

Intimidated or imitators? (1)
Prepared by Bob Young

Theme: Imitators or Intimidated? Is the imitation of Jesus really possible today?

LIVING LIKE JESUS

Our example in the Christian life is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did not live life without problems. Jesus did not live a life without hurts, without suffering, without challenges. He did not live a life of luxury or comfort. The Bible says, without home, without pillow. He suffered many hurts—emotional, physical, separation from God, rejection. In all this, he is our example. Our theme, our focus for two nights is that we can live that Jesus. Good news! We have hope, we will find comfort, we will find encouragement, we will find strength, and we will find salvation!

I have a message both for Christians and for those with questions. This message is for those who are members of the body of Christ, the church; for those who are followers of Jesus but are not connected with a church; and for those outside of Christ, far from Christ. This message is Jesus. The focus is Jesus. Our hope is Jesus. Therefore, we want to live our lives in imitation of Jesus. This village will be a better place for every resident when all are imitators of Jesus.

This message is practical, touches daily life. This message tells us of the example of Jesus. This is a practical message, outlining how we should live our lives.

I have one theme: In Jesus Christ, as followers, imitators, disciples, as Christians, God does not want that we might live a life of intimidation. We are not intimidated.

We begin with a reading from the OT. This is the story of David and the Philistines (1 Sam. 16:7-10). Israel was intimidated. They did not see what God saw. Their view was limited. They were afraid. They were intimidated. David by faith accepted the challenge of Goliath.

We often look only on the outside. We must look on the inside. How is your heart? What is the condition of your heart, the focus of your heart, the goal of your heart? What is your life? It is more than a little vapor (James 4:14-15).

- Listen to another text from the OT. The prophet Isaiah, eight centuries before Jesus Christ, writes, Isa. 40:28-31. What a great promise.
- We are not timid, we do not have fear. We do not have a spirit of fear, but of power, of discipline, of a sound mind, 2 Tim. 1:7.
- Yes, there are problems in this world, but Jesus is greater than this world, 1 John 4:4.
- We have a victory that overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4.

Life in this world is not easy. Always there are problems.

- There are problems in the family. As a result, we are often anxious, anguished.
- There are problems with children. Children often have little interest in spiritual things. Children may have little interest in attending church, little interest in studying the Bible. Where did they learn such things? We have to look only to the adults.
- These are problems of faith. Faith is not easy.
- There are illnesses. Why are we not intimidated? Because God is the one who heals. This is not easy.
- There are faith problems. We often lack faith—faith with confidence in God, faith that sees the invisible, faith that brings hope. We do not have hope because we do not have faith. We are afraid because we do not have faith. The opposite of faith is lack of hope. There is evidence of hope; evidence of faith. That evidence is seen in the experiences of heroes of faith without number. Our experience is parallel to the experience of the great people of faith who lived before us. We are not intimidated (Heb. 11:32-40).
- There are life problems. Listen to the words of Paul, 2 Cor. 4:7-12.
- There may be persecution problems. Listen again to Paul, 2 Cor. 11:23b-28.

- There are financial problems, economic problems. But our God is the owner of the world, Ps. 50:10. The problems that seem so large are temporary. They are not eternal. The day is coming when these problems will be meaningless.

The solution to every problem is that we are connected with God. We are connected with God through Christ. It is possible to live life in the midst of problems.

Over 20 years ago, my mother died as a result of an auto accident. It happened on the holiday in the US, Thanksgiving, November, on Thursday. What to do? Three days later, on Sunday, as every Sunday, we went to church to worship God. The time to make the decision about whether our God is faithful, Heb. 10:23, the time to make the decision about whether our God is faithful is before the problems most difficult, most severe come. When the problem comes, when the tragedy already has occurred, there is not enough time to meditate and ruminate and make a decision. There is not enough time to question, What does this mean? What should I do?

Problems are a part of life; problems are normal. The Christian response to normal problems is abnormal. We are not intimidated. We are not conquered by the problems of life.

I want that this truth be well known in this church. I want that this church, every person present, might have such faith, the ability to live life without intimidation. Across our nation, in our world, there are many people, even many Christians, who are intimidated by the problems of life. There are those who become Christians, are happy in the new relation with God through Christ, are connected with God, but only when times are good. Life is not always composed of good times. There are bad times in life. There will come difficult days. There will come tumultuous times. There will come horrible hours. A problem comes, or problems come. How normal. And there are doubts, even in the church; questions, in the church; lack of faith, in the church; impure lives, in the church. What is happening? We are weak, we are helpless, we are useless.

The Bible has an answer. Do not be intimidated. Life without intimidation is possible. Eph. 2:1-4—But God, rich in mercy, has worked in our lives. Or Phil. 2:5-16—God is at work in our lives. Do not be intimidated by life, regardless of the problems. There will always be problems in our world.

We are disciples of the spiritual conqueror, Rom. 8:28-37. We have overcome; we are more than conquerors. In Christ we are conquerors, more than conquerors. Conquerors are not intimidated.

This is because of the love of God, John 3:16, Rom. 5:8. Jesus Christ is the supreme demonstration of the love of God. Jesus Christ is the evidence. Thus we have faith, confidence, hope, and understanding.

God is love. Jesus said those who love me keep my commandments. It is not enough to say, I love God. It is not enough to say, God loves me. It is not enough to say, I love you. Love always is demonstrated—by our actions, by our lives. If you love God, keep his commandments. Keep his commandments, regardless of the circumstances. When it is to my benefit, I will obey God. When it is not to my benefit, I will obey God. When it costs me—money, family, prestige, position, honor among men, whatever thing, I will obey God.

The only way to avoid living in intimidation is to commit oneself to God. I have decided to follow Jesus. This decision, made freely, frees us. The truth makes us free indeed. John 8:32. We belong to God. Do not live with intimidation; do not be intimidated by the problems of life, by the challenges of our culture, by other persons in this world.

Come to Jesus. Live for Jesus.

Intimidated or imitators? (2) **Prepared by Bob Young**

Theme: Imitators or Intimidated? The imitation of Jesus is possible.

Living Like Jesus--Imitators of Jesus

1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 4:25-32; 5:1-2; 1 John 2:1-6; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

How is it possible? How can we imitate Jesus? He lived a perfect life. He was divine, the Son of God.

To begin—

The Greek word for walk is better translated to live, 1 John 2:6. The Greek word literally means walk, but we know the word was used to mean to live. This is the translation in many recent translations.

We have before us a text, the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is about how you live. How you live has roots in what you understand. One's way of life is connected with one's way of thinking-- doctrine and duty; creed and conduct; thinking and steps; vision and life.

God has a purpose in our life. This purpose is to bring everything together in the lordship of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:9-10).

The human problem is long-term (Eph. 2:1ff). In other times, you also lived in a manner displeasing to God. This text demonstrates to us two types of sin. Transgression means to go beyond, 1 John 3:4. The word for sin signifies not to hit the mark, to fail, Jas 4:17. We understand sin in the meanings of these two words. We are sinners in both meanings.

Our past is characterized by a manner of life opposed to God, 2:3. The text suggests that we were living but dead. Remember that phrase—living but dead. One seeing us would say we are alive. The Bible says we were dead.

This is where the good news of the gospel begins. But God... (2:4). God has a purpose for us; according to that purpose, God acted on our behalf. God created the possibility (we are new creation) that we can live in a different way.

Our word appears again in Eph. 2:10. How we walk is how we live. And we live in this way: as the workmanship of God.

We have experienced a change. Things are not as they were previously, Eph. 2:11. We were without hope, without Christ, without God, without citizenship, without promises. We were without future. We were without blessings (Eph. 1:3). We were not sons and daughters. We did not have a calling. Everything in our lives has been changed in Jesus Christ. This is the message of the rest of chapters 1-3.

We have to pass over some great texts quickly—Eph. 2:19-21; 3:17-21.

Our theme is living like Jesus, imitators of Jesus. Paul develops this concept in five passages in the last section of the book. How are we going to live as Christians?

1. 4:1ff. Walk/live worthy of your calling. The description given by Paul makes clear that this challenge deals with our attitudes.

2. 4:17ff. Walk in light, not in darkness. We are Christians, not pagans. This concept demands understanding.

3. 5:1ff. Walk in relationship. Walk in love, as imitators of God, as children like our Father. This text is a summary of the verses anterior. One cannot be a Christian, cannot live like Jesus, separated from the followers of Jesus in this world. There is no salvation in isolation. There is no maintaining, keeping salvation in isolation. Relationships are vital.

4. 5:8ff. Walk in light, this means live in purity. Vs. 14 gives us a contrast. Remember that before we were living but in reality dead, dead spiritually. This verse tells us, we are dead but alive. We are alive in Christ Jesus. We are dying, 2 Cor. 4:16-18, but we are alive.

I want here to take a brief detour, for this text reminds me of Romans 6:4-6: we are alive although we were dead.

5. To summarize, 5:15, walk in wisdom. Live wisely in the moment. Use the opportunities God gives. You have an opportunity this night. You can make the decision to live like Jesus. You can decide to follow Jesus, be a disciple of Jesus, live a life worthy of your calling. You can change your attitude. You can walk in light. You can escape the problems and frustrations of the world; you can find the solution to the problems and frustrations of life.

You can establish a relationship of salvation with God through Christ, connected with divinity, connected with eternity, connected with a spiritual family.

You can live a life of purity and holiness.

It is possible. It is not impossible.

Intimidated or imitators? (3)
Prepared by Bob Young

Theme: Imitators or Intimidated? The imitation of Jesus is possible.

Imitators of Jesus

1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 4:25-32; 5:1-2; 1 John 2:1-6; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

How is it possible? How can we imitate Jesus? He lived a perfect life. He was the special Son of God.

1. We imitate Jesus by having the thinking of Jesus.

Without egotism, not self-centered

Taking the form of servants, being like others, being in the condition of others

Humbling ourselves, serving as sacrifices

Our thoughts—not seeking our own well-being, not seeking to accumulate the things of this world, not focused on our comfort.

We cannot be imitators of Jesus while our thoughts are only for ourselves, Phil. 2:3.

2. We imitate Jesus when we develop the heart of Jesus.

We can become like Jesus by developing the attitude of Jesus.

We should love everyone.

We should honor and respect everyone.

We should forgive all, Eph. 4:25-32

3. We imitate Jesus when we walk as he walked. That is, when we live as he lived, 1 John 2:6

4. We imitate Jesus by living pure lives, 1 Peter 1:15-25

5. We imitate Jesus by obeying God, Heb. 5:8-9

Conclusion

We become like Jesus when we become Christians, when we participate in his death and in his resurrection. Rom. 6:3-6.