

## **BC 29 (Part 2)– The True Christian**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: There are all kinds of fake products on the market. There are fake perfumes, fake leather, fake brand name clothes, etc. A real Louis Vuitton purse can cost \$4,400.00 or \$200.00, if it is not so real. Even so, **in most of these fake products you can lose money, but not all of them are as dangerous.**

**There are times when getting fake things can be dangerous** – even deadly. Some **Chinese baby milk powder had melamine**. A few years ago there were some **fake chemotherapy medicines**. Some died after taking those medicines.

**The most deadly fake thing in the world is a fake Christian.** A fake Christian can be in a church with all the right marks (**faithful preaching, proper administration of the Sacraments, and strict Christian discipline**), but in practice his life is completely different. **He leads many to hell while having a nice form.** But God wants you to learn what a true Christian is like.

Our headings are:

**Marks of True Christians Exhibited**

**Marks of True Christians Limited**

Our goals are: **That you will know, believe, and show the true marks of redeemed Christians for Christ's glory.**

### **Marks of True Christians Exhibited**

With respect to those who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians; namely, **by faith**, and when, having received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they **avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof.** But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in Him.

#### **1. True Christians have the one true faith, a genuine faith.**

**We say: Sola Fide in Christ.**

**a. Another word for genuine is sincere.** Sincere comes from 2 Latin terms: sine and cere, meaning "without wax." "Long ago, **a potter would often put his seal, or stamp, upon a completed vessel with the words sine cere.** This meant that to his knowledge there was no flaw in that work. If a potter **did crack a vessel**, he would carefully **patch that flawed vase or bowl by filling in the crack with wax.** Then he would **glaze it over.** But it did not merit the stamp sine cere, "without wax," because it was not a flawless piece of pottery." (Dieleman)

This is the idea of what **a sincere Christian is: He is whole and free of cracks.** True Christians with true faith rest on God, lean on Christ, and look to Him alone for grace and salvation.

**b. Since genuine faith is based on knowledge**, Reformed churches have always insisted that new Christians must **be taught the doctrines of the Scripture** before and after baptism so Christians can grow. More truth taught and believed creates more faith.

Philippians 3:12 - Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but **I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**

## **2. True Christians continue to flee from sin.**

They see the receipt of their ownership – the marks on Jesus hands and side - so they learn that they must not go back to the things of this world.

What comes to your mind when you hear the command “flee from sin?” **The first thing that probably comes to your mind** is Joseph in Potiphar's house. **Consider what Paul said to the Romans and to Timothy!**

Romans 6:1-2 - What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! **How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! **We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?**

The implication of this rhetorical question was: “I won’t! I’ll live differently.” My baptism or my church membership won’t save me! The Apostle Paul stated it even more strongly.

2 Timothy 2:19... **Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”**

... “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord **must turn away from wickedness.”**

Galatians 5:24 ...those who are Christ's **have crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires.

<sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus **have crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires.

**Dieleman:** When Chrysostom was arrested, the Roman emperor sought to make the Greek Christian deny his faith. But the emperor was unsuccessful. So the emperor discussed with his advisors what they could do to this prisoner. "Shall I **put him in a dungeon?**" the emperor asked. "No," one of his counselors replied, "For he'll be glad to go. He **longs for the quietness** where he can delight in the mercies of his God." "Then **he shall be executed!**" said the emperor. "No," came the answer, "For he'll **be glad to die**. He declares that in the event of death, he will be in the presence of the Lord." "Well, what shall we do then?" the ruler asked. The counselor replied, "There's only one thing that will cause him pain. **Make him sin. He's afraid of nothing but sin.**"

**The Christian must also separate himself from wickedness in order to protect his duty.**

**2Thessalonians 3:6** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

When you flee from sin, **let the joy of the Lord fill your life so that world in unmitigated sadness could see it and ask about God.**

Don't act like you were baptized with vinegar or lime juice.

### **3. True Christians Pursue righteousness**

#### **a. Pursue means "to go after with full force."**

**1Timothy 6:11** But you, O man of God, flee these things and **pursue righteousness**, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

**2Timothy 2:22** **Flee also youthful lusts**; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**1John 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.

But if we **walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all<sup>(b)</sup> sin.

**b. There is no option to be slothful.** To be lazy is to die.

**c. Be ready to die for pursuing what you believe.**

De Bres, the writer of the Belgic Confession, was put to death for celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the Bible teaches.

### **4. True Christians love God and their neighbors.**

**This is how you are able to pursue righteousness.**

**John 13:35** By this all will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.**

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, **if you love one another.**"

**1John 4:20-21** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him: **that he who loves God must love his brother also.**

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup>And he has given us this command: **Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.**

Faith, prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, understanding-all mean nothing apart from love (1 Cor 13). Even with the best theology, the most carefully written Creeds and Confessions, and the most beautiful sermons, they mean nothing without love. And this is a perpetual battle.

**Romans 7:15** - For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; **but what I hate, that I do.** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

**Galatians 5:17** - For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, **so that you do not do the things that you wish.** For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, **so that you are not to do whatever you want.**

## **5. True Christians are focused on truth. Sola Scriptura.**

They appeal constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of Jesus Christ, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins through faith in Him (OT & NT.)

### **Your better doctrine must make you love better.**

**Acts 17:11** These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily** to find out whether these things were so.

<sup>11</sup> Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures** every day to see if what Paul said was true.

**1Thessalonians 5:21** **Test all things:** hold fast what is good, but **test them all;** hold on to what is good,

You must not get hung up on useless conversations, however.

**1Timothy 6:20** O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,

## **Marks of True Christians Limited**

### **1. Don't wait for a perfect church before you join it; the Christian isn't perfect.**

**Rome teaches that as long as you are baptized you will be saved – so the church is pure.**  
**Anabaptists taught that you have to be literally pure before you could join the church.**  
**But the example of the mixed impure church was obvious during the time of Jesus.**

**Psalms 41:9** Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath **lifted up his heel against** me. Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

NIV didn't give the best translation, **but it gave the correct interpretation.**

This referred to Judas. He walked with Jesus for 3 ½ years. He infiltrated the church and did

his dastardly deed. But Jesus kept him there until the end. So the church is imperfect, but you must be a part of it.

## **2. Don't wait to be personally perfect to join the church.**

**Individual members of the church and the elders of the church will always have many weaknesses and shortcomings.** Like many of the imperfect foods we eat, we have rat hairs - like our chocolate bars, and 20 maggots in our mushrooms. Yet God separated you to be his children, and you are to stay in the church as he cleans you out. This is why Paul referred to the sinful people as the church at Corinth...or the church at Ephesus – imperfect though they were.

**Don't let the fact that you are not perfect keep you from joining the church.**

## **3. If someone comments on the church being full of hypocrites, don't deny it.**

But make it clear that **all our imperfections were paid for** and encourage those who recognize their sins to come to the same cross as you for grace. Sola Gratia.

## **4. Use this teaching to correct the views of Anabaptists who think you have to be almost perfect to join the church and therefore reject covenant baptism.**

The church is not for the perfect. Come, dear sinner, come as you are. You and your children will find grace in abundance.

## **Conclusion:**

Christians are known by their genuine faith – a faith that works – a faith that makes them flee from sin and flee to Christ for help and flee to his people for support – a faith that makes them bring in the lost– a faith that makes him study the Word of God for truth. No, Christians are never perfect, but they strive to live to please God by righteous living.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Displaying true Christianity is not an end in itself; it has a purpose. Soli Deo Gloria – the glory of God alone.** So display Christ so the lost will come and give God the glory. Someone said that **the best argument for Christianity is Christians. Yet the opposite is also true. The strongest argument against becoming a Christian is Christians, Christians who** lack evidence of Christ. And display Christ so fellow Christians will be encouraged to grow closer to God.

**2. Because of whose you are through his blood on the cross, may you then be moved to be a true blessings** to your fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus. May you never forget the motivation of the cross.

Finally, if you don't have faith – a confident trust, based on knowledge – in Christ, you are not of his church. Your home is hell. There you will join all those who have rejected the opportunity to be saved. But if you look to Jesus and ask him for help, he will give you all you need so you can become his child.