

“The Ultimate Example”

2 Peter 1: 1 – 8

When we think about some of the old hymns that have been around for years and years such as “I Would Be Like Jesus” and “Till I Become Like Thee” and when we would sing them, do we really think about the words we are singing? Are we sure we understand what they mean in our life? Another hymn that comes to mind, “Lord, I Want to be Like Jesus, in My Heart.” What does it mean to be like Jesus? How do we know if we are like him? What determines whether we are Christ-like? I believe there are many things that we could consider, but for here and now I would like to draw attention to three tests that will help determine how much like Christ we are as He has left us numerous examples for us to follow.

There is the example of humility as Jesus washed his disciple’s feet and then he said to them in (John 13: 15), “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” An example or pattern of service to others that in reality is service to God. There should be a willingness to reach out and help those in need as we serve in whatever way possible. As followers of Christ, we are expected to follow his example.

Jesus left an example of suffering, but for most of us this is an example that we would prefer to by-pass. Certainly, there are varied kinds of suffering and when we think of Jesus we think of his suffering on the cross. However, there are issues of suffering that may come to all of us as we are ridiculed for our faith in Jesus as our Savior and Lord. People who we thought were our friends may shun us and losing friends can be a form of suffering. So, how do we deal with suffering? Do we become bitter and feel as though Jesus has forsaken us or do we understand that suffering is part of our call to follow Jesus as he tells us to take up our cross whatever that may be and follow him. We can’t separate suffering from discipleship as we obediently follow him. For whatever it involves, we are told in (Romans 12: 1), “to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

Jesus also left us an example in daily living as he went about his work here on earth. The Apostle Paul also gave young Timothy this admonition in (1 Timothy 4: 12), “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in

faith and in purity." The Apostle Paul had also said on another occasion, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." If we live a life of obedience and follow the example of Christ, others will see Christ Jesus in our lives. The words of the chorus of the hymn, "I Would Be Like Jesus" seem to bring these thoughts to a conclusion; "Be like Jesus this my song, in the home and in the throng; be like Jesus, all day long! I would be like Jesus."

If we really desire to be like Jesus, these three tests will be helpful as we examine our lives and see the truth of the words in (Matthew 20: 28), "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Let us follow Jesus example in humility as he served others, in his willingness to suffer and in his life of obedience to the will of his heavenly Father. Are we willing to pay the price, give up self to become like Jesus? If we are indeed his disciples, that is what is expected of us? So, let's follow the Ultimate Example!

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