

The Christian Way

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Have you ever considered how radical, extreme and courageous the call of Christianity really is? I'm talking about real, authentic Christianity. Christianity that truly mirrors the life of Christ in attitude, response, and love for people and the Father. I tell you the call to follow Jesus and to be like Him is an invitation into the most honorable and noble life that a human being could ever experience. I'm talking about true honor and true nobility that only One is able to truly bestow that lasts forever. Christianity is the most courageous religion in all of human history.

In Matthew chapters 5-7 Jesus teaches in what many say is His most popular sermon in His entire earthly ministry. The broadest summary of this sermon would be to say it is the picture of His life that He came and lived on the earth. You see Jesus came to the earth and displayed for all to see what our Father in heaven is like. He came to trumpet, "this is what God is like"; not just with His mouth but the way He lived. As the apostles and the multitudes watched His every move, His responses, His attitude, His facial expressions, the tone of His voice, the way He taught and even the way He touched and looked at people they were seeing and hearing what the God of all creation is truly like.

The message of Mt. 5-7 is that we are to now be this expression of God to the earth! He ascended to the Father and sent His Spirit, the Helper, to enable us and empower us to be true witnesses unto Him (Acts 1:8). Jesus says in (Mt. 5:13-14) that we are to be salt (preserves the good and destroys the bad) and light (giving meaning and direction in life) to the whole world. Jesus knew the high nobility and courage of this calling therefore He says in Mt. 5:19 that those who hear and do this teaching will be called great in the Kingdom of heaven forever. Beloved that's no small thing. It's no small thing to be called to represent God to an unsaved and unrighteous people and it's no small thing to be called great by God Himself. Jesus is saying that in the midst of all the angels, the saints and all the rest of heaven that the Father will declare that this one is great, highly esteemed, revered, and honored in His sight.

He goes on again at the end of the sermon in Mt. 7:24 and says that the one who hears and does this teaching will be likened unto a person of wisdom. Embracing this teaching will enable one to stand through any circumstance, any storm, any mistreatment, and any trauma. We see this in the life of Jesus and all that He endured. He was found unwavering and victorious till the end. The profoundness of this is that He says we can be found victorious and overcoming too, if... we hear (which means receive it), say (which means we value it and honor it) and do it (which means we live it).

The call is to be like Him. He wants us to be what Paul called "the fragrance of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15) and "ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us" (2 Cor. 5:20). Some limit this to being a witness by our mouths when telling others about Jesus. This is partially true, but only partially. The true impact of the believer is directly related to cultivating the values of God's Kingdom in your heart. When we take the high values of God and make them our high values we find ourselves being like what He is like. We find ourselves agreeing with Him, hating what He hates and loving what He loves.

So what are these high values you might ask. He lays them out clearly in Mt. 5:3-10, we know them as the 8 beatitudes. They are the values that Jesus lived out in great focus and passion. The word beatitude means blessedness. Jesus is teaching us that these 8 realities are very important to God and He "blesses" those that cultivate them deep in their heart. We want these 8 beatitudes to be more to us than a Sunday School poster posted on the wall. These are the very expression of the life of Christ in us. We must mature in every one of these and be found like Him. It's not OK to be found lazy in these areas. They are a high value to God therefore they must be a high value and importance to us.

So where is the courage? The courage is in the "doing" that Jesus speaks of throughout the sermon. In the culture we live in today it's foolishness and extremely difficult to "do these sayings of Mine" on a continued, over the decades of life, kind of way. Yet it's the call of God on our generation. He will meet us, He will strengthen us, He will break in at the moment we think we can't do it any longer and push us along. It takes great courage to stay the course. In the midst of great adversity, everyday life, changing circumstances and seasons of life courage is found in those unwilling to yield.

So the next time we're confronted with an opportunity to serve, embrace humility, resist wickedness, and suffer for staying the course take heart! Set your gaze upon Him and reach, resist and stand with Him that we may be like Him. Amen. May the Lord strengthen us and finish this great work in us that He has begun.