

Reverend Ken Kvistad Sermon 12 May 2019 Imitating Christ

READINGS: PSALMS 23, ACTS 9:36-42,

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: WHO IS CHRIST? How do Christ's Apostles imitate him?
How can WE imitate CHRIST? Will we?

Intro. Who is this Christ that we are trying to Follow , imitate or Invite Into our Hearts and Lives and to become like?

As Christians we say that we follow Him. Many even go so far as to say we LOVE him.... And many who claim to know Him say that he loves us. Do we know who He is? What he's done? What he's told others to do?

We've heard the stories of His life from birth to post death. We've read accounts from every perspective, every millennium, every race and culture and almost every language there is. To some he is the most important, most powerful and the most lasting person on Earth and beyond. To some he is the biggest lie and deception ever perpetrated on humankind and a threat to our sanity! Really!

I. WHO IS CHRIST? So who is He and why should we imitate him? The Gospel of **John** tells us clearly who this Jesus is in his own words "**John 10:24** So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you "Jesus" keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' 25Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; 26but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30The Father and I are one.> **John 10.22-30**

So this Jesus is according to himself exactly the same as God his Father (They are ONE) and Jesus has done many works on Earth in his Father's name. And according to him in order to hear his voice and know him we have to be one of Jesus' Sheep or followers. They are His own and have eternal life by Christ and cannot be "snatched out of his Father's hand because they are ONE together.

II. How do Christ's Apostles imitate him? Today's Reading in Acts shows just what happens when we follow Jesus. This story in **Acts 9:36-43** tells us about Peter and what he is led to do in Christ's name as a follower of Jesus. Remember Peter? Remember the struggles he had while with Jesus? Peter was the one who just couldn't accept that Jesus had to suffer death and Christ told Satan to get behind him and Peter had to see the things of God and NOT Satan. Jesus had to ask him multiple times if he loved him. Jesus had to remind him that it was all about "feeding his Sheep" and each time more emphatically!! Peter is the one who denies knowing Jesus in his final hours. Three times!!! And yet here he is after one of the most stirring speeches to the whole Jewish World gathered in Jerusalem 40days after Jesus' crucifixion (Pentecost) and after going out into the world after having received GOD's Holy Spirit...just as Jesus had promised them...and what is he doing? IMITATING CHRIST and like Jesus had RAISED LAZARUS to Life from Death, Peter Raises DORCAS to life...

Through Peter and all followers the baton of faith in a living God, in Jesus' Name is passed on to new believers. Just before Dorcas is raised from Death a paralyzed man Aeneas is healed and Peter and the other disciples go into an unbelieving world to help them believe in the one who has sent them! JESUS. Believe and do the same! And onward Peter goes...

How can WE imitate CHRIST?

- 1. Believe**
- 2. Know Christ (speak to him and know what he did and what He wants of you! Read Paul's letters to the Philippians, etc)**
- 3. Just Go and Do it!**

Will we? Don't look back...Don't doubt...Go as Jesus sent us all: Matt 28:18 "All authority in Heaven and Earth has been given to me, Jesus said. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'...He is truly with us all!

What will we receive if we overcome and go forward faithfully in Christ's Name as called and try?:

Rev: 7:13-17 ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?' ¹⁴ I answered, 'Sir, you know.'

And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore,

'they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

¹⁶ "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat down on them," nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd;

"he will lead them to springs of living water." "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."