

LESSON THREE

FROM THE PRINTED PAGE TO THE LIVING HEART

There were two men standing on the street corner talking when another man began approaching them. As he drew near, one of the gentlemen looking up recognized him and said, "Here comes Jesus Christ walking on the feet of James Russell."

The dominant thought presented throughout this recording is the truth that you can and must reflect the image of Christ in your own life.

I once read of a refugee from the Iron Curtain who had drawn, in a very unusual way, a picture of what he imagined Christ to be like. On a canvas three feet by four feet he had copied by hand the complete twenty-one chapters of the gospel of John in minute English letters. He had arranged the words in such a way that they drew a full length figure of a picture of Christ. He had inked some of the words more heavily than the others, to bring out the details in the picture. This refugee had done in a figurative way what we must do in a very real way as a Christian. He took the words of the Bible and drew on canvas a picture of Christ. We must take His word from the printed page to the living heart and make it "flesh". We must do it - live it. We must let it "run in our blood till Christ be formed," It should be the desire of every disciple of Christ to be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" [Gal. 2:20]. This is a Christian - A PERSON IN WHOM CHRIST LIVES AGAIN!

A DIVINE PLAN

The life of a Christian, his daily effort, is to illustrate the life and characteristics of Christ. He is to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." [Titus 2:10] And there is a divine plan for doing this. It is the Bible. The basic imperative for becoming like Christ is a daily consistent study of the Bible. The only way to know the living Word is through the written Word. The apostle Peter tells us, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." [2 Peter 3:18] And then he tells us how. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." [1 Peter 2:2] The apostle Paul recorded "Only let your life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." [Phil. 1:27]

And so, from the printed page of the living heart we must take his word and make it flesh. We must become the LIVING WORDS OF JESUS.

LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE

I remember in grammar school we had writing exercises in which the teacher would write the letters of the alphabet on the blackboard and then each pupil would come and write under the letters she had written - copying them as closely as possible. Thus, we learned to write by following her example. It is in this same way that we learn to become like Christ. Paul wrote, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS." The disciple, or pupil, of Christ is "writing under" the example left by the Author and Finisher of our faith.

At this point you may be asking, "But is it possible? Can we really live as he lived?" If you mean by that, can we live in the same circumstances as he lived in, the answer is "NO." But, if you mean can we live by the same principles as he lived and can we pattern our be-

havior after his behavior, the answer is "YES!" Listen carefully to these words from the Bible. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" [Rom. 13:14]. Again, "As ye have therefore received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in him" [1 Cor. 1:30]. And, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked." The question then is not can we, but how can we?

LETTING THE MIND OF THE MASTER BECOME THE MASTER OF YOUR MIND

There are two parts to answering this question of how. First, as Henry Drummond said in his lecture, "The Changed Life," it is the law of influence that we become like those whom we habitually admire." This suggests that the reflection of Christ in our life will be in direct proportion to our love and admiration for him. The more we love and admire him the more we will assume his interest and his desires.

The second part of the answer is found in Phil. 2:5 where Paul says, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." It is right here that many disciples of Christ have the most difficulty. How can we possibly have the same mind as Christ had? we should understand that Paul was not speaking of the mental power of Jesus, but of the ATTITUDE of Christ. In other words, we are to let the "Mind of the Master become the master of our minds."

HOW WE CAN DO THIS

Listen carefully to what I am going to say in the remaining minutes of this recording. It could mean the difference between success and failure in reflecting the image of Christ in your own life.

The INITIAL STEP is to determine, beginning today, to read the gospel of John through ten times within the next six weeks. [There is a plan in the back of the script accompanying this record for doing this. This can take the place of your daily Bible reading for the next six weeks if you so choose. Or, it can be worked in at another time during the day.]

As you begin your reading, observe the ATTITUDE exhibited by Christ. Ask yourself these questions;

1. What was Christ's attitude toward his Father and his Father's will?
2. What was his attitude toward his enemies? Sin? The sinner?
3. What was his attitude toward discipleship? Faithfulness? Unfaithfulness?
4. What was his attitude toward prayer? Forgiveness? Worship?

After the sixth time through the book of John write down each of the above questions and answer to them. Then using the same questions ask what YOUR attitudes are and write down the answers. NEXT - compare your attitudes with those of Christ. This will give you some idea of how close, or how far, you are from letting the mind of the Master become the master of your mind.

CLOSING THE GAP

Upon comparing your attitudes with Christ's, there may seem to be an impossible gulf fixed between what you are now and what you want to become. But do not despair. Do not forget that God is helping you to close the gap. Pray, Pray earnestly every day for strength and courage to live as he lived; to have the same attitudes and desires that he had. And they will come, for he has promised. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. [Matthew 5:6] So continue to pray and continue to read the book of John. Read the

rest of the four gospels through at least three times your first year as His disciple.

As you do this you will gain a clearer picture of your Lord. He will become a LIVING SAVIOUR and a LOVING MASTER. Soon you will find that he is becoming the principle for your conduct - that you are drawing closer to him each day in thought and deed. Remember that his word teaches us that if we draw nigh to him, he will draw nigh to us. And thus the gap will be closed.

Perhaps you are saying. "Is that all? Just read and re-read the four gospels and compare my attitudes with his and pray? Is that all?" NO. These are but the "first principles" in becoming Christ-like. Christ said, "Come learn of Me," and you are taking the first of many step in learning his way of life in order to live as he lives.

The saying that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, is true. Do not fail to take it. It is essential to the journey.

OH, TO BE LIKE THEE

There is an old story that has been handed down through the ages which says that there stands at heaven's gate an angel who admits no one who has not the same features as our Lord. There came one day a man with a crown on his head. The angel said, "Thou art a king, and your crown is very beautiful, but crowns are not the medium of access here." Later there came another dressed in robes of state and great learning. The angel said, "Yes, it is good. But you see, wealth and wisdom are not the marks that shall admit you through these gates." Then there appeared one who was fair and beautiful. The angel looked at her and said, "You are very beautiful, and that pleases men on earth, but earthly beauty is not wanted here." Another comes who is known throughout the world, who is heralded by fame. The angel says to him. "Yes, it is well that man has bestowed upon you great honors, but fame and the glory of men have no part within these gates." Finally there come one more to the gate. When the angel seen him, he steps up close to hin and looks into his face and smiles. "Thou art like the one who lives here," says the angel. "Thou hast put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is waiting for you in the throne room of God."

"Oh, to be like Thee, Oh, too be like Thee,
Precious Redeemer, Pure as Thou art!
Come in thy sweetness, come in thy fullness
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart."

"BE THOU FAITHFUL'

ACTION PAGE
FOR
FROM THE PRINTED PAGE OF THE LIVING HEART

1. First Step: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

A. You are now ready to begin following the Master each day for the next six weeks through the gospel of John.

1. It is suggested that you read five chapters per day. This will take you through the book ten times in six weeks.

2. If you are an average reader, you can possibly read the gospel through [21 chapters] in only one hour. If you choose this method, then read for one hour once each day until you have completed the ten times through.

B. Remember, as you read, keep in mind the questions about the attitudes of Christ as listed in the narration guide.

2. Second Step: "Only let your life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

A. After the sixth time through the book of John, begin to write down the attitudes manifested by Christ and compare them with yours.

B. You may want to refer to the other gospels for additional insight.

C. Remember our goal is to: "GROW UP INTO HIM IN ALL THINGS." [Eph. 4:15]