

Becoming More Like Jesus by Bob Young

I have been rereading the gospels. I want to understand Jesus. I want to know about him. Even more I want to know him well enough that I can imitate him. Jesus came teaching, preaching, and healing (Matthew 4:12; 9:35). Jesus came seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus came for the ill, not the healthy (Luke 5:31-32). Jesus came touching lives by serving and teaching (Mark 1-4). Finally, Jesus came dying (Matthew 16:21). How can one summarize the life of Jesus? What is “the big picture” that reflects all of the little pieces?

In his ministry to others, Jesus did three basic things. He did many things, but three things summarize virtually all of his “people actions” during his ministry prior to his death on the cross. **Jesus spent his time in faithful proclamation, compassionate service, and supportive fellowship.** Think about Jesus’ life. Read and study afresh the gospels. These three points encompass virtually every action. This is how Jesus reflected God to others. This is how Jesus showed what God is like. Both the actions and the descriptive words of the summary are chosen carefully. Not just proclamation—proclamation that is faithful to the purpose and will of God. Not just any kind of service—service that reflects the compassionate heart of God. Not fellowship for the sake of fellowship, but supportive fellowship that connects hearts and reaches out to others to help and encourage.

These three fundamental descriptions of Jesus’ life do not demand expansion. If Jesus did these things, how should we spend our time if we are serious about becoming like Jesus? What would we do if we wanted to imitate him? Yes, we imitate his death, burial and resurrection in our baptism, but does our imitation of Jesus stop there? If disciples become like their Master (Luke 6:40), what would we do to show that we are like Jesus and that we are followers of Jesus? Would we not do what he did? Would we be able to omit any aspect of Jesus’ example?

Let us recommit and seek daily the opportunities God gives us for proclamation and teaching. Who is open to hearing about the strength we receive from our walk with God? Whom is God putting in our path? What opportunities is God giving for telling others? Let us pray for opportunities for faithful proclamation.

We become like Jesus as we serve others compassionately. Jesus came serving others. He came meeting needs. He came and lived out compassionate service. His compassion caused him to do for others what they could not do for themselves. Sometimes we serve others but do not meet this basic criterion for compassionate service. It is easy to serve those who can serve us back. Jesus said the Pharisees did that and missed the blessing. Christianity calls us to do more than others do. Let us pray about how and where and when we can compassionately serve each day.

We become like Jesus as we share fellowship and encourage one another in supportive ways. People have needs. Too often our “fellowship” is too superficial to be supportive of others. Jesus lived a life of supportive fellowship in his relationships and interactions with others. How can we become more like him?

Considered together, these are the essence of our Christ likeness. These are the basic components that drive our adoration and praise to God. These people interactions drive us to prayer and relationship with God.