

Characteristics of True Christianity #1

Jesus Teaches about fruit in People's lives (Characteristics of True Christianity #1)

Luke 6:44-45 - Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. **For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.**

The Good impressions we try to make cannot last if we are being deceptive!!!

I would like to begin a four-part series on Characteristics of True Christianity.

1. What does it mean to be a Christian?
2. What does a Christian look like?
3. How does a Christian act?
4. What is the purpose of a Christian?

We will come up with an accurate picture of ***what Jesus desires to see in us as true believers of Christ.***

As New Testament believers in Christ, ***we are to be like Him*** in all areas.

It is His ***characteristics*** that ***are to be portrayed in our lives.***

Philippians 2:5 - *In your relationships with one another, have the **same mindset as Christ Jesus:** (Be Imitators of Christ's Humility) – JOY in serving!!!*

Throughout this series we will be drawing from the life of Peter,

- One of Jesus' disciples, as an example of the **transformation a Christian goes through**
- How **Christ's characteristics are to be portrayed** in our lives as believers.

Peter was a man with many facets to his character.

- I think **most of us identify with Peter** in some way.
- He is a good illustration of **the characteristics of true Christianity.**
- We see in him ***a remarkable transformation*** that comes forth
- A result of **the grace of God** being released into his life.
- ***He gives all of us hope!!!***

Peter was naturally impulsive, tenderhearted, affectionate and gifted with spiritual insight; yet, ***sometimes slow to comprehend deeper truths.***

He was courageous in his confession of Christ, yet guilty of a most cowardly denial.

- He was self-sacrificing, yet inclined towards self-seeking.
- He was a man of contradictions, because of the same growth process we are all going through.
- ***Peter wasn't perfect***, yet we see him as one who strives to put on the characteristics of Christ.
- It was **Peter**, who was given the keys to the kingdom.

The fact that he was given the keys to the kingdom - ***Illustrates to us the very characteristics of the Christian life for us as fellow believers to draw from.***

Matthew 16:19 - I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." - (Kingdom doors are swung wide open for us who BELIEVE)

****Translated Into The Kingdom of the Son –

One of the most important aspects of our Christianity - Recognizing that ***there is a transformation*** - We are continually involved in ***As we grow and mature*** in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, ***are being transformed into his image*** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Our transformation begins when - We are ***translated from the kingdom of darkness, Into the kingdom of the Son.***

Colossians 1:13-14 - For he has ***rescued us from the dominion of darkness*** and brought us into ***the kingdom of the Son*** he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have ***redemption, the forgiveness of sins.***

The person we are today is a result of all of our past influences – good and bad.

- The kingdom of darkness ***is incapable of transforming*** our character.

The truth is; We come to Christ, He translates us from the kingdom of darkness, ***We begin a journey of transformation*** into a new person.

- ***All things become new*** with the ***old things passing away.***

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ**, the new creation has come: **The old has gone, the new is here!**

****Transformation Characteristics –**

1. The Transformation Begins With The New Birth

John 3:3 - Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, **no one** can see the kingdom of God unless **they are born again**.”

In order for the new **Christ like characteristics** to begin, **The seed must first be planted**.

This happens when **we recognize our need for a Savior!!!**

We find ourselves **incapable of changing by ourselves**

- We **recognize our sinful condition** - and **invite Jesus Christ to be the Lord of our lives**
- We **repent of our sins** - **God sends the Holy Spirit to begin** the **regeneration process**.
- The Divine **seed of God has entered our hearts** and lives - And now begins to **grow and produce kingdom fruit and characteristics**.

This happened to Peter and the other disciples **following Jesus' resurrection** from the dead.

Even though they had been walking with Jesus for 3 1/2 years...

- **They were not able to be born again** and Experience His transforming power in their lives **until after the resurrection**.

John 20:21-22 - Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”²² And with that he breathed on them and said, **“Receive the Holy Spirit**.”

Once they **entered into this new kingdom realm** -

- **With this inbreathing came the POWER to do God's will on earth!!!**
- **Characteristics of the kingdom** And **True Christianity began to emerge** in their lives.

For many of us, in our search for God, before we actually came to the place where we repented and asked Christ into our lives,

- *We were on a search for truth,*
- *But, nothing really settled in.*
- *The seed didn't have a chance to take root.*

Peter and the other disciples never really understood what Jesus was saying ***until they were born again.***

2. A Growth Begins to Take Place

1 Peter 2:1-3 - *Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

There are **three distinct things** mentioned in this passage that will **either enhance or hinder our growth** in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **We must lay aside all malice, guile and evil speaking.** These things prevent the seed from germinating and growing.
2. **We must humble ourselves with child-like faith.** This is what fertilizes the soil of our hearts and causes the seed to germinate and begin to grow wonderfully.

*****Peter constantly exhibited this child like faith. (walking on water.)*****
3. **We must desire the pure milk of the word** with a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Again, we find **Peter a great example** of one who had a hunger and thirst for God's word.

He always seemed to be **the one who was asking Jesus questions** and asking for further explanations of what He was teaching.

- **Peter exemplified this characteristic of true Christianity** by the change in his life from a reed to a rock.
- Peter was the one who was **full of strange contradictions** in his early walk with the Lord.

- At times he was **presumptuous, timid and even cowardly,**
- **But we see him transformed into a mighty man of God.**
- **In the end we find him as a rock standing firm in the faith.**
- He went from being **timid and cowardly**
- To being **courageous and immovable in the faith.**

Peter's wonderful example of true Christian growth and transformation - **was a result of his continuing hunger and thirst for the word of God.**

3. We Must Begin To Put On The New Man

Isaiah 61:10 *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

We must realize, **when we come to Christ, our thoughts, emotions and habits have been shaped by the world and an ungodly environment.**

- **There is a renewing of our minds that must begin to take place.**
- Again, **this takes place through the word of God.**

Romans 12:1-2 - A Living Sacrifice - 12 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. ²**Do not conform 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.

Therefore we are to **begin putting off all of our old ways** and **begin putting on the new ways or the new nature.**

Peter was transformed from a **profane fisherman** to **a man who walked in holiness** and righteousness exhibiting **the new man who was created according to Christ's image.**

4. We Are to Have A Radiant Life

Matthew 5:16 - *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Peter's life was so transformed and radiant that **by his very shadow people were healed.**

Acts 5:15 - As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

CLOSE:

Characteristics That Define Our Transformation

- I. Translated Into The Kingdom of the Son.
- II. Transformation Characteristics.
 1. The Transformation Begins With The New Birth.
 2. A Growth Begins to Take Place.
 3. We Must Begin To Put On The New Man.
 4. We Are To Have A Radiant Life.

Christ really desires these transformation characteristics **to be a part of our Christian experience.**

We have seen that transformation begins by being born again...

- As a result of **God's transforming grace** being released into our lives
- We enter into a **growth process** ***when we humble ourselves***
- And desire the **pure milk of the word.**

PRAISE TEAM:

We have also seen that our character begins to really change When - we begin to put on the new person, Who - was created after Jesus Christ.

As a result, we begin to **emanate the very life of Christ within us,** and we become radiant.