

"AS HE IS, SO ARE WE"

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." (I John 4:17)

Isn't this a strange statement, and a strong statement, "As he is, so are we in this world"? I John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Here the Bible says that we ought to walk as Christ Jesus walked. If you abide in Christ, you are wrapped up in Him, are living for Him, then you ought to live as He lived. You say that is impossible. Christ is perfect, but a Christian ought to try to be perfect. You say that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, blameless, and powerful in a way that you are not. That is true, but the Bible still teaches that He is our pattern and we ought to walk as He walked.

When a teacher puts a copy on the blackboard, children are supposed to try to write it just like the teacher wrote it. In former days there was a copybook with copy in script and the student was instructed to try to make his handwriting as nearly as possible like that in the book. Of course, he didn't and usually the more lines that he wrote the more unlike the copy his writing became. Nevertheless, one learns writing by copying after others.

So a Christian, though not like Jesus Christ, ought to want to be. Christ should be our pattern in everything. A Christian ought to study and meditate on the Word of God in order to learn what Christ is like and how to be like Him. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." We are to be like Jesus and to walk like Him.

A Christian is to be a living likeness of Christ. "As he is, so are we." John, the beloved apostle, tells that there is to be a correspondence between the Master and the disciples, between Christ and Christians. We are to reproduce in our lives the spirit and characteristics that marked His earthly life. This is a challenging demand and it drives to the painful but fruitful work of self-examination. "As he is, so are we"—is this true? There are several ways that we should be like Jesus Christ:—

I. Be Born Of God.

Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost when He was begotten of God physically. Human beings need to be begotten of God spiritually. They need to be made new or regenerated by the Spirit of God. No one can act like a child of God until he is born into the family. When one is born into the family of God he needs to take his Saviour, Jesus Christ, as his pattern and learn to be like Him. That is the will of God for our lives. It is a high standard, and we ought to be glad that it is. What would we want with a pattern that is no better than some other good man? Thank God for the perfect pattern we have in Christ! When you were born of God and became His child, you were destined eventually to made like Jesus Christ. For that reason, you ought to set out to grow like Him, to walk like Him, and to live like Him.

II. Be Subject To Authority.

We are to be subject to the authority of God and of others. Many children do not want to obey their fathers, but Jesus Christ obeyed His Heavenly Father. There is only one picture of our Lord in His boyhood, and that is the story in the second chapter of Luke. When the Lord Jesus was twelve years old He went with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem. There in the temple He asked questions of

the doctors of the law. When Joseph and Mary missed Him and found Him after two or three days, and inquired as to why He had done what He did, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Then He went home with them and was subject to them. He obeyed both His mother and Joseph, His foster father. As the Lord Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph, so Christian children and young people ought to be to their parents. Likewise, citizens should be subject to the authority of the government, and employees subject to the authority of their employers. Christ Jesus was subject to the authority and we are to be like Him.

As Christ is subject to the Father and does the Father's will in everything, we ought to obey those whom God has put over us. This is one of the lessons our Lord taught us. Some of the critics of the Saviour tried to get Him to rebel against the government over the subject of taxes. They asked, "Should we obey Caesar or not?" He replied, "Show me a coin. Whose image and superscription is on it?" They answered, "It's Caesar's image on the coin and superscription." He said, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The Lord Jesus was subject to authority, and so ought we to be.

III. Be Humble.

Christ Jesus maintained the attitude of humility. Repeatedly He humbled himself. When it became apparent that neither of the disciples would condescend to wash the feet of the rest, instantly and quietly Christ arose from the table, picked up a towel and tied it around His waist, poured water into an empty basin, washed the feet of His disciples, and dried them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Surely those disciples could not have been rebuked more severely than by seeing the Lord do what they thought themselves above doing. While they were aspiring to a throne, He was willing to take a towel and perform the lowliest service that one could render for another.

God's Word teaches that we should have the humility that Christ had. In Philippians 2:5-7 we read: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." We should have the same attitude of heart and mind that the Lord Jesus had.

IV. Be At Peace.

One of the greatest characteristics of Christ was His peace. Prophets spoke of Him as "the Prince of Peace." On the night of His birth angels sang "Peace on earth." His purpose in visiting earth was to preach peace to them that were afar off and to them that were nigh. The message that His messengers were charged to proclaim was, above everything else, the gospel of peace. Christ not only came to give peace, but He possessed it. In fact, no one can give what he does not possess. Because Christ possessed peace He was able to give it. To His disciples Christ said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

What kind of peace was it that Christ possessed? For an answer to this question you would do well to turn to the account of the great storm that overtook Him and His disciples on the Sea of Galilee. "And leaving the multitudes they take Him with them, even as He was, in the boat. And there ariseth a great storm of wind and the waves beat into the boat insomuch that the boat was now filling

and He himself was astern, asleep upon the pillow." Could you have a more perfect picture of peace? The winds were roaring, the sea was raging, the boat was filling, and the Lord Jesus was sleeping. That illustrates precisely the nature of Christ's peace. It was a deep peace in the midst of a storm. It was a deep peace that nothing could disturb.

What are the things in life which are most calculated to destroy peace? One thing is poverty. Was Christ a poor man? Yes, as poor as a man could be. He did not have any money to pay His taxes. He did not have a place in which to lay His head, but His poverty did not disturb His peace in the least. Another thing that tends to disturb and destroy peace is the opposition and hatred of men. Did Christ experience that? Yes, He did. He was despised and rejected of men. He came to His own and His own received Him not. And yet it was on the eve of that bitter day when the rejection and hatred of men were to find their expression on the cross but the Lord Jesus talked about His peace. Neither poverty nor trouble could disturb the serenity of His soul.

"As he is, so are we." Is that true? Is it true in this matter of peace? Peace is a mark of the Christian. Does it mark us? Does the peace of God which passeth all understanding garrison our hearts in Christ Jesus? Are we possessed of our Lord's central calm? Whatever our circumstances of life may be are we able to rest in the Lord? Do men wonder at our peace? Do they stand amazed at our calm? In all too many cases it is not true that "As he is, so are we."

V. Be Joyful.

It is not often that we associate joy with our Lord, and yet one of His distinguishing characteristics was His deep and constant joyfulness. In the chapter following the one in which Christ bequeathed to His disciples "His peace," Christ also gave them His joy. He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my peace might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). That was as if He had said their joy could neither be real or full until His joy had been imparted to them. It is a misrepresentation of the Lord Jesus to associate Him with only the ideas of pain, misery, and sorrow. Our Lord, Who sang a hymn of exultation and triumph before He went out into the Mount of Olives, was truly a Man of Joy, and the height of blessedness for you and me is that we may enter into the joy of our Lord. They call to rejoice peals like a great bell from one end of the apostolic literature to the other. Listen to these sentences from the writings of Paul: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice; "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord;" "Rejoice," in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." The Christian is supposed to be a in possession of the secret of perpetual joy. "Rejoice evermore."

VVI. Be Loving.

Several times in the Bible we are taught to love like Christ. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor" (Ephesians 5:1-2). We are to walk in love as Christ also loved us. We ought to love one another because Christ loved us and we want to be like Him. We should love those whom Christ loves. Our Lord said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). If we are to be like Jesus Christ, we must love as He loved.

VII. Be Forgiving.

A Christian should forgive as he is forgiven. We should forgive like Christ forgives. On the cross He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In Ephesians 4:32 we are commanded, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." As we are forgiven, we should forgive.

In the Model Prayer we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We are to forgive and to ask forgiveness. We are to be like Christ in that we forgive others. You may think that some do not deserve forgiveness. But forgiveness, is on a grace basis, and not on a merit basis. We do not deserve forgiveness or mercy or salvation, but God in lovingkindness sent His Son, and when He arrived on earth He had pity upon us and paid the penalty for our sins. Therefore, we ought to be glad to forgive others because Christ has forgiven us.

If we are to have proper fellowship with the Lord, we need daily cleansing from our sins. When Christ washed the feet of His disciples, He said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet" (John 13:13-14). The footwashing here is a reminder and a symbol of the cleansing of the Christian who walks in a dirty world. Just as one who walks in a dusty world gets his feet dirty, so God's children walk in a dirty world and daily need cleansing and forgiving. If Christ daily forgives and cleanses us, we ought to forgive others. If one does wrong, we should try to help them to get right with God. When people fall into sin, we should pray for them, help them, and try to get them to do right.

VIII. Be Subject To Persecution.

In John 15:20 Christ said, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." A servant need not expect to be better than his Lord. We ought to set out to be like Christ, and that will mean we will be subjected to persecution, as certainly as we attempt it. If there are those in the world who hate you, remember that Christ said the world hated Him before it hated you. A Christian ought to learn that he is not to live for himself, but that he is to seek first the kingdom of God. As he follows Christ, it is encouraging to recall that He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." He also said, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

IX. Be Faithful Witnesses.

Like Christ, we have been sent to do the work which He assigns us to. To His disciples Christ said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Since he has sent us, we need the anointing of the Holy Spirit, if we are to do faithful witnessing for Christ. Christ was crucified when He was approximately thirty-three years of age. Many of us have had this opportunity to live longer than that, and to walk and talk and teach and preach and write and sing for Christ. We can have the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit if we want it, and thereby be enabled to introduce lost souls to the Saviour.