

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to be Followers of Christ

Philippians 2:12-18

¹ Samples are important. A group of experts went to a certain district in Australia to see if gold ore was present and could be mined. They examined the area. Then they wrote a report stating that the earth's strata in that area did contain gold. The report was published but no one seemed to care. Later a shepherd came to Melbourne carrying an actual gold nugget. Then the gold rush began. Hundreds of people left their homes to seek their fortunes. The sample of gold had done the trick! ¹

To become interested in spiritual things people need to see the genuine samples of the product. When you decide to become a Christian you become a follower of Christ. You can be a genuine sample when you conscientiously follow the Lord Jesus. But what does that mean? ²

Matthew, chapter 16, verse 24, says, if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

¹ "Samples Needed", Our Daily Bread.

Let's look at Philippians, chapter 2, verses 12 through 18, to tell us. ²

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. ^{2 3}

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life — in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. ^{3 4}

But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. ^{4 5}

This passage shows you some attitudes you can develop to genuinely follow the Lord. ⁶

² v12-13.

³ v14-16.

⁴ v17-18.

You need to be followers of the Lord . . . 7

I. In the Way You Obey God - v12-13

In the way you obey God. 8

Obedience is an evidence of your salvation. 9 God is the majestic Creator, the true master of the universe! He created you and everything you possess. 10 In the Lord Jesus, He redeemed you when He went to the cross. So you are His twice! 11

God is the one Who is worthy to be obeyed. Lord Jesus showed us an example by obeying the Father's will in everything. 12

God has always honored obedience. 13 In First Samuel, chapter 15, verse 22, it says, **Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.** 14 Lord Jesus said that entrance into heaven is based on obedience. 5 Noah was saved because he obeyed and built the Ark. 6 15 One of the Ten

⁵ Matthew 7:21 - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

⁶ Genesis 6.

Commandments promises a long life to those who are obedient. ⁷ ¹⁶ And James, chapter 1, verse 25 says that all their deeds will be blessed for those who obey. ⁸ ¹⁷

Notice verse 13 in our passage; God will work in you to accomplish His purposes. ¹⁸ The apostle clarifies this in Romans, chapter 8, verse 28, **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** God promises to provide guidance and the power of His Holy Spirit to live according to that direction! ¹⁹

Next, you need to be followers of the Lord . . .

II. In the Way You Shine as His Lights - v14-16

In the way you shine as His lights. ²⁰

How do you misrepresent the Lord? Verse 14 tells us it's that you complain and argue! Complaining and arguing lead to dissention and, eventually, to church fights. There's no worse witness to a neighborhood or a community than for a church to fight! They just think the church is a social club in

⁷ Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

⁸ James 1:25 - But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.

which they can't get along with one another. Who wants to belong to something like that! ²¹

How do you accurately represent the Lord? Verse 14 tells you how. You hold forth the word of life! The best way to hold out the word of life is to have that word demonstrated in your life. ²² Lord Jesus said, **In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.** ⁹ As the moon reflect the light of the sun, you reflect the light of the Lord when your life demonstrates what's in the Bible! ²³

So, how can people tell if you're living the life? Verse 15 tells US. ²⁴

It's by living blameless. ¹⁰ This word means to not be blamed for doing wrong. ²⁵

It's by living pure. ¹¹ This literally means "unmixed", not containing anything that would corrupt. So it means to be innocent of wrong doing. The New American Standard version translates this word "innocent". ²⁶

⁹ Matthew 5:16.

¹⁰ ἄμεμπτος.

¹¹ ἀκέραιοι.

It's when people see you "without fault" ¹² surrounded by a very corrupt culture. It means "without blemish". This term is the word used in the Old Testament for the only acceptable animal sacrifice; an animal without blemish! ²⁷ Your life lived for God becomes a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. ¹³ ²⁸

Finally, you need to be followers of the Lord . . .

III. In the Way You View Physical Death -

v17-18

In the way you view physical death. ²⁹

Notice verse 17, **But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith .**

. . . Death is like a Drink Offering! ³⁰ This was an Old Testament offering where three pints of strong wine was poured on the ground. ³¹

¹² ἄμωμος.

¹³ Romans 12:1-2 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The Jewish meaning of this offering was that the wine was a symbol of vigor and refreshment. Pouring it out was a sign of putting God before enjoyment in your life. ³²

A possible Christian meaning might have been this: red wine was used in the Passover Feast as a symbol of blood. ³³ Lord Jesus used this meaning at the Lord's Supper as His blood being poured out for you. Matthew, chapter 26, verses 27 and 28, **Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."** Paul was probably implying here that he would suffer a violent, bloody death. ³⁴

But, in verses 17 and 18, Paul saw death in the Lord as better than living in this life. ³⁵ He made that desire very clear in Philippians, chapter 1, verse 23, **I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far . . .** Physical death to him was a reward for a faithful life!

Your death can also be a beautiful testimony to an unbelieving world if your Christian life is genuine.

In the movie "Quo Vadis", the crowds in the Roman coliseum were visibly affected when the Christians faced the lions joyfully singing.

In the historical books "End of the Spear" and "Through Gates of Splendor", the true stories of missionaries being killed by the Auca Indians in Ecuador, have a fantastic conclusion. The whole tribe of Aucas eventually gave their lives to the Lord! ³⁶

Following Lord Jesus often means taking up the cross of obedience, proclamation of the word and a sacrificial life. The Christian life is to be a life of surrender to the will of God. But God has promised to give you the direction and the strength to do it! ³⁷

You want your Lord to say to you, "Well done, My good and faithful servant"! ¹⁴

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

¹⁴ Matthew 25:21-23 - His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'