

Characteristics That Define Our Transformation Part #3

Characteristics of True Radical Christianity - Characteristics That Define Our Actions

Faith & Deeds –

James speaks against those who confuse mere intellectual assent with True Faith.

James 2:17-18 - ¹⁷ In the same way, ***faith by itself***, if it is ***not*** accompanied by action, is dead.¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

We cannot earn our salvation by servinq and obeying God

- But such ***actions show*** that ***our commitment to God is real***.
- Deeds of loving service are not a substitute for, but rather ***a verification of***,
- ***Our faith In Christ!!!***

While it is true that our good deeds can never earn salvation

- True faith always results in a ***changed life and good deeds...***
- True Faith involves ***a commitment*** of your whole self to God...

In this series of messages we have been looking at ***the characteristics of TRUE Christianity***.

In the ***first message*** we looked at ***characteristics that define the transformation process in our lives***.

In the ***second message*** we looked at those ***characteristics that define who we are in Christ***.

We have been using ***Peter***, one of ***Christ's early followers*** and disciples ***as our example of true Christianity***.

Peter's life was transformed from a profane fisherman to a mature Christian, who had all of these defining characteristics operating in his life.

Peter was not perfect, yet we see him as ***one who was striving to walk*** in these Christ-like characteristics.

In this message today, I want to look at those characteristics that define our actions as Christians. These are marks of a TRUE Christian!!!

Characteristics That Define Our Actions

1. We Are Called To Serve

The classic example of **our call to serve** is the illustration Jesus used of Himself when He washed His disciples feet.

- ***We must be like Jesus and put on the servant's apron.***
- ***Do you understand what I have done for you???***

Jesus had just finished washing the feet of the disciples...

John 13:14-15 - Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

A nineteenth century painting shows a long row of beggars waiting in a soup line. They are all ragged and sleazy looking.

But around the head of one, barely noticeable, is a halo. ***One of them is Christ!***

You may see ***no halo around the heads*** of your brothers and sisters in need, ***yet to serve them is to serve Christ***, for ***the King is hidden in them***.

Matthew 25:35-40 - ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

God has given to each one of us gifts and talents that are to be used in our service to one another.

We are all called to serve the Lord and one another in various ways.

Peter was exhorted by Jesus to be a humble servant using his gifts to feed the sheep and the lambs.

Now Peter after fulfilling his calling in his own life exhorts us as fellow believers to do likewise.

1 Peter 4:10 - *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

What is the meaning of life?

Is it how long we live, how famous we become, or how rich we are at retirement?

Jesus says that the measure of life is in our service, the good we do for others.

George W. Truitt said, "It is not the talents one has that makes him great, however many and brilliant they may be; it is not the vast amount of study that gives mental enrichment to the mind and life; it is not in shining social qualities; it is not the large accumulation of wealth that secures peace and honor. In none of these measured by God's standards does greatness reside. ***The true greatness consists in the use of all the talents one has in unselfish ministry to others."

2. We Are Called To Sacrifice

We are called to live our lives in manner that shows that we are continually giving of ourselves and laying our lives down as a living sacrifice.

This is our reasonable service.

It is a very important characteristic that determines how much fruit we produce for Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1 - A Living Sacrifice

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, **to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

Sacrifice entails picking up our cross and following Jesus

- Wherever He chooses to take us.

It involves being at that place where He sees the need.

Matthew 16:25 - For **whoever wants to save their life will lose it**, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

- Peter's life was continually **a living example of this kind of sacrifice.**

There were **many places the Lord led him**, which were a **personal sacrifice** to him.

- After being **released from prison** by the angel, he had to **leave the comforts of his home** in Jerusalem **and go to areas he was not totally familiar with.**

3. We Are Called To A Walk

We are called to a walk that consists of many **areas that bring us into greater maturity as TRUE Christian believers.**

Ephesians 4:1 - As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to **live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**

2 Corinthians 5:7 – For we **live by Faith, Not by sight...**

Galatians 5:16 - So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and **you will not** gratify the desires of the flesh.

Ephesians 5:2 - And **walk in the way of love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 11:13 - All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, **admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.**

Again, if you look at the life of **Peter** you see that **he exemplified** all of these areas.

He was a man who **walked by faith in the Spirit**, walked in the light and definitely walked as a pilgrim on the earth.

You never see where he went back to live in Capernaum.

4. We Are Called To Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-13 - The Armor of God

¹⁰ ***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*** ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your *stand against the devil's schemes.*

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

As I close this message, let me leave you with this story about ***heavyweight boxing champion Joe Lewis.***

Joe Lewis was the heavyweight boxing champion of the world.

- *He fought 71 times professionally;* He lost only once.
- During the decade and a half he held his title, He defended it 25 times.

Bill Stern decided toward the end of the Brown Bomber's career that he would interview him and ***find out the technique or the secret that Lewis employed*** in fighting his opponents and *how he could win over people who were at times much larger than he.*

His answer was very simple:

"I study my opponent. I plan my fight very carefully."

The results are always the same!!!

- *I'm never surprised...*
- *I stay on the offensive...*

That's pretty good counsel for dealing with the devil!!!

- Satan wins many of his attacks and victories *because he surprises us.*
- We continually *live shocked.*

The believer has no reason to be shocked, intimidated or surprised by the attack of the enemy!!!

CLOSE:

In conclusion, we can see that there are **four major characteristics that define our actions as Christians:**

1. We are called to serve -

Jesus says that the measure of life is in our service, the good we do for others.

2. We are called to sacrifice -

We are called to live our lives in manner that shows that we are **continually giving of ourselves** and **laying our lives down as a living sacrifice**.

3. We are called to a walk -

We are called to a walk that consists of many **areas that bring us into greater maturity as TRUE Christian believers**.

4. We are called to spiritual warfare -

The believer has no reason to be shocked, intimidated or surprised by the attack of the enemy!!!

PRAISE TEAM

Characteristics That Define Our Actions

These are very important characteristics that **must be developed** in all of our lives as Christians.