**More Like the Master**

Jesus Christ: The Model of All Models

Lesson 26

*“For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained*

*to be conformed to the image of his Son…” (Romans 8:29)*

**The World Needs A Role Model**

It is in our human nature to want to copy others and pattern our lives after something we see or someone we watch. Little children, for example, watch their parents and do what they do, good or bad. For this reason, Jesus said that *“the lamp of the body is the eye”* and it is important that one be careful what he lets in through the eye (Matthew 6:22-23). The eye causes one to be molded and made by what he sees. But, we have a choice regarding the role models we look at. We can let Jesus be our role model and be pleasing to God, or we can follow someone else and be less than pleasing to God.

We can follow self to our own destruction (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). We can let the Devil be our role model and follow his example like some of the Jews did (John 8:44). We can even let worldly people be our role model and engage in ungodly things (1 John 2:15-17). Unfortunately, many people today who are held up as role models in our society are popular, but ungodly people (athletes, musicians, movie stars, political leaders, business tycoons, etc.)

If we are going to pick a role model who will help us go to heaven, we need to pick Jesus. We need to behold *“the glory of the Lord”* and allow ourselves to be transformed into his image (2 Corinthians 3:18). When we look at Jesus we behold his glorious humility, his glorious love, his glorious teaching, and his glorious sacrifice. When people see us, they need to see Christ in us because after all, we are Christians (belonging to Christ and following him). We need to magnify Christ in our body like Paul did (Philippians 1:20). We need to *“behold him”* (Hebrews 2:9) and we need to keep *“looking unto Jesus”* (Hebrews 12:2). We need to look to Jesus in loving adoration, in blessed trust, in obedient faith, and with a strong desire to be like him. We need to sing, “Oh to be like thee…” and we need to mean it.

**Jesus Christ: The Model of All Models**

Jesus knew how to live. Jesus is the preeminent role model of all models because he knew how to truly live his life. First, Jesus knew how to live a life of noble purpose. He lived with the sole purpose of serving God and saving mankind (Matthew 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 10:10; 18:37). He lived in constant fellowship and communion with God (Matthew 6:9-15; 10:2-4; 14:19, 23; 26:36-44). Second, Jesus knew how to live a busy, useful, and meaningful life. He was constrained to live by constantly doing his Father’s will and work (John 5:17; 8:29; 9:4; 17:4). Third, Jesus knew how to live a selfless life. He lived looking out for the best interest of others. He selflessly gave up things so that others could have what they needed to go to heaven (2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-8). Finally, Jesus knew how to live *“in the world”* but *“not of the world”* (John 17:11, 14, 16). He lived in the world to save sinful man without partaking of the sinfulness around him. He was “in the world” with reference to his full human nature, his daily association with men and women, and his earthly temptations. However, he was “not of the world” with reference to his holiness, his teaching, his opposition to sin, and his kingdom. He balanced a close association with the world and a complete separation from worldliness at the same time.

Jesus knew how to die. Jesus is the preeminent role model of all models because he knew how to properly face death. He knew how to die. First, Jesus did not avoid the thought of death. He talked about his approaching death with anticipation. He was not morbid or depressing about the subject of death, but he was realistic (Matthew 20:18-19). Second, Jesus died knowing that he would be victorious over death. He knew that he would die and rise again (Matthew 20:18-19). Third, Jesus thought of others even in the hour of death. He thought of his mother *(“Behold, thy mother…”,* John 19:25-27), the sinful crowd *(“Father, forgive them…”,* Luke 23:34), the thief on the cross *(“Today you will be with me in Paradise,”* Luke 23:43), and his heavenly Father (*“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit…”,* Luke 23:46). Fourth, Jesus died without hatred and resentment in his heart. He was despised and rejected throughout his life. Yet, he lived with a forgiving spirit (Matthew 5:44; 6:14-15) and he died with a forgiving spirit (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:21-24). Finally, Jesus died in a right relationship with his Father and wanting to do his Father’s will. Jesus did not try to prevent his death like Peter tried to do twice (Matthew 16:21-23; 26:51-56). He simply wanted to do his Father’s will which included dying (Matthew 26:36-46). Jesus’ final words on the cross were: *“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit…”* (Luke 23:36). These words are taken from Psalm 31:5. Jesus died with scripture on his lips.

**The Christian: Living and Dying Like Jesus**

We need to live like Jesus lived. Christians need to live with the noble purpose of serving God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). Christians need to live a busy life of zealous service and good works (Romans 12:11; Titus 2:14). Christians need to live a selfless life looking out for the best interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4). Finally, Christians need to live in the world but not of the world at the same time (Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1).

We need to face death like Jesus faced death. Christians need not avoid the subject of death. They know that *“it is appointed unto men once to die”* (Hebrews 9:27) and they are willing to face that day realistically. Like Jesus and Paul, faithful Christians are ready to die; they are prepared for it (Acts 20:22-24; 21:13; 25:11; 2 Corinthians 5:1-6; Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; 4:6-8). Faithful Christians die knowing that they will be victorious over death in the resurrection of the righteous (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58). Faithful Christians die while thinking of others. Like Peter, faithful Christians know that one day their bodily tabernacle will be put off in death and they are willing to openly talk about it in order to encourage others to carry on (2 Peter 1:13-15). Faithful Christians die without resentment or hatred toward life’s problems. Like Stephen (Acts 7:59-60) and Paul (2 Timothy 4:6-8), faithful Christians die while focusing on the good that God has for them in the next life. Finally, faithful Christians live to their dying day in service to the Lord. They *“fall asleep in Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14), they are *“faithful unto death”* (Revelation 2:10), and they *“die in the Lord”* (Revelation 14:13). They die in comfort while waiting for Jesus to come (1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11)

**More Like the Master Means Christ-likeness**

God’s plan is Christ-likeness. Being like Christ (Christ-likeness) in all areas of our life is God’s plan for sinful mankind. God sent his Son into the world so that sinful man could: 1) be saved from sin, and 2) have an example to conform to. God’s plan from the beginning has always been that mankind be *“conformed to the image of his Son”* (Romans 8:29).

God’s precept is Christ-likeness. Being like Christ (Christ-likeness) comes from following God’s precepts laid down in the words of the New Testament. Jesus is our example (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:20-21). When we behold *“the glory of the Lord”* on the pages of the New Testament, we ourselves will be *“transformed from glory to glory”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

God’s portrait is Christ-likeness. Being like Christ (Christ-likeness) is found in being like his moral character. We are not like Christ in his physical characteristics (he looked like an ordinary man). We are not like Christ in his cultural characteristics (he wore scandals and robes and spoke Aramaic like a 1st Century Palestinian Jew). We are not like Christ in his personal characteristics (he was a carpenter, he was single, and he was poor). We are not like Christ in his divine characteristics (he was God in the flesh). We are, however, like Christ in his inward, moral characteristics. We have the following moral characteristics that Christ had: selfless (Romans 15:1-3), receptive (Romans 15:7), meek and gentle (2 Corinthians 10:1), forgiving (Ephesians 5:1-2; Colossians 3:13), loving (Ephesians 5:25), humble (Philippians 2:5), non-combative (1 Peter 2:21-23), patient (1 Peter 3:17-18), obedient (1 John 2:6), etc. These moral characteristics can be found in any person of any age and in any culture or generation.

God’s provision is Christ-likeness. Being like Christ (Christ-likeness) will take some help. In addition to providing divine precepts and a portrait to look at, God also provides other kinds of help to Christians who desire to be like Jesus. God provides providential care (1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 13:5-6), his word (1 Thessalonians 2:13), prayer (Hebrews 2:18; 4:16), and the encouragement of other faithful Christians (Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14). Let us take all that God provides us and go out and be “More Like the Master”.

**Questions**

1. What choices do we have today in our society regarding role models?

2. What do these passages teach about Jesus as a role model: Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Hebrews 12:1-2?

3. How did Jesus live that makes him the preeminent role model for us today?

4. How did Jesus face death that makes him the preeminent role model for us today?

5. What is God’s plan for mankind regarding the “image” (life and example) of Jesus Christ?

6. What help does God provide to everyone who desires to follow Jesus as a role model?