

following the leader

Mark 8:34-38 - When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul the apostle says, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ."

All are called to follow Jesus. We should always strive to live in all ways as He gave example. Just as Jesus spent His life for others, we should spend ours bringing everyone we can to know Him.

Luke 19:9-10 - And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 10:27-33 - "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."

Out of our love for others (which Christ calls us to have) it should always be our priority to bring the good news that is in Christ to the world. It would be selfish not to tell others about the salvation we have been given by God's grace and mercy. Christ calls us to spread the Word and confess Him as Lord to the world.

A Servant's Attitude

Mark 9:33-37, 10:45 - Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." ... "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Read **John 13:1-17**, where Jesus washes the disciples' feet, showing His servitude and calling them to follow His example.

As followers of Christ we should always strive to take the attitude of a servant. Because we love Christ, we love others, and because we love Christ we serve Him and we serve others. Always we should reach out to others in love, esteeming them better than ourselves, and caring first for their needs. Be as helpful as you can to others *all* the time.

Our Strength Through Christ

Sometimes we feel incapable of carrying out the tasks that God has given us; sometimes we just feel weak. But fear not, God provides us with more than enough strength when we rely fully on Him.

2 Corinthians 12:9 - And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Isaiah 40:28-31 - Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.
Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

Joshua 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

God gives us strength! We were created to be strong and God tells us plainly to live up to be strong, be courageous. If God is for us, who can be against us? (**Romans 8:31**). When we put on Christ, we become so strong through Him. What once was our weakness becomes strength through Christ.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I can do *all things* through Christ who strengthens me. Christ gives us the strength we need to carry out His will. We have been given this strength by God. None of this strength is our own, but His. Just as Christ could do nothing without the Father, neither will we be able without Christ and the Father. We must give all things to God in order to access this strength, putting on Christ as our armor (see **Ephesians 6:10-20**).

Letting His Light Shine Through

So what do we do with this strength? Do we put it under a basket? No way! We put it on a lampstand (see **Matthew 5:14-16**). In **John 12:46** Christ says, "I have come as a light unto the world," so should we let our light shine before men.

1 John 1:7 - But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

We are called to shine as lights to the world, just as Jesus did. God shines His light upon us, and not only do we reflect it back to Him, we let it shine through us. Pray that God will allow His light to shine through you all the time. We should always be trying to spread the joy and the light that is the good news of our salvation!

This does not have to be a huge and complicated thing that is planned out. In fact, it isn't. It's so simple. All we have to do is go out there, wherever we may go, and let His light shine through us. I mean really, we don't even have to do anything except facilitate His strength and let Him work through us (I don't mean to say we don't do anything). We have nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes we do feel weak, like we don't have it in us to reach out to others or maybe to overcome sin in our lives. But God gives us the strength we need when we rely on Him for it! I always was afraid that I was going to be counterproductive by speaking to people about Jesus, and I definitely didn't want to do that. So often I have seen people being pushed away from the church and from Christ, and I did not want any part of that. But we have nothing to be afraid of! God is on our side, we have the truth, we have the good news, and we have the strength He provides for us! And whatever we lack, we can ask of God and He will give us what we need. He will always provide us with the strength to do His will, whether it be overcoming Satan or bringing others to know Jesus.

Some people worry that they lack knowledge of the Bible or about religious things. Honestly, these things can get in the way of many people anyways when they become so focused on doctrine and religious tradition that they ignore the spiritual growth that is necessary to our faith. Of course this is not to say that we should not always be working to gain knowledge and wisdom about these things (remember **James 1:5**). Ask the Lord and these things will be given to you. Ask for knowledge and he will give it to you, for wisdom and He shows you the way! When we have been given the truth through the Holy Spirit and we know the good news that is in Christ, all we have to do is share these things with all sincerity, humility, and love. It's as simple as that.

Sure, some people won't like what we are going to say, and they aren't going to like us, just as they hated Jesus. We have to accept this and move on. It is necessary so that the Scriptures will be fulfilled and it happens because Satan has a stronghold on people of the world.

Everything we do should be out of love. And if we really sincerely love others, we have nothing to worry about. Don't be afraid! We are strong, because we were created that way. Don't avoid situations where you have the opportunity to tell others about the good news but rather seek them out! There is no reason whatsoever why we shouldn't be completely open all the time about our faith! We should be like lights shining in the world, always bringing people to know Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Laying Down our Life for His Sake

Now the disciples in the first century were all about this. All they did was go around preaching the word, sharing the gospel, and encouraging one another, as Jesus directed them (and us) to do. These guys were being persecuted and put to death just for talking about Jesus, but they went on anyways! Today we don't really have to worry about any of that in this country. No one's getting thrown in to prison, no one is dying, but everyone *is* afraid to say what they believe. *Why?* Stop it! These guys were dying, just to spread this good news, how much more should we be doing it every day!

Matthew 16:25 - For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

1 John 3:16 - By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Jesus calls us to lay down our life for His sake. It's easy for us to say, "Oh, if I were in that situation I would die for Jesus." We're just like Peter when Jesus told Him that he is going to deny Him (see **John 13:36-38, 18:15-26, 21:15-19**) Peter says 'No way, I'll die for you!' Now when it comes down to it, he doesn't go through with it, because he gets scared. We can only pray for strength if the opportunity ever arises. But what about right now? We can make a decision right now. Not only should we be willing to die, but Jesus says to lay down our *life!* Are we really willing to give up our lives to Jesus and devote ourselves completely to letting His light shine through us while we are alive?

John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

I would like to challenge and encourage you to continue growing closer to God, and strive to really *know* Christ. I cannot stress enough how important it is to keep reading the Bible regularly. Keep reading, praying, having fellowship with others and with God, and reach out to others every day. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to talk with those whom we love about our faith, but if we truly love them we will put all trivial things aside and care enough about them to ensure their eternal salvation, which *only* comes through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

If you need anything at all, please get in touch with me. If you have any questions or anything you would like to discuss, do not hesitate to contact me.

Numbers 6:24-26

May the Lord bless you and keep you;

May the Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you;

May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.

paul herrin_423-773-8633_pherri20@student.scad.edu