Perfected Humanity*' ... that '*Humanity 2.0*' – that '*Pneumanity*' for us.

Those who begin to experience '**Humanity 2.0**' rise above all normal earthly distinctions as they enjoy a '*unified humanity*' if not yet a truly '*perfected one*.' All normal human distinctions are gone.

As the Christ-Life is more and more '*formed*' in them, they find themselves less and less defining themselves by any former earthly designations.

They find themselves defining themselves as '*Newly Minted Human Beings*' filled with the very Spirit of the Christ who has paved the way for them.

They increasingly enjoy a kind of '*abundancy*' that the unbelievers around them can only marvel at. That '*abundancy*' comes through their possession and expression of those **Twelve Core Components of Humanity 2.0** we discovered in the earthly life lived by Jesus Christ.

- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Leadership** ...  
(To Guide – To Direct – To Benefit - Mark 1:17)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Passion** ...  
(Zeal – Intensity – Energy - Joy - John 2:17)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Tenderness** ...  
(Gentleness – Compassion - Empathy - Mark 6:34)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Patience** ...  
(Composure – Poise - Endurance - Hebrews 12:2)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Integrity** ...  
(Honesty – Truthfulness – Stability – Faithfulness – 1 Peter 2:22)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Radiance** ...  
(Life Energy – Glow – Brilliance – Inviting – Matthew 17:2)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Focus** ...  
(Concentration – Motivation – Application – Luke 9:51)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Love** ...  
(Unconditional Commitment – Wholehearted Benevolence – John 15:13)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Confidence** ...  
(Certainty – Tenacity – Assurance – Conviction – John 14:6)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Awareness** ...  
(Alert – Tuned In - Informed – Attentive – John 13:1)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Surrender** ...  
(Yield – Submit – Relinquish – Luke 22:42)
- \* **Jesus** demonstrated **Nurture** ...  
(Teach – Train – Encourage – Cultivate – Luke 13:34)

This '*Journey to Christ-Likeness*' is the Plan of God for every believer.

This '*Journey*' is the Plan of Christ for His Church.

This '*Journey*' is the Plan of the Spirit of God who has devoted Himself to the task of '*companioning*' every believer every step of the way and '*forming the Christ-Life*' within each of them.

This has been an incredibly important study – every message is available at our church web-site – [www.sonlifecommunitychurch.com](http://www.sonlifecommunitychurch.com)

So how do we '*wrap it all up*' ... How do we '*zero ourselves in*'?  
Can it all be boiled down to a single focus – a captivating concept?

***I believe it can*** ... I want us this morning to allow a single expression of the Apostle Paul and thus of the Holy Spirit Himself to do that for us.

**TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSION ...**

**"CHRIST** in you, the **HOPE** of **GLORY**"  
(Colossians 1:27)

This is possibly the most important verse in the entire Bible.

Paul said that this verse – this phrase – identifies the '*Great Mystery*' which had been '*hidden*' from the beginning of time.

Now, in these last days, Paul says that the privilege had been granted to him to reveal what he called '*The Glorious Riches of this Mystery*' which is ...

*"Christ in you, the Hope of Glory."*

In that incredible phrase unheard by any Old Testament Saint ...  
In that central, most important phrase marveled at by all the awesome heavenly host, is contained, revealed, suggested and affirmed these  
***Four Tremendous Spiritual Realities ...***

**First of all, that incredible phrase “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory” contains, reveals, suggests, affirms ...**

## **I. THE ULTIMATE PLAN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER**

\* To Develop A **GLORIOUS PEOPLE**

*“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him  
who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”*

(1 Peter 2:9)

The Father's ultimate plan is not to simply save men and women from Hell. The Father's ultimate plan and desire is to have a 'People filled with the Glory of God' – a people who belong absolutely and completely and obviously to their Glorious Heavenly Father. Saving them from Hell is simply a necessary step in the accomplishing of that Plan.

\* To See His Son as the **FIRST-BORN** of **MANY**

*“For those God foreknew he also predestinated to be conformed  
to the likeness of His Son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”*

(Romans 8:29)

Another great outcome of this Plan of the Heavenly Father is that Jesus become the 'Elder Brother' as it were to an entire 'Family of Faith' ...

His death, which provided deliverance from Hell, also granted the possibility of new life - new birth into the very Family of God.

All such 're-born ones' would together make up God's Glorious People.

Seeing Jesus as the 'Elder Brother' of untold numbers of 'Born-Again Christ-Like Believers' is a big part of God the Father's Ultimate Plan.

The **first part** of the 'Mystery' contained in the phrase

“Christ in You, the Hope of Glory” is thus revealed:

*“God the Father's Ultimate Plan is to develop a Glorious People and  
to see His Son as the First-Born of an entire Family of Faith.”*

**Secondly now, that incredible phrase** “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory” **contains, reveals, suggests, affirms ...**

## **II. THE FOCUSED PURPOSE OF THE BELOVED SON**

\* To Live His Earthly Life As A **FLAWLESS EXAMPLE** – Humanity 2.0

*“... Christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you follow in his steps.  
He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

(1 Peter 2:21)

Jesus didn't come to earth just to die ... Before He could ‘**die** in our place,’ He had to (as it were) ‘**live** in our space’ ... He had to demonstrate ‘*Godliness (righteousness) in a fallen, sinful world.*’

He had to model the kind of life that ‘*Spirit-Filled Human Beings*’ would live. He had to demonstrate that **Humanity 2.0** was indeed a possibility ... This He did.

He ‘*wrote the book*’ on ‘*Perfected Human Living*’ ... It's the ‘Book’ that all who walk with His Spirit read daily.

But, of course, there was more to that ‘*Focused Purpose of the Beloved Son*’ as He did His part to make possible the Ultimate Plan of His Heavenly Father. He also ‘**purposed**’ ...

\* To Die On The Cross As An **ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE** – The ‘Lamb of God’

*“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins  
and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”*

(1 Peter 2:24)

Oh, what a wondrous thing did the Son of God achieve through the Sacrifice of Himself on Calvary!

He not only paid the price **for** our sin but he freed us from the bondage **of** sin. His death would provide the way that ‘*Born-Again Human Beings*’ could live good and godly lives. They would live free from all the ‘wounds of sin’ that once festered within them.

Oh, how tragic to take this verse and apply it in some 'mere' physical way!  
Oh, how even more tragic to take that merely physical application and use it to berate believers who struggle with physical illness as in ...

*"Don't you know that 'by his stripes (King James Version)  
you have been healed'?"*

Though some believers over the years certainly have experienced physical healings just as some did in Jesus' Day, this verse refers to so much more.

Here Peter is talking about the kind of 'healing' that frees us to live 'righteous lives.' That kind of 'healing' fits perfectly with the Focused Purpose of the Son of God as He came to **live** and **die** for us!

**Thirdly now, that incredible phrase** "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory" **contains, reveals, suggests, affirms ...**

### **III. THE ENERGIZING PASSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

\* To **CONFORM** Every Believer To The **IMAGE of CHRIST**

*"We ... are being transformed into His Likeness with ever-increasing glory,  
which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)*

To conform us to the very image of Christ – To transform us into Christ's Likeness ... To create the 'Life of Christ' in us – That's the 'Christ in You' part of our key verse.

Now that's the **task** that energizes – that stirs the passion of - the Holy Spirit who has been sent into the world by the Father and the Son.

His '**Role**' is absolutely essential in the Fulfilling of the Heavenly Father's Ultimate Plan and in the Recognition and Endorsement of the Beloved Son's Focused Purpose in coming to earth.

Jesus documented the possibility of such a thing by His Life on the Earth.  
Jesus paved the way for such a wondrous thing by his Death on the Cross.  
Jesus demonstrated His commitment to this thing by sending 'Pneuma' into the world to 'companion' all those who have yielded themselves to Him.

'Pneuma', the Holy Spirit Himself, is the ONE who has been assigned the task of making this happen.

"Make them all like Jesus" - what a task!  
If He wasn't God, He wouldn't even try but since He is God,  
He not only tries, He succeeds!

And what is the result of His Success?

What is the ultimate outcome that keeps Him passionately working through all the ups and downs of the process?

What is the ultimate goal toward which He strives ...

It's this ... the same goal that captivated the heart of the Apostle Paul ...

\* To **PRESENT** Every Believer **PERFECT** in **CHRIST**

*"We proclaim Him (Christ) ... so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end, I labor struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works within me."  
(Colossians 1:28-29)*

Just imagine what we might hear if 'Pneuma' were to speak for Himself.

Oh, my Beloved Companions ...

This is why I have come to you ... This is why I eagerly reach out my hand to you each and every morning ... This is why I pray continually for you and so energetically invest Myself in you.

There is coming a day when it will be my privilege to present you to the Highly Exalted ONE Himself – your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is my desire and yes, the energizing passion of my life here in this fallen world to present you to Him on that day as a finished product ...

'Perfect, that is 'fully mature' in Christ –  
As one conformed to His Image – bearing His Likeness.

I see myself placing your hand in His and hearing the Father said to both of us:

*"Well done, Good and Faithful Servants,  
Enter into the Joy of the Lord."*

Take a moment and picture it with me.

That's what I can imagine 'Pneuma' saying to us this morning.

**Fourthly now, that incredible phrase “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory” contains, reveals, suggests, affirms not only ...**

The Ultimate **Plan** of the Heavenly Father and the  
Focused **Purpose** of the Beloved Son and the  
Energizing **Passion** of the Holy Spirit.

**It also contains, reveals, suggests and affirms ...**

#### **IV. THE SPIRIT-GENERATED PERSPECTIVE OF EVERY BELIEVER**

**Three adaptations** of Today's Key Verse form this 'perspective.'

\* “***Christ in me***” – the Hope of a **GLORIOUS** God-Honoring **LIFE**.

The Christ-Life is the Abundant Life – It's the Spirit-Filled Life.  
It's a glorious life – a life that pleases God and brings glory to God.  
That's the life that every Born-Again, 'Pneuma'- Companioned  
Believer can sincerely **hope** for and expect to experience!

\* “***Christ in us***” – the Hope of a **GLORIOUS** God-Honoring **CHURCH**

The Christ-Life always winds up expressing itself in 'Community Life  
Spirit-Filled Followers of Christ combine beautifully together.

They rise above human pettiness and selfishness. They submit themselves  
to one another out of Reverence for the Christ-Life that is developing in  
each of them. They literally would lay down their lives for one another.

That's the church life that we can sincerely **hope** for and expect  
to experience even as the early church did for a time.

\* “***Christ through us***” – the Hope of a **LOST** and **DISILLUSIONED WORLD**

This too is part of this 'Spirit-Generated Perspective.' It's through His  
People individually and collectively that the Call of Christ comes  
to those who are still lost in sin and separated from God.

And the **Number One Thing** that the Lost and Disillusioned World  
needs to see is the '**Christ-Life**' ... **Humanity 2.0.**

Unbelievers don't need to hear well-constructed arguments or dramatically delivered pronouncements or desperately constructed denunciations.

They need to hear and see **Christ** ... They need to look as it were into the Mirror of our Lives and see '*Christ looking back at them.*'

They need to see that when they encounter us individually and when they encounter us collectively.

We should make it our goal to never have a visitor who doesn't come back ...

We should never have a visitor that hasn't been made to feel welcome, who hasn't gotten the idea that we desire to see Him or her flourish in their life, who doesn't get the idea that the people in this place are in fact flourishing in their lives!

'**Christ in you the hope of glory**' means "Christ in me" and "Christ in us" and "Christ through us" bringing the very Hope that the Father has planned for and the Son has come to earth to provide for and that the Spirit of God is ministering in our midst to produce.

***The Hope of Genuine Christ-Likeness  
Developing within us!***

This is the most important thing ...

This is the very thing for which all Resources of God are presently employed.

And so, I raise this **Key Challenge Question** for each of us to ask ourselves as we conclude this lengthy Series of Messages ...

**TODAY'S KEY CHALLENGE QUESTION ...**

Am I **READY** to make **CHRIST-LIKENESS**  
my sole **PURPOSE** for **LIVING**?

That's what all of this comes down to for each of us personally ...

The question each of us must ask ourselves is ...

Am I ready to narrow down my focus to this single thing?  
Am I ready to set my mind and heart upon this single thing?

Am I ready to declare that the **Plan** of God in desiring Me and  
the **Purpose** of the Savior in Living and Dying for me and  
the **Passion** of the Spirit who is companioning me is  
all wrapped up in this single thing –

That the Life of Jesus Christ might be seen in me and through me?

Am I ready to **make** 'Christ-Likeness' my sole purpose for living?  
Am I ready to **declare** that 'Christ-Likeness' **Is** my sole purpose for living?

To that end, I offer 'Our Series Concluding Prayer' ...

Let's look at it together.

It's truly the prayer of my heart this morning.

I want you to reflect upon it and decide if it is also the prayer of your heart  
and if so, then pray it out boldly before your Heavenly Father's Throne.

**OUR SERIES CONCLUDING PRAYER ...**

*Father in Heaven ...*

*I come into Your Presence today declaring my intention  
to make Christ-Likeness my sole purpose for living so that  
Your Ultimate Plan for mankind might be achieved and that  
great Glory by your Son might be received.*

*To that end, I yield myself completely to the control of  
Your Most Holy Spirit (my earthly companion, 'Pneuma') and I rest myself  
completely in His ability to conform me to the very Image of Your Son.  
AMEN*

Now if you have prayed that prayer, do know this.

Your Heavenly Father and your Exalted Savior and your Earthly Companion  
have not only heard it but are rejoicing in it because as our **final thot** says ...

**Final Thot ...**

Being Christ's '**MIRROR IMAGE**' is the **KEY** to **EVERYTHING**.

It's all that really **MATTERS!**

# BECOMING CHRIST'S MIRROR IMAGE

- A Journey Toward Christlikeness -  
(Series Review)

STAGE ONE: THE IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...  
WHO IS HE AND HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO ME?

## FIVE KEY IDENTIFICATIONS ...

1. Jesus is the ONE who Knows all about me ...  
He will one day Call me into Account.

*"I am He who searches hearts and minds and I will repay  
each of you according to your deeds"  
(Revelation 2:23)*

2. Jesus is the ONE who can Forgive me for all my Sins ...  
He offers me a Fresh Start.

*"He bore our sins in His body on the tree so that we might die to sins  
and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."  
(1 Peter 2:24)*

3. Jesus is the ONE who can Satisfy my spiritual hunger and thirst.  
He would Nourish me with Spiritual Food.

*"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry  
and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."  
(John 6:35)*

4. Jesus is the ONE who Possesses the Words of Eternal Life.  
He opens the Door of Salvation to me.

*"Simon Peter answered ... 'Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life'  
(John 6:68)*

5. Jesus is the ONE who **Extends** to me a **Life-Altering Call**.  
He would **Re-shape and Re-direct** my **Life**.

*“Anyone who does not hate ... even his own life cannot be my disciple. And (neither can) anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me.”  
(Luke 14:26-27)*

### **AND HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO ME?**

I **RESPOND** to His **CALL** and **SURRENDER** my **LIFE** to Him!

**STAGE TWO: THE IMITATION STAGE ...**  
**WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS OF HIS AM I TO IMITATE?**

### **SEVEN SPECIFIC ‘TO BE IMITATED’ BEHAVIORS ...**

#### **1. Imitate Jesus In His Sense of Service**

*“As I have washed your feet you are to wash one another’s feet.”  
(John 13:14)*

Feel the disciples’ shock as Jesus stooped down to perform this most menial task –  
Feel as well the shock of imagining yourself doing such a menial thing –  
Ask yourself ...

*“What menial thing might ‘Pneuma’ be leading me to do?”*

#### **2. Imitate Jesus In His Lifestyle of Love**

*“As I have loved you, you are to love one another.”  
(John 13:34)*

Absolute 100% commitment to the Body of Christ in this world – the willingness to do whatever needs to be done to bless and encourage them.  
Such commitment led Jesus to the cross – who knows where such a commitment might lead us?  
‘Pneuma’ knows!

### 3. Imitate Jesus In **His Gentle and Humble Manner**

*"Take my yoke, learn from me; I am gentle and humble in heart."  
(Matthew 11:29)*

Though He was the Almighty Son of God Himself, Jesus came not in power and glory, not manifesting His Majesty, but humbling himself to enter the human condition and to treat each person He met tenderly and humanely.

### 4. Imitate Jesus In **His Spirit of Forgiveness**

*"Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you."  
(Colossians 3:13)*

The willingness and the ability to forgive is a '*Pneuma-Generated Thing*.' It runs contrary to our natural '*get even – exact revenge*' nature.

But if the Judge of all the universe could forgive who are we to demand '*justice*' – especially since we have ourselves been so graciously and freely forgiven?

### 5. Imitate Jesus In **His Resurrection Perspective**

*"Because I live, you too shall live."  
(John 14:19)*

Never will we look at death the same way again. Jesus not only overcame death; Jesus destroyed death. Death is no longer an enemy – death is an opportunity to enter into the Eternal Realm where our '*Transformation into Christ-Likeness*' will be completed. That eternal life begins in this life!

### 6. Imitate Jesus In **His Understanding of His Personal Mission**

*"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."  
(John 20:21)*

Jesus was sent with a specific plan and with a specific script – '*something to do*' and '*something to say*' ... so are we. '*Pneuma*' leads us into the discovery of both.

## 7. Imitate Jesus In **His Demonstration of Patient Endurance**

*"He suffered for you leaving you an example."  
(1 Peter 2:21)*

It's truly a 'grace-filled', 'grace-demonstrating' thing to 'endure suffering patiently' especially unjust, undeserved suffering. This Jesus did and this He calls us to do as well.

Only with our hand firmly placed in *Pneuma's* can we do so but with Him by our side and His Grace in our hearts it can indeed be done, even as it was by Jesus Himself.

The '**Imitation Stage**' is in no way **elementary** Christian Living – it's merely **limited** Christian Living – It's not the **whole** package – It's not the **End** of the Journey but it is a crucial stage **of** the Journey.

### **STAGE THREE: THE CONFORMATION STAGE ...**

#### **WHY DID JESUS DO THE THINGS HE DID ...**

#### **WHAT INTERNAL CHARACTER TRAITS STIMULATED HIS EXTERNAL BEHAVIOR?**

## **EIGHT KEY CHARACTER TRAITS OF JESUS ...**

### **1. Jesus Was Completely Surrendered To the Father's Will**

*"I come to do your will, O God"* was the central theme of His Life.  
'*Pneuma*' would have it be ours as well.

How impressive it is to find a human being who lives completely 'ego-free.'  
That's the condition of one who has completely surrendered himself  
to the Father's Will and Ways.

### **2. Jesus was Thoroughly Dependent Upon The Holy Spirit**

This discovery was probably a 'shocker' to some of us but the Scripture makes it clear. It was '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit – who came upon Jesus at His Baptism and drove him into the wilderness and then completely '*filled him*' as He returned from that time of wilderness testing to begin His Three -Year Ministry.

It's not at all a shocker that this is a critical character trait for those of us who in and of ourselves have none of the credentials Christ brought into the world. It did not surprise us at all to learn that the Heavenly Father Himself announced long years ago that progress in our lives would be accomplished ...

*"Not by (our) might – not by (our) strength – but by His Spirit."*

### 3. Jesus was **Relentlessly Opposed To Satan's Presence And Practice**

This one, of course, was not in any way shocking to us – It was not much of a discovery. Naturally Jesus would be completely opposed to Satan's Presence and Practice.

Satan is a condemned created being committed to the destruction of everything that bears the Father's name. All who belong to the Father oppose Satan and His Efforts to deceive and destroy. His ruthlessness must be met by our relentlessness. There is never a 'time out' in this contest.

### 4. Jesus was **Passionately Committed To His Own**

Here is a character trait of Christ that directly impacts us – a character trait that brings great encouragement and blessing as it is formed in us.

Whether it was His Patience with Doubting Thomas or His Tenderness with Simon Peter, Jesus' Commitment to His Own – His Love for His Own – is an awesome thing to contemplate and an even more awesome thing to feel stirring in our own hearts. This 'Stirring' is produced by 'Pneuma' Himself.

### 5. Jesus Was **Compassionately Connected To Lost People**

Jesus looked at lost people through the 'eyes' of compassion. The Rich young ruler – the grieving widow – the long-suffering woman who touched the hem of his garment – the height-challenged tax collector, Zacchaeus – the thousands who raced around the lake to get to where he was going – even the woman who had been 'caught' in the very act of adultery.

He didn't see them as 'losers' or in any way 'unworthy' of his attention. He brought the 'Love of God' into their situation and dealt with each of them gently and compassionately.

### 6. Jesus Was **Radically Reliant Upon Prayer**

He sometimes got up early in the morning to spend time in prayer; He sometimes spent entire nights in prayer; He agonized in prayer in the Garden; He revealed His Heart in prayer in the Upper Room; He taught His Disciples to pray.

The key thing was He maintained connection with His Father in Heaven; He never felt like He was alone, nor did He act as though He was. He relied upon His Fellowship with the Father to sustain Him.

## 7. Jesus Was **Profoundly Impacted By The Brevity Of Ministry**

Earthly life is limited – Ministry time is limited.  
Jesus knew that His 'days on earth' were limited.  
"We must work while it is day for night is coming," he once said.

The farmer says: 'Make hay while the sun shines'  
That's just how it is in this 'time-determined' world of ours.

'Pneuma' would never want us to become 'anxious' about the shortness of life because He manages the outcome when we walk with Him but He does want us to avoid the complacency or presumption that can beset those who have 'Fallen out of step' with Him.

## 8. Jesus Was **Steadfastly Focused Upon The Joy That Awaited Him**

Now this is the final 'Character Trait' we considered and, in a sense, it is the most significant of all because that 'steadfast focus' on the 'Joys that await' provides a generating energy for the formation of the other seven.

So ...

***Eight*** 'Glimpses into Christ's Heart' we have been given in the Scripture. Each of those 'glimpses' reveals an internal 'Quality' – a 'Character Trait' – that stimulated certain of His external behaviors.

**STAGE four: THE DEMONSTRATION STAGE ...**

**WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE 'CHRIST-LIFE?'**  
**IT'S HUMANITY 2.0 – 'PNEUMANITY'**

In Christ are found all the aspects of a 'perfected humanity.'  
They will be found in those in whom His Life has been formed as well.  
**Humanity 2.0** can only be found in Him and them.

## **TWELVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CHRIST-LIFE** (Humanity 2.0) ...

### **1. LEADERSHIP** (Guide – Direct – Benefit) ... Mark 1:17

You can't walk long in the footsteps of Jesus – guided by His Spirit – and not realize that this new life forming in you is a life that would seek to guide and counsel and benefit those around you.

Leadership is a great building block to a 'full-fledged' authentic Christ-Like Life.

### **2. PASSION** (Zeal – Intensity – Energy – Joy) ... John 2:17

To be fully human – to fully express the Image of God that has been placed upon us and the Life of Christ that is forming within us – means to be passionately connected with life – to possess zeal, intensity, energy and joy.

There is no morbid, defeatism, no uninterested by-standing in '**Humanity 2.0.**'

### **3. TENDERNESS** (Gentleness – Compassion – Empathy) ... Mark 6:34

Fully functional Followers of Christ possess a genuine '*Heart for people.*' They go easy on people – they are able to '*put themselves in the other person's place*' and sense what they are feeling. They sincerely care about others.

Such tenderness is always noted and almost always appreciated.

### **4. PATIENCE** (Composure – Poise – Endurance) ... Hebrews 12:2

Waiting from '*Before the foundation of the earth*' to come to His Bethlehem Birth was an incredible demonstration of patience – Waiting patiently for his chosen disciples to finally '*see the light*' was another. And, of course patiently awaiting the moment of his suffering and death as an earth-bound human being was most impressive of all. He (and those in whom His Life is being formed) show great composure and poise and capacity for endurance. It's a most admirable human quality.

**5. INTEGRITY** (Honesty – Truthfulness – Stability – Faithfulness) ... 1 Peter 2:22

What incredible qualities for a human being to possess!  
They all flow from a heart that is pure and true.

Jesus possessed just such a heart and so do those  
whom 'Pneuma' has shaped into His Image and Likeness.

**6. RADIANCE** (Life Energy – Glow – Brilliance – Inviting) ... Matthew 17:2

**Version 2.0** Human Life is vibrant and alive – It shows on the countenance.  
It's winsome and welcoming. It communicates acceptance and  
issues an invitation to 'Come Along' and to 'Join In.'

Initially, at least, people bask in the warmth of its glow.  
People not only '*loved to be around Jesus,*' they love  
to be around those in whom His Life is forming.

**7. FOCUS** (Concentration – Motivation – Application) ... Luke 9:51

Especially in a fallen, fragmented, ever-altering world, it's a rare (and wonderful) thing  
to meet someone who is truly '*captured by something*' – something of great worth –  
something toward which their entire life is heading and to which their  
entire self is dedicated. Such '*focus*' characterized Jesus.

**8. LOVE** (Unconditional Commitment – Wholehearted Benevolence) ... John 15:13

Across the board – across the ages – genuine '*agape love*' has been  
considered one of the (if not '*THE*') most desirable human quality.  
**Humanity 2.0** embraces and expresses such love beautifully.

**9. CONFIDENCE** (Certainty – Tenacity – Assurance – Conviction) ... John 14:6

To be a person possessing a genuine confidence in life is a most wonderful thing.  
To live with certainty and tenacity and assurance and conviction is at the  
very heart of the Christ-Life.

It's awesome to experience and to observe.

**10. AWARENESS** (Alert – In Tune – Informed – Attentive) ... John 13:1

No 'living in the dark' for one in whom the Christ-Life has been formed.  
No being 'blind-sided by life' either. Awareness/alertness/attentiveness  
does not guarantee smooth sailing in this fallen world but  
it surely does reduce the number of 'surprises.'

**11. SURRENDER** (Yield – Submit - Relinquish) ... Luke 22:42

Having the ability to 'relinquish control' and to 'yield to a greater and better,'  
to willingly 'subordinate ourselves' is a tremendously important thing.  
This ability Jesus Himself demonstrated and so do those  
in whom His Life is being formed.

**12. NURTURE** (Teach – Train – Encourage – Cultivate) ... Luke 13:34

What a marvelous ability to possess – the ability (and the desire) to help form another  
human being – to see them progress toward true and full faith in Jesus Christ –  
to work hand in hand with 'Pneuma' Himself in the shaping of their lives!

**AND NOW A CLOSING WORD ...**

***"A student is not above his teacher,  
but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."***

(Luke 6:40)

So said the greatest Teacher who ever lived – Jesus Christ Himself ...  
Notice the optimism, the hope, the confidence in that statement.

"Everyone who is fully trained" – that's why Jesus and the Heavenly Father  
sent the Holy Spirit, 'Pneuma' Himself, into this world ... to "fully train"  
(to form the life of the teacher in) the student. May this series of messages  
serve as a useful tool in the His Hands as He further 'trains' you!

## - APPENDIX -

### THE TWELVE BUILDING BLOCKS - THE CORE COMPONENTS - OF HUMANITY 2.0 ...

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **LEADERSHIP**...

A desire to provide guidance and direction for those around us –  
a desire to genuinely benefit their lives.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **PASSION** ...

A zeal and intensity and energy and joy that focuses itself upon doing and  
celebrating the plan and purposes of the Almighty.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **TENDERNESS** ...

A gentleness and compassion and empathy that reflects a real '*heart for people*' –  
a sensitivity that causes people in need to comfortably '*draw near.*'

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **PATIENCE** ...

A sense of composure, poise, and endurance  
in the face of difficulty or delay.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **INTEGRITY** ...

A lifestyle of honesty, truthfulness, stability and faithfulness  
that flows from a heart that is genuinely pure.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **RADIANCE** ...

A glow on the countenance that communicates energy and vitality –  
a winsome, welcoming aura that invites people to '*bask in its glow.*'

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **FOCUS** ...

A capacity for concentration, motivation and application that keeps  
the '*main things*' **of** life the main things **in** one's life. It's an amazing ability  
in today's increasingly '*fragmented*' and easily distracted world.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **LOVE** ...

An unconditional commitment expressed as whole-hearted benevolence.  
It draws no distinctions, harbors no prejudice, demonstrates no bias.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **CONFIDENCE** ...

A certainty (an assurance) that lays the foundation for conviction and generates great tenacity. In a wishy-washy world, it demonstrates note-worthy stability.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **AWARENESS** ...

An alertness and attentiveness that keeps one from being '*blind-sided*' by life.

Awareness in no way guarantees '*smooth sailing*' in this '*fallen world*' but it does greatly reduce the number of '*surprises*.'

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **SURRENDER**...

An ability to willingly '*relinquish control*' – to '*yield to that which is greater and better*' – to '*subordinate one's self*' to God's Call.

**Full-Blown Christ-Like Humanity 2.0** embodies and expresses **NURTURE** ...

A desire and ability to teach, to train, to encourage, to cultivate.

A desire to help '*form*' another human being into Christ's own image.

\* \* \* \* \*

***"A student is not above his teacher,  
but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."***

(Luke 6:40)

So said the greatest Teacher who ever lived – Jesus Christ Himself ...

Notice the optimism, the hope, the confidence in that statement.

"*But everyone who is fully trained*" – that's why Jesus and the Heavenly Father

sent the Holy Spirit, '*Pneuma*' Himself, into this world ... to "*fully train*"

(to actually '*re-incarnate*' the life of the '*teacher*' in) the '*student*.'

These twelve '**Core Components**' reflect the end result of that training

for they give expression to the very type of perfected '**Humanity 2.0**'

that Jesus Christ Himself demonstrated.

May they become the '*Standard*' by which

'*Growth in Grace*' is measured!