

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST

(a lesson series on being like Christ)

How to Use This Pamphlet

We are called to pattern our lives and ministries in the light of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In this lesson series, we are going to look at four of the major events in the life of Jesus Christ and spell out their implications in how we live today as Christians. First, we are followers of *the incarnate Son*, who became who He was not in order to minister to humanity. Secondly, we are followers of *the crucified Christ*, who suffered at the hands of others while fulfilling his mission of redeeming humanity. Thirdly, we are followers of *the risen Lord*, who was victorious over all human attempts to thwart God's purposes. Finally, we are waiters of *the coming King*, who shall come back on earth to judge and save.

Each lesson will have an introduction, points to talk about, and suggested questions for discussions. I suggest that only one question per point is dealt with. But of course, if there is enough time, the leader has the prerogative to ask more questions for discussion.

The monthly attendance sheet at the end will help the leaders monitor their small group/s. This will also help the leaders keep track of who are in need of encouragement and prayer.

This series is written by Dick Eugenio © 2015.

Lesson 1

Followers of the Incarnate Son

Bible reading:
John 1:1-14

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to identify themselves as followers of the incarnate Son, and put to practice the implications of such a reality.

Introduction

The church has many designations in the Bible, including “the house of God” (1 Tim 3:15), “household of God” (Eph 2:19), and “household of faith” (Gal 6:10), among others. But the church must be understood primarily in relationship to Jesus Christ, so the designation “body of Christ” must be given primacy. The Bible is clear that the church is the body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-31; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:24), we are members of the body (Eph 5:29-30), and that Jesus is the head of the body (Col 1:18; Eph 4:15-16; 5:23).

I. Incarnate Son

The word “incarnate” comes from two Latin words: “*in carne*” which means “in the flesh.” This is what John 1:14 said about Jesus Christ: “the Word became flesh.” This means that He

went through all of human experiences (Heb 4:15). He hungered and thirsted (Mark 11:12; John 19:28). He experienced pain. He ate our food and socialized with the outcast (Mark 2:15). He was human like us in every way (Rom 8:3; Heb 4:15).

- *Why do you think did Jesus have to go through all of these?*
- *What aspect of the life of the human Christ is very important to you? Why?*

II. Incarnational Ministry

As Christians, because we are followers of Christ, must model our lives in the incarnation of the Son. Members should imitate the example of Christ in being willing to be who He was not yet just to be able to reach others (1 Pet 2:21). The church is a spiritual reality incarnated within space and time, meeting the needs of the world. The church empathizes with its audience. The church goes where the people are in their situation. This is what we call ***incarnational ministry***.

- *In what way can we be incarnational in our lives as Christians?*
- *Can you narrate one experience in your life when you think you have become incarnational in your dealing with others?*
- *What are the challenges and hindrances to being incarnational in our lives and ministry as Christians?*

III. Two Roads

Incarnational ministry, patterned after Jesus means being able to be what we are not yet. This presents a challenge, because to be incarnational means two things: (1) being better than who we are now, and (2) stooping down to the level of others (1 Cor 9:20-22). If we fall under the first category, the reason why we don't do much is probably because we feel inadequate so we need to be equipped more. If we fall under the second, the reason why we are not able to do much is probably because we are not able to be humble. Either way, whether we rise above ourselves or humble ourselves, we definitely need to leave our comfort zones.

- *If you are to be incarnational in your life and ministry to the people God is calling you to minister to right now, what is it that you need to do: rise to a new level or stoop down?*
- *What is harder to do: rise up to a new level or stoop down to the level of others? Why?*

Application

If Jesus ministered to other people even when it brought Him discomfort, we too must be willing to be uncomfortable in order to be able to minister to others. What does God want you to do right now, at Taytay 2015? What are the things that are hindering you from being incarnational in your ministry?

Homework

In preparation for next week's meeting, read John 15:18-25.

Lesson 2

Followers of the Crucified Christ

Bible reading:
John 15:18-25

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to identify themselves as followers of the crucified Christ, and put to practice the implications of such a reality.

Introduction

The life of Christ on earth was filled with agony. John 1:10 says that even though He came to the world He created, the world did not recognize Him. From His birth to resurrection, He experienced rejection from: inn keepers (Luke 2:17), king Herod (Matt 2:16), religious leaders (Mark 11:27-12:17), town mates (Luke 4:14-30), and even some disciples (John 6:66). The Christ we follow was rejected by the world, even when He came with the best of intentions for us.

I. Inevitable Rejection

John 15:18-25 spells the fact that just as Christ was persecuted by the world, His disciples will experience the same. If the church is the body of Christ, then just as the head experienced suffering at the hands of the world, the body must expect the

same. John said, “Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13). Jesus too was hated without reason (John 15:25).

- *Have you ever tried to show kindness to someone and was accused of wrong doing instead? Tell your story.*
- *Is it possible to serve God and others without experiencing opposition and persecution?*

II. Embracing Our Crosses

Jesus Christ did not turn back from His commitment to us, although it cost Him everything (Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8). Christ embraced the cross for the sake of others and the world (Rom 5:8). Such is also the challenge for us. We endure pain and shame not because we are masochists, but because we are thinking of others. Just as Christ was crucified for the world, we are also called to take up the cross for the world (Matt 16:24-26). Just as the suffering of Christ leads to the salvation of humanity, our sacrificial suffering can lead others to Christ. Wholehearted acceptance of possible suffering is important (Luke 21:12-13).

- *Is suffering for the sake of others a good motivation enough to make Christians work for God?*
- *What are the concrete ways that we can suffer for the sake of our family members, friends, and neighbors?*

III. The Power of the Cross

Suffering for Christ is an integral part of our being witnesses. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Greek word used for “witnesses” is *martyres*, where we get the English word “martyr” today. So, literally, Jesus is saying: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my *martyrs* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- *What does it mean to be a martyr today?*
- *What is the “power of the cross” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:18?*
- *How can standing firm in our suffering become a witness to the world?*

Application

The fact is that we cannot serve God wholeheartedly so long as we are afraid of pain and rejection. So the question is this: what sufferings are we avoiding or are afraid of? The more we protect ourselves and our own self-interests, the more we will be crippled to work in the kingdom of God.

Homework

In preparation for next week’s lesson, read Acts 2:22-32.

Lesson 3

Followers of the Risen Lord

Bible reading:

Acts 2:22-32

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to identify themselves as followers of the risen and triumphant Lord, and put to practice the implications of such a reality.

Introduction

Jesus died, but He also rose from the dead. He was persecuted, but He was also triumphant. He was rejected, but was also received by many. He suffered pain, yet He was given incorruptible body. He experienced shame, yet He is now glorified. He died a lowly death in the cross, yet He is now exalted in the heavenly realms. Just as Christ was triumphant in the end, his followers are called to live victorious lives and ministries.

I. Pre-resurrection Disciples

When Jesus died, the disciples were absolutely devastated. They have invested three years of their lives following Jesus, so when He died, they felt as if they wasted their lives over nothing. From the moment Jesus was arrested, they were

scattered (Mark 14:50-52). The only disciple close by when Jesus died on the cross was John (John 19:16). Also, they were **afraid** so they went hiding (John 20:19). They were also **idle** (John 21:2-3). Finally, instead of fulfilling the mission Jesus gave them (see Matt 10:1) to be fishers of men (Matt 4:19), they thought that they should just go back to their old profession as fishermen (John 21:3).

- *Do you see yourself in any of the experiences of the disciples when Jesus died? How?*
- *Why do you think are majority of Christians acting as if Jesus is still in the tomb?*

II. Post-resurrection Disciples

The resurrection changed the lives of the disciples. They were no longer afraid of death. They found the true meaning of life. They became bold, aggressive, and full of joy. The finest illustration would be Peter. Peter denied Jesus to a lowly girl (Mark 14:66-72), but after the resurrection, he stood in the temple courts defying those who were responsible for Jesus' death (Acts 4:19-20). In Acts 2:22-32, Peter preached about the resurrection in the same city where Jesus died and to the same people who might have been the ones who demanded that Jesus Christ be crucified.

- *What are the evidences of resurrection-powered mission to the world?*

- *How can we live—daily—with the awareness that Christ is victorious over anything? And how can we live the reality of Christ’s resurrection in our lives?*

III. Power of the Resurrection

Paul said that if we share in the suffering of Christ, we too will share in his resurrection (Rom 6:5). Participation in Christ’s suffering is accompanied by sharing in “the power of his resurrection” (Phil 3:10). It is interesting that the Greek word used for “power” in the verse is the same word used in the promise of Jesus to the disciples in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power (*dunamin*) when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” *Dunamin* is where we get English words like dynamic, dynamite, and dynamo. The power of the resurrection is like an explosive dynamite that brings power to everyone.

- *What are the evidences that we have the power of the resurrection in our lives?*
- *How can we receive the power of the resurrection?*

Application

The church is not a tomb. Christians are not meant to lie and rot in a tomb. Just as Christ rose from the dead, Christians are called to rise from their death and slumber. The church is the body of the risen Christ, and we are Christians who have received the power of Christ’s resurrection. All we need to do is live out this reality.

Homework

In preparation for next week's lesson, read Matthew 25:1-13 and Acts 1:1-11.

Lesson 4

Waiters of the Coming King

Bible reading:

Matthew 25:1-13; Acts 1:1-11

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to identify themselves as Christians waiting for the coming of Christ, and live out the implications of such a reality.

Introduction

We are not only called to follow Jesus Christ; we are also called to wait for Him and expect His imminent return. To follow and to wait do not contradict one another. In fact, we are called to follow Him while waiting for Him. But what does it mean to follow Him while waiting for His return?

I. The Promise

In Acts 1:11, angels promised that Jesus would be coming back again. No one really knows when He will come back (Matt 24:36). He will come unexpectedly, like Noah's flood, when people are doing their daily businesses as usual (Matt 24:37-39). What is important is the fact that He will come back. He has not abandoned His people to battle in the world. He is coming back

to take the church, His chosen people (1 Pet 2:9), into His kingdom of peace, joy, and righteousness (Rom 14:17).

- *Why is the second coming important in our lives as Christians? So what if there is a second coming?*
- *Are there evidences in which our awareness of His second coming affect our Christian lives?*

II. The Command

Because we live in a world where the prince of darkness dwells (Eph 5:11; 6:12), we must be careful. We are also called to stand firm in our faith (1 Cor 1:8). But also, while waiting for Jesus' return, we must not be like the Thessalonian Christians who were doing nothing, staying at the roofs of their homes, looking up in the sky. We are commissioned to do His mission (John 20:21). We must do what He asked His disciples to do: make disciples by baptizing and teaching others (Matt 28:19-20). In fact, it is when the gospel is preached to all nations that Jesus will return (Mark 13:10; 24:14).

- *As Christians, what are evidences that we are standing firm in the faith while waiting for the coming of Christ?*
- *What is the difference between waiting passively and waiting actively for the coming of Christ?*

III. The Preparation

We are also called to be prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. The parable of the ten virgins indicate that we must be vigilant (Matt 25:1-13). Most Christians take the second coming for granted, as if they can do their last-minute preparations when Jesus is already here. The parable says that Jesus will come whether we are ready or not, and He would only take with Him those who have been preparing themselves for His unannounced return. We do not wait in complacency. We wait in eager expectation. We are not called to be mediocre in our faith, commitment, and work.

- *What are evidences that we are actively and consciously preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ?*
- *How can we be fully ready for Christ's return?*

Application

Christ is coming again. While we are waiting, we are called to proclaim the goodnews to the world. Are we accomplishing this command? When He comes, He will be both Judge and Savior. As Judge, He will punish; as Savior, He will save. Because we do not know the day and time of His return, we must be ready all the time. The question, therefore, is: are you ready to meet Him?

Monthly Attendance

Leader: _____

Month: _____

Members	Dates				
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
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9.					
10.					
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12.					
Visitors/Guests					
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