

Live Like Christ Pt. 3

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, September 15, 2019

Main Theme – The third installment of a multi-part series on the traits of Christ we are to mimic.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Special Events**
 - Spirit-Emphasis Week – September 15, 19–22 (See Bulletin Insert)

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

- Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work
- Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH**
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INTRODUCTION

As always it is wonderful to see you. I do look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you today. Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes (**SLIDE**).

SETTING THE STAGE

FYI – We are in the midst of a multi-part series on the character of Jesus Christ. This series has spotlighted those **PERFECTIONS** of His nature that **(a)** make Him worthy of our **WORSHIP** and **(b)** are worthy of **IMITATION** in the life of His followers. Remember...

Romans 8:29a (NIV, emphasis mine)

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed** to the image of his Son . . .

NOTE 1 – We have studied the **HUMILITY** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' willingness to lay aside His personal desires in preference to the Lord and others (i.e., His selflessness and sacrificial service) (cf. Phil. 2:3–8; John 13). **Q. To what degree do we exemplify such humility in kind?**

NOTE 2 – We have studied the **COMPASSION** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' sympathetic pity for the suffering of others (i.e., His being so moved by the plight of others that He took action) (Matt. 9:35–36; Luke 7:11–15). **Q. To what degree do we exemplify such compassion in kind?**

NOTE 3 – We have studied the **ACCEPTANCE** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' willingness to show concern for every soul He encountered (i.e., the tax collector, prostitute, leper, afflicted, demon-possessed, etc.) (cf. Lk 7:36–47) **Q. To what degree do we exemplify such acceptance in kind?**

NOTE 4 – We have studied the **LONGSUFFERING** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' patience in working to cultivate/develop His followers unto spiritual maturity (e.g., Simon Peter). Such is a wondrous manifestation of His love. **Q. To what degree do we exemplify such longsuffering in kind?**

NOTE 5 – We have studied the **FORGIVING NATURE** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' willingness to pardon and absolve. i.e., To release bitterness, wrath and the need for retribution (leaving vengeance to the Lord alone). **Q. To what degree do we exemplify a spirit of forgiveness?**

NOTE 5 – We have studied the **SELF-CONTROL** of Christ. We assessed Jesus' discipline in rejecting the lure of temptation and sin. He resisted the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—preferring obedience to God. **Q. To what degree do we exemplify self-control in kind?**

POWER PT. 1

This morning we are going to study ONE facet of the nature of Christ (in light of the special EMPHASIS we will be hosting this week). Namely, I want to consider the POWER of Christ. It is beyond all contestation that the life and ministry of Christ were characterized by MIRACULOUS power.

NOTE – The most casual reading of the Gospels REVEALS the following:

1) Christ Demonstrated Power in Proclaiming the Message of God

(i.e., The audiences of Jesus Christ marveled at His power to teach God's Word)

Matthew 7:28

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Mark 1:22

22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

2) Christ Demonstrated Power Over the Natural World

(e.g., Feeding of the 5k; Feeding of the 4k; Walking on Water, etc.)

Mark 4:35–41

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

3) Christ Demonstrated Power Over Physical Disease

(e.g., Healing of the Ten Lepers; Woman w/ the Issue of Blood, etc.)

Luke 5:12–13

12 While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

13 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.

4) Christ Demonstrated Power Over the Demonic Realm

(e.g., Casting Out a Legion of Demons into a Herd of Pigs cf. Mark 5)

Luke 4:40–41

40 At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

5) Christ Demonstrated Power Over Death Itself

(e.g., the Raising of Jairus’s Daughter; the Raising of Lazarus; the Widow’s Son)

Luke 7:11–15

11 Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

POWER PT. 2

KEY – Clearly, the ministry of Christ was characterized by POWER.

Q. Yet can the same be said of us?

Q. To what degree do we exemplify such spiritual power in kind?

Q. To what degree is such “authority” evident in our lives and ministry?

Q. To what degree can we claim conformity to Christ apart from His power?

These are PENETRATING—and perhaps even FOREIGN—questions to honestly engage!

KEY – Of course, it would be EASY to say, “Such miraculous power was relegated to a past age and is NOT meant to be replicated in and through the Church of all generations!” A large portion of Christendom makes such a claim (i.e., app. 50%).

Q. Yet is this biblical? NO. The Bible offers no support for this claim. Rather it states the following:

John 14:12

12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Mark 16:15–18

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

SO...

Q. Why don’t we see manifestations of such POWER in and through His Church?

Q. What is hindering the expression of God’s POWER in and through His people?

ANSWER #1

KEY – I posit that part of the answer is FAITHLESSNESS. I believe that we see so LITTLE of God’s power in operation due to a LACK of faith in His Church. A study of the Gospels reveals the connections between faith and the release of His power. Consider the following:

Mark 5:25–34 (Emphasis Mine)

25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” 31 “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ” 32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, “Daughter, your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Q. What led to this display of miraculous power? FAITH

NOTE – Contrast this account with another—recorded in Mark 6

Mark 6:1–6 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” 5 He could **not** do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their **lack of faith**.

Q. What hindered the display of God’s miraculous power? FAITHLESSNESS

Q. Could our lack of faith be hindering the supernatural release of God’s power?

NOTE – Many Christians do NOT believe in the operation of God’s power because they do NOT see it. Perhaps they are NOT seeing it because they do NOT believe what the Word clearly reveals!

ANSWER #2

KEY – I posit that part of the answer is SPIRITUAL APATHY. I believe that we see so LITTLE of God’s power in operation due to a LACK of serious seeking. Let’s be honest for a moment: The Church of North America is simply NOT given to the disciplines of prayer and fasting (e.g., attendance at a church BBQ v. a church prayer meeting).

NOTE – The same could NOT be said of the Early Church! They were SERIOUS SEEKERS:

Acts 1:12–14 (Emphasis Mine) [Post-Ascension]

12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together **constantly in prayer**, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 2:1–4

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Q. What do you think they were doing? They were seeking the fulfillment of Christ’s promise!

NOTE – This PATTERN continues throughout the Book of Acts. Consider:

Acts 4:23–31 (Emphasis Mine) [Following the Threats of the Religious Elite]

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“‘Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
26 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.’

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

31 **After they prayed**, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Q. Could our apathy be hindering the supernatural release of God’s power?

NOTE – If we want to experience their results, we should mimic their spiritual disciplines!

ANSWER #3

KEY – I posit that part of the answer is **WRONG MOTIVATIONS**. I believe that we see so **LITTLE** of God’s power in operation due to a **LACK** of biblical intentions. **Q.** Even if we take the time to ask for a release of God’s power, do we do so for the right reasons?

James 4:2b–3

2 . . . You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

NOTE – Let’s take a moment to talk about **PROPER** motivations as it relates to miraculous **POWER**.

Acts 1:8 (Emphasis Mine)

8 But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Q. For what purpose was the Spirit (power) given?

A. To empower the Church of Jesus Christ for mission.

KEY – But we so often **SEPARATE** the **POWER** of God from His divinely-revealed **PURPOSES**.

FYI – The Pentecostal movement of the early 20th-Century was born out of believer’s desire to see their world won for Christ. They were hungering for the power to change their world for Jesus. But somewhere along the way we began to **EQUATE** the move of the HS with church altar times, moments of worship and revival meetings for the saints, **DIVORCING** God’s power from reaching the world. Somehow it become all about **US** and **NOT** about the lost. Once that shift began to take root, the power began to dry up.

FYI – A move of God is MEANT to spill out of our churches and into the community! I’m convinced that God is NOT playing games about reaching this world, and He is NOT going to give His Church any power until they are ready to use that power to REACH the world for Him.

ANSWER #4

KEY – I posit that part of the answer is a LACK OF SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY and OBEDIENCE. I believe that we see so LITTLE of God’s power in operation because we FAIL to see and walk through the open doors the Lord opens all around us!

Let’s be HONEST for a moment. We are usually pretty OBLIVIOUS to the people and situations around us. Though we are SUPPOSED to live as witnesses for Christ, we get caught up in OUR routines, agendas, issues, etc.—so much so that we are often BLIND to opportunities to share our faith or serve, etc. (and His power is HINDERED in the process).

NOTE – We need believers who are willing to live with their EYES WIDE OPEN. Consider...

Acts 3:1–10

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Q. What do we see herein? A. Peter and John being sensitive to the needs of those around them.

Q. What do we see herein? A. Peter and John recognizing the open door of God/walking through.

Q. What do we see herein? A. Peter and John yielding to the Lord and to this orch. Interruption.

NOTE – We must be such a people: **a)** sensitive to needs; **b)** responsive to open doors; **c)** selfless!

CONCLUSIONS

IF we are going to live like Christ in His fulness we **MUST** seek to be conduits of His **POWER** divine.

NOTE 1 – We must be willing to ask tough Q's (e.g., "Whatever Happened to the Power of God?")

NOTE 2 – We must be willing to make structural changes to how we live before the Risen Christ:

- 1)** We Must Seek Greater Degrees of Faith
- 2)** We Must Diligently Seek the Lord in Prayer & Fasting
- 3)** We Must Assess and Correct Our Motivations (Power—Mission)
- 4)** We Must Open Our Eyes to the Needs and Open Doors in the Midst of Living

KEY – Special Event (SPIRIT-EMPHASIS WEEK)