

Why Christchurch Is Christ-like?

I love our people. One reason that I love our people is because of an overall attitude among the membership to please Christ, do God's will and overcome in the world in which we live. Jesus said, "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). There are four qualities I would attribute to chief reasons Christchurch members are faithful in their rendered service to our Lord.

1. There is an understanding of our positional standing in Christ.

The Bible says in Colossians 3:4, "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" For many Christians, the Christian life doesn't really "kick in" until Jesus comes. Some of us are so caught up in being caught up in the rapture, that anything short of exiting earth is to be "left behind" in life. We as Christians should be eagerly awaiting and longing for Christ's return, but not to the point that we cannot move beyond coping to overcoming in this life! Still, not a few Christians are too satisfied with earth, as we know it - settling for the "settled for" life. This is the attitude that says we have no real power over certain influences and vices in life, so we take a spiritual hit, do damage control and hope we won't be too bereft of rewards when we see Jesus. Notice the Bible does not say Christ becomes my life when He returns; He is my life right now!

When we use the term positional truth, here is what we mean: (a) We who are saved are positioned with Christ in heaven, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3). (b) Because of our oneness with Christ in heaven, we have authority to live victoriously on earth, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (I John 4:4). (c) We now live the exchanged life. This means since Christ died for us, we died with Him, He was buried, we were buried, and since He rose, we rose to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6; Galatians 2:20). Paul also expressed this life well in II Corinthians 13:4, "*For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.*" The result: "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Philippians 4:13). Our goal is simple - we desire that our spiritual position will influence and overcome our earthly condition.

2. There is a devout attitude of prayer.

For Christchurch members, it is the consensus - prayer is not optional. As a rule, our people have the best sense of humor of any people I know, but we take very seriously the matter of prayer. Why? Because Jesus does! He said, "*...men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (Luke 18:1). The reason most of the flock at Christchurch live with the attitude that asks, "What would Jesus do?" is because they are willing to do what Jesus did, which is pray. "*And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed*" (Mark 1:35). "*And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone*" (Matthew 14:23). "*...What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matthew 26:40,41). If we live in the holy place, it is much harder to live with known sin. As much as any activity I know, prayer actualizes and activates the exchanged life better than anything on earth. Truly in prayer, heaven touches earth. It is touching the extended hand that Michelangelo could only paint about!

3. The right life is modeled by those in high profile.

Let me be real blunt. If a man even thinks about cheating on his wife, if he is overly friendly with

the opposite sex so that he lapses into flirtation, he is not going to enjoy the fellowship of Christchurch. The highly visible church members live a faithfulness to their Lord, which is expressed in faithfulness to their wife and children. To be respected at Christchurch, alcoholic beverages will not be consumed, tobacco is out, pornographic entertainment is taboo, we do not nightclub and filthy, suggestive language is not approved. We are not legalistic, but we do believe living the Christ-life will affect every area of our life.

In the more positive aspect, we see married couples in love with each other and happy to be so. When I see the admiring looks of our parents as they oversee their kids playing on the church playground, I am reminded that here is a group of people who are not only pro-life, they live a pro-active healthy, loving Christian life not only in front of their kids, but with their kids. Recently, I have been admiring our teens who are not governed by the "Prom gang." God bless our youth who have chosen to walk with Christ rather than dance with the world! I love to hear our younger children memorize Scripture. And may we always put more emphasis on the spiritual rather than the physical. How blessed I am when I discover our deacons helping the widows and our senior class members looking out for one another. Truly, Christchurch is modeling a Christ-walk! *"...Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"* (Philippians 3:16).

4. The Lord's Supper is essential.

For over twenty-five years on the first Sunday night of every month we have been celebrating Jesus in the prescribed ordinance that our Lord Himself initiated, The Lord's Supper. We may miss a lot of activity that the world or carnal Christianity may insist we partake in, but we will not miss the Lord's Table! Jesus said, *"Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:26-28). Every month we do what the Bible says, *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup"* (I Corinthians 11:28). Sinful activity is held at bay in Christchurch by the frequency of the Lord's Table. May we all continue to gather together and partake!

These are not by any means all the reasons, but these are four great answers why Christchurch is Christ-like. My prayer is that we will always be so until our Lord returns!

- Pastor Pope -

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