

The Way Of Christ



Sermon Outlines On The Way Of Christ In Doctrine And Life

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Way Of Christ

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The Way Of Christ

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1. Today it is not unusual to hear the term “**Christianity**” to describe...
 - a. The teachings of Jesus, emphasizing the role of Jesus as savior
 - b. The collective body of Christians throughout the world and history
2. But in the early days of the church, both were simply known as “**The Way**”...
 - a. Saul of Tarsus persecuted those of the Way - **Ac 9:2; 22:4**
 - b. Others spoke evil of the Way, even caused a riot - **Ac 19:9,23**
 - c. Paul confessed to Felix that he worshiped God according to the Way - **Ac 24:14,22**

[Today the expression “**The Way**” is rarely used, except by some parachurch organizations, individual congregations, and even a few cult groups. But what did it mean in the early days of the church...?]

I. THE MEANING OF “THE WAY”

A. PROBABLE ORIGIN...

1. Jesus taught about two ways - **Mt 7:13-14**
 - a. The broad way that leads to destruction
 - b. The narrow way that leads to life
 2. Jesus claimed to be the way - **Jn 14:6**
 - a. The way to truth and life
 - b. The only way to the Father
- **It seems likely that Jesus’ statements led to the use of “The Way”**

B. POSSIBLE MEANING...

1. Simon J. Kistemaker (BNTC) suggests it refers to:
 - a. The teaching of the gospel
 - b. The Christian’s conduct directed and guided by the gospel
 - c. The Christian community in general
 2. W. A. Ewell (ECB) suggests it connotes something of:
 - a. The way of salvation - **Ac 16:17**
 - b. The true way of God - **Ac 18:25-26**
- **It likely referred to following Jesus as “The Way” in both doctrine and life**

[With this lesson, I wish to introduce several topics that certainly fall under the category of “**The Way Of Christ**” as it pertains to the doctrine and life of those who follow Jesus...]

II. THE WAY OF CHRIST

A. THE WAY TO GOD...

1. Jesus is the only way to God - **Jn 14:6; Mt 11:27**
2. Through Jesus, both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father - **Ep 2:18**

B. THE WAY TO TRUTH...

1. Jesus came to this world to bear witness to the truth - **Jn 18:37**
2. He offers the truth that sets us free from the bondage of sin - **Jn 8:32-36**

C. THE WAY TO LIFE...

1. Jesus came that we might life more abundantly - **Jn 10:10**
2. He offers life beyond this life - **Jn 11:25; 1Th 4:13-18**

D. THE WAY OF LOVE...

1. Jesus taught His disciples to love one another - **Jn 13:34**
2. He even taught them to love their enemies - **Mt 5:43-45**

E. THE WAY OF JOY...

1. Jesus spoke in order that His disciples' joy might be full - **Jn 15:11**
2. He did so that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves - **Jn 17:13**

F. THE WAY OF PEACE...

1. Jesus offered a peace unlike any the world could give - **Jn 14:27**
2. A peace that overcomes tribulation in the world - **Jn 16:33**

G. THE WAY OF UNITY...

1. Jesus prayed for unity among those who believe in Him - **Jn 17:20-23**
2. He died on the cross to reconcile Jew and Gentile - **Ep 2:11-17**

H. THE WAY OF PRAYER...

1. Jesus taught us how to pray, to pray diligently and humbly - **Lk 11:1-13; 18:1-14**
2. He serves as High Priest and Advocate as we pray - **He 4:14-16; 1Jn 2:1**

I. THE WAY OF FORGIVENESS...

1. Jesus taught the importance of forgiving others - **Mt 6:12,14-15**
2. He demonstrated the attitude of forgiveness on the cross - **Lk 23:34**

J. THE WAY OF BEARING FRUIT...

1. Jesus taught the necessity of bearing fruit to being His disciples - **Jn 15:1-2,8**
2. Abiding in Him is the key to bearing fruit - **Jn 15:4-5**

K. THE WAY OF SERVICE...

1. Jesus came to serve, and taught His disciples to do likewise - **Mt 20:25-28; Jn 13:12-17**
2. Therefore His followers are to serve one another in love - **Ga 5:13; 1Pe 4:9**

L. THE WAY OF SUFFERING...

1. Jesus had to suffer to enter His glory - **Lk 24:25-26**
2. He calls us to follow in His steps, if need be - **1Pe 2:20-23**

M. THE WAY TO GLORY...

1. Jesus will one day be revealed in glory - **2Th 1:10**
2. We too shall be revealed in glory in Him! - **2Th 1:12; Col 3:4**

CONCLUSION

1. We may or may not refer to ourselves as people of **“The Way”**...
 - a. There are other designations just as scriptural
 - b. In some circumstances, it could be misunderstood as a cult

2. But we should never stop thinking of **Jesus as the Way**...
 - a. The way to God, truth, life, and glory
 - b. The way of love, joy, peace, and unity
 - c. The way of prayer, forgiveness, bearing fruit, service, and suffering for righteousness’ sake

We shall examine each of these more closely in succeeding lessons. In the meantime, have you accepted Jesus as your Way to salvation and eternal life? Are you willing to become His disciple and learn from Him...?

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” - Mt 11:28-30

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. - Mt 28:18-20

The Way Of Christ

The Way To God

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way of Christ is first and foremost **the way to God...**
 - a. Jesus claimed to be the only way to God - **Jn 14:6**
 - b. He is the way for Jew and Gentile to have access to God - **Ep 2:18**
2. To appreciate why this true, we must understand the gospel of Christ...
 - a. The good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ
 - b. What Paul calls “the gospel of the grace of God” - **Ac 20:24**

[Grace is defined as goodwill, lovingkindness, unmerited favor. As we examine the grace of God in Christ Jesus, consider first...]

I. THE NEED FOR GRACE

A. ALL ARE SINNERS...

1. All sin and fall short of the glory of God - **Ro 3:23**
 2. Even one sin condemns - **Jm 2:10**
 3. Even good men need saving - **Ac 10:1-2; 11:14**
- **Do not think that our good works can save us!**

B. CONSEQUENCES OF SIN...

1. The wages of sin is death - **Ro 6:23**
 2. Spiritual death involves separation from God - **Isa 59:2**
 3. Left in such a state, eternal separation is the result - **Re 21:8**
- **The consequences of sin are grave, both now and hereafter!**

[The point is clear, **we all need the grace of God!** But praise be to God, in Christ Jesus there is...]

II. THE PROVISION OF GRACE

A. BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE...

1. God sent His only begotten Son - **Jn 3:16**
 2. God offered Jesus as the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins - **1Jn 4:9-10**
- **God truly does love us!**

B. BECAUSE OF HIS JUSTICE...

1. God offers Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb for our sins - **Jn 1:29**
 2. God gave Jesus as the redemption for our sins - **Ro 3:24-26**
- **God has done what is necessary to forgive sinners while still being just**

[Demonstrating that He is both a God of **love** and a God of **justice**, God has provided mankind the grace we need! But that grace is **not unconditional** (otherwise all would be saved), it must be received...]

III. THE RECEPTION OF GRACE

A. OBEYING THE GOSPEL...

1. To receive grace, we must obey the gospel
 - a. For Jesus is the author of salvation for those who obey Him - **He 5:9**
 - b. And consider the end of those who do not - **1Pe 4:17; 2Th 1:7-9**
 2. To obey the gospel, we must respond to God's grace
 - a. Believing in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God - **Jn 8:24; 20:30-31**
 - b. Confessing one's faith in the Lord Jesus - **Ro 10:9-10; Mt 10:32-33**
 - c. Repenting of our sins - **Lk 24:46-47; 3:19; 17:30-31**
 - d. Being baptized for the remission of sins - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 8:35-38; 22:16**
 3. Such obedience does not earn or merit our salvation!
 - a. Baptism involves the mercy and grace of God - **Tit 3:4-7**
 - b. Baptism unites one with Christ in His death - **Ro 6:3-8**
 - c. Baptism is God working on you - **Col 2:11-13**
 - d. Baptism is an appeal for a good conscience - **1Pe 3:21**
 - e. Baptism is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ - **Ga 3:27**
- **By obeying the gospel of Christ, we receive the initial benefits of God's grace: the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of eternal life**

B. LIVING THE GOSPEL...

1. To continue receiving grace, we must live the gospel
 - a. The gift of eternal life is received at the end - **Ro 6:22-23; Mt 25:46**
 - b. It is possible to become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin - **He 3:12-14**
 - c. We must remain faithful to receive the crown of life - **Re 2:10; Jude 1:21**
 2. To live the gospel, we must grow in grace and knowledge
 - a. Grace is multiplied in the knowledge of God and Jesus - **2Pe 1:2-4**
 - b. Growing in knowledge involves adding Christ-like qualities - **2Pe 1:5-11**
 - c. Otherwise we might fall from our steadfastness - **2Pe 3:17-18**
- **By following the way of Christ in faith and obedience, we continue to experience the grace of God both now and hereafter!**

CONCLUSION

1. The way of Christ is **the only way to God** because...
 - a. God Himself sent His Son to deal with the problem of sin
 - b. Only by sacrificing His Son does God demonstrate both His love and His justice
 - c. Rejecting the gospel of Christ rejects both the Father and His Son - cf. **2Jn 1:9**
2. The way of Christ does not stop with obeying the gospel of grace; it continues...
 - a. By living the gospel, that is, doing what Jesus taught His apostles - **Mt 28:19-20**
 - b. By growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2Pe 3:18**
 - c. By remaining faithful to Jesus even to the point of death - **Re 2:10**

Have you responded to the gospel of the grace of God? Do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of any assistance...

The Way Of Christ

The Way To Truth

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way of Christ is also **the way to truth...**
 - a. Jesus came to this world to bear witness to the truth - **Jn 18:37**
 - b. He was full of grace and truth - **Jn 1:14,17**
 - c. He is the truth - **Jn 14:6**
2. To appreciate the significance of this, we must understand what is truth...
 - a. By answering the question asked by Pilate: "What is truth?" - **Jn 18:38**
 - b. Especially when so many today view truth as relative

[Many have a **relativistic view** of truth, that what may be true for me may not be true for you. This is contrary to the **correspondence view** of truth (what corresponds to factual reality). As used in the Bible, let's define...]

I. THE MEANING OF TRUTH

A. BIBLICAL WORDS FOR TRUTH...

1. True (**alethes**) - "unconcealed, manifest...actual, true to fact" - **Vine's**
 2. True (**alethinos**) - "denotes 'true' in the sense of 'real, ideal, genuine;'" - **ibid.**
 3. Truth (**aletheia**) - "objectively, signifying 'the reality lying at the basis of an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of a matter' (Cremer)" - **ibid.**
- **When the Bible speaks of truth, it describes that which corresponds to reality, what is factual and absolute, not relative**

B. BIBLICAL STATEMENTS REGARDING TRUTH...

1. God is a God of truth - **Deut 32:4**
 2. Jesus is the truth, full of truth, and spoke the truth - **Jn 14:6; 1:14; 8:45**
 3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth - **Jn 14:17**
 4. The Word of God is truth - **Jn 17:17**
 5. The judgments of God are according to truth - **Ps 96:13; Ro 2:2**
- **The Bible asserts that God is true (real), reveals truth (reality), and judges accordingly**

[So when Jesus says that He came to bear witness to the truth, it means He proclaims things as they are in fact, in reality. Denying it won't change reality. With this understanding, let's now consider...]

II. JESUS AS THE WAY TO TRUTH

A. HIS VIEW OF TRUTH...

1. Truth is knowable - **Jn 8:32**
 2. His doctrine reveals truth - **Jn 8:31-32**
 3. The Holy Spirit would guide His apostles into all truth - **Jn 14:26; 16:13**
 4. The apostles became the source and repository of His truth - **Ac 2:42; 1Co 14:37; 1Jn 4:6**
- **The truth Jesus wants us to know is knowable and has been revealed by His apostles**

B. HIS REALM OF TRUTH...

1. The reality of **the kingdom of God**
 - a. That is, the rule or reign of God in our lives
 - b. Jesus taught its coming was near - **Mt 4:17**
 - c. He taught that it should have priority in our lives - **Mt 6:33**
 - d. Thus He bore witness to the nature of His kingdom - **Jn 18:36-37**; cf. **Lk 17:20-21**
 2. The reality of **the problem of sin**
 - a. How that sin enslaves - **Jn 8:34**
 - b. Jesus' doctrine offers the truth that frees one from sin - **Jn 8:31-36**
 - c. His truth reveals how we should live in righteousness and holiness
 - 1) Unlike those blinded and hardened by sin - **Ep 4:17-19**
 - 2) But renewed in mind, speaking truth and living right - **Ep 4:20-32**
 3. The reality of **the resurrection and the day of judgment**
 - a. He taught the fact of the resurrection - **Jn 5:28-29**
 - b. He taught that He and His words will be the Judge - **Jn 5:22,24; 12:48**
 - c. His own resurrection from the dead is proof of this - **Ac 17:30-31**
- **The truth Jesus wants us to know relates to living under the liberating rule of God rather than the bondage and guilt of sin!**

[Before we conclude this study, a couple of thoughts on...]

III. FOLLOWING JESUS AS THE WAY TO TRUTH

A. MOST WILL NOT...

1. They choose the broad and easy way that leads to destruction - **Mt 7:13-14**
 2. Even many who profess to follow Jesus as Lord - **Mt 7:21-23**
 3. For many will turn their ears away from the truth - **2Ti 4:1-4**
- **The way to truth can be a lonely road**

B. THOSE WHO DO...

1. Walk in truth and love - **2Jn 1:1-6**
 2. Patiently teach others the truth - **2Ti 2:24-26**
- **Knowing truth is no excuse for arrogance or self-righteousness**

CONCLUSION

1. We live in a world of great moral uncertainty...
 - a. Many no longer know what is right and wrong
 - b. Many claim there is no right and wrong
 - c. Thus they stumble in moral darkness, ruining lives in the process
2. The Way of Christ is **the way to truth...**
 - a. Jesus is the Light of the world - **Jn 8:12**
 - b. Those who follow Him will not abide in darkness - **Jn 12:46**
 - c. Seeing things as they really are, our lives can be saved by the truth!

Will you let Jesus be your guiding light, showing you the way to what is **true** and **real**...?

The Way Of Christ

The Way To Life

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way Of Christ is also **the way to life**...
 - a. Jesus came that we might life more abundantly - **Jn 10:10**
 - b. He offers life beyond this life - **Jn 11:25**
2. Thus He provides the way to life...
 - a. For the here and now
 - b. For the hereafter

[The life which Jesus offers is described as “**eternal life**”. As used by Jesus and His apostles, this term describes both a **present possession** and a **future hope**. Consider first how Jesus is the way to...

I. ETERNAL LIFE AS A PRESENT POSSESSION

A. WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE NOW...

1. John writes of eternal life as a present possession
 - a. “God **has given** us eternal life, and this life **is** in His Son” - **1Jn 5:11**
 - b. “He who has the Son **has** life” - **1Jn 5:12**
 - c. “that you may know that you **have** eternal life” - **1Jn 5:13**
 2. He refers to the quality of life we possess now in Christ
 - a. Which comes from knowing God and Jesus - **1Jn 5:20**; cf. **Jn 17:1-3**
 - b. Which emanates from the fellowship we share together with Them - **1Jn 1:1-3**
- **This quality of life is available to all willing to come to God through Jesus!**

B. THIS ETERNAL LIFE...

1. **Begins** when we are born anew in baptism
 - a. Born again of water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:3-5**
 - b. Buried with Christ into His death, raised to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:3-4**
 - c. Raised with Christ, made alive together with Him - **Col 2:12-13**
 - d. Clothed with Christ, thus sons of God through faith in Christ - **Ga 3:26-27**
 2. **Remains** a blessed life as long as we walk with Jesus
 - a. He offers the Spirit to those who believe in Him - **Jn 7:37-39**; cf. **Ga 5:22-23**
 - b. He offers peace to calm the troubled heart - **Jn 14:27**; **16:33**; cf. **Php 4:6-7**
 - c. He offers joy to lift our depressed spirits - **Jn 15:11**; cf. **1Pe 1:8**
 - d. He offers love to cast out fear - **Jn 15:9**; cf. **1Jn 4:18**
 - e. He offers ability to bear much fruit - **Jn 15:1-8**; cf. **1Pe 4:10-11**
- **This quality of life is available to all willing to follow Jesus with an obedient faith!**

[Eternal life available now as a present possession includes so much more: privilege of prayer, fellowship of saints, etc.). Even so, it pales in comparison to the quality of life promised by...]

II. ETERNAL LIFE AS A FUTURE HOPE

A. WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE PROMISED...

1. Paul writes of eternal life as a future hope
 - a. "in hope of eternal life" - **Tit 1:2**
 - b. "who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life..." - **Ro 2:6-7**
 - c. "you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" - **Ro 6:22**
 2. He refers to the quality of life that follows the Judgment
 - a. As Jesus did describing the reward of the righteous - **Mt 25:46**
 - b. As Jesus did making the promise of life to Martha - **Jn 11:25**
- **This future hope is available to all willing to come to God through Jesus!**

B. THIS ETERNAL LIFE...

1. **Begins** with the resurrection of the dead
 - a. When Jesus will raise all the dead - **Jn 5:28-29**
 - b. When the righteous dead will put on immortality - **1Co 15:50-52**
 - c. When the righteous will dwell forever in the new earth and new heaven - **2Pe 3:13-14**
 2. **Remains** a blessed state in which we dwell with God forever!
 - a. In the New Jerusalem in the new earth and new heaven - **Re 21:1-2**
 - b. In which God dwells with His people - **Re 21:3**
 - c. In which God removes all sorrow and suffering - **Re 21:4**
 - d. In which all is new, and the water of life is freely given - **Re 21:5-6; 22:1**
 - e. In which the tree of life will be available to all - **Re 22:2**
 - f. In which we shall both serve and reign forever! - **Re 22:3-5**
- **This future hope is available to all willing to follow Jesus with an obedient faith!**

CONCLUSION

1. What a wonderful life Jesus offers...!
 - a. An abundant life for now
 - b. A super abundant life for eternity
2. The alternative is too grim to contemplate...
 - a. To go through life without God and Jesus
 - b. To spend eternity without God and Jesus

Jesus is **the way to life**, eternal life, and stands ready to give it to you both as a present possession and a future hope. Why despair of life, when the Savior offers you His tender invitation?

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." - Mt 11:28-30

Take up His yoke (i.e., become His disciple), and He will lead to life eternal...

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Love

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of love** beginning with...
 - a. **The love of God**, sending His Son to die for our sins - **Jn 3:16**
 - b. **The love of Jesus**, willing to die for our sins - **Jn 15:13**
2. The two Greek words most commonly translated “love” are **agape** and **philia**...
 - a. It is common to make the following distinction
 - 1) **agape** - active good will, as that which is commanded
 - 2) **philia** - fondness, heartfelt affection, as that which cannot be forced
 - b. Yet the distinction between the two is not always clear cut
 - 1) **agape** - can also be defined as “brotherly love, affection” - **Thayer, Strong**
 - 2) **philia** - often commanded in the Scriptures - cf. **Ro 12:10; 1Co 16:22**

[As we examine more closely the way of love, we learn that both “**active goodwill**” and “**heartfelt affection**” are fundamental to The Way Of Christ. Indeed, consider how we are taught to love...]

I. THE WAY OF LOVE TAUGHT

A. TO LOVE GOD AND JESUS...

1. We are to love (**agape**) God heart, soul, mind, and strength - **Mk 12:30**
 2. We are to love (**philia**) Jesus, more than family - **1Co 16:22; Mt 10:37**
- **The greatest command of the Law, reinforced in the Gospel**

B. TO LOVE OUR BRETHREN...

1. We are to love (**agape**) one another as Christ loved us - **Jn 13:34-35**
 2. We are to be kindly affectionate (**philostorgos**, love of family) to one another with brotherly love (**philadelphia**, fraternal affection) - **Ro 12:10**
- **With brotherly love that is affectionate and demonstrative to others**

C. TO LOVE OUR FAMILIES...

1. Husbands are to love (**agape**) their wives (which includes to cherish) - **Ep 5:25,28-29**
 2. Wives are to love (**philandros**, to love as a friend) their husbands - **Tit 2:4**
 3. Mothers are to love their children (**philoteknos**, to be fond of one's children) - **Tit 2:4**
- **With heartfelt affection that should only be natural in families**

D. TO LOVE NEIGHBORS AND ENEMIES...

1. We are commanded to love (**agape**) our neighbor - **Mk 12:31**
 2. We are commanded to love (**agape**) our enemies - **Mt 5:44**
- **With active good will that allows no distinction between friend and foe**

[As followers of The Way of Christ, we are certainly to be a loving people! But where our love is weak, how can it be made stronger...?]

II. THE WAY OF LOVE LEARNED

A. TAUGHT BY GOD...

1. Concerning brotherly love (**philadelphia**) to love one another (**agape**) - **1Th 4:9**
2. By way of example (how He sent His Son) - **1Jn 4:9-10; Ro 5:8**
- **God teaches us how to love one another**

B. TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. By way of example (how He was willing to die for us) - **1Jn 3:16**
2. How He loved (**philia** and **agape**) His disciples - **Jn 11:3,5** (Lazarus, Mary, Martha); **Jn 13:1,34** (the disciples); **Jn 13:23; 20:2** (John)
- **Jesus teaches us how to love one another**

C. TAUGHT BY PAUL...

1. Who expounded on the qualities of love - **1Co 13:4-8**
2. Who taught Christians how to walk in love - **Ep 5:1-2**
3. Who taught husbands how to love their wives - **Ep 5:25-33**
4. Who practiced brotherly love (**agapetos**, beloved, dear) - cf. **Php 4:1**
- **Paul teaches us how to love in word and example**

D. TAUGHT BY PETER...

1. Who taught us to love one another (**philia** and **agape**) fervently - **1Pe 1:22; 4:8**
2. Who taught us to love (**agape**) the brotherhood, as brethren (**philadelphos**) - **1Pe 2:17; 3:8**
3. Who practiced brotherly love (**agapetos**, beloved, dear) - cf. **2Pe 3:15**
- **Peter teaches us how to love in word and example**

E. TAUGHT BY OTHER CHRISTIANS...

1. Older women should be capable of teaching the younger women - **Tit 2:3-4**
2. Even young Christians can set an example of how to love - **1Ti 4:12; 2Th 1:3**
- **Brethren (young and old) can teach us to love one another**

CONCLUSION

1. What is The Way Of Christ when it comes to love...?
 - a. It is **heartfelt affection** toward God and man
 - b. It is **active good will** toward everyone
2. **Where we lack** heartfelt affection and active good will...
 - a. We need to acknowledge the deficiency (as an indication of spiritual immaturity)
 - b. We need to be willing to learn how to love
3. **When we need to learn** to love others with a heartfelt love...
 - a. Look to the Father, to Jesus, to the apostles, and to other Christians
 - b. Take the initiative to practice active good will, and heartfelt affection will develop naturally

We have been born again, purified to have unfeigned, affectionate love for one another (**philadelphia**). Do we love one another (**agape**) fervently as we should, while walking in The Way Of Christ...? - cf. **1Pe 1:22-23**

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Joy

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of joy**...
 - a. Jesus spoke in order that His disciples' joy might be full - **Jn 15:11**
 - b. He did so that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves - **Jn 17:13**
2. Many Christians appear to fall short in experiencing such joy...
 - a. It is often apparent as they go about their daily living (dispirited, sad)
 - b. It frequently carries over into our worship (lack of enthusiasm, boredom)

[If The Way Of Christ is **the way of joy**, then how can Christians be filled with joy...?]

I. UNDERSTANDING JOY

A. COMPARE THE GREEK WORDS FOR JOY AND GRACE...

1. The word for joy is **chara**
 - a. Which Thayer defines as “**joy, gladness**”
 - b. Vine adds “**delight**”
 - c. By one count the word is used **60** times in the NT
 2. Closely related is the word **charis**
 - a. Which is the word most often translated as “**grace**”
 - b. Grace in the objective sense is “that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard” - **Vine**
- **Joy is gladness that comes from grace!**

B. CONSIDER THE RELATION OF JOY TO GRACE...

1. Joy is directly proportional to grace one has received, or at least to the perception of grace that one has received
 - a. Receive a small gift, and your joy might be minimal
 - b. Receive a large gift, and your joyous reaction is greater
 2. “If you have no joy in your religion, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere.”
- **Billy Sunday**
 3. “The reason why many poor souls have so little heat of joy in their hearts, is that they have so little light of Gospel knowledge in their mind.” - **William Gurnall**
- **The more we understand God’s grace, the more we will experience God’s joy!**

C. CONTEMPLATE THE ABIDING JOY OF THE LORD....

1. The Lord certainly does not want Christians to be joyless - cf. **Jn 15:11**
 2. The joy He gives is “*inexpressible and full of glory*”, able to sustain us in the worst of circumstances - cf. **1Pe 1:6-8**
- **The Lord has made it possible for the Christian to say: “Rejoice!” - Php 4:4**

[A failure to remember things graciously given which make for joy in our lives can explain why many Christians do not have the degree of **joy (gladness, delight)** they should have. But we have every

reason to be joyful. We just need to remember what it is that produces joy. Here are keys to...]

II. EXPERIENCING JOY

A. FAITH PRODUCES JOY...

1. Joy comes from having **a confident trust** (faith) in God - cf. **Php 1:25**
 - a. For faith in God dispels attitudes that prevent joy from occurring
 - b. Such as worry, doubt and fear - cf. **Mt 6:25-30; 14:27-31**
 2. This emphasizes the role of God's Word in producing joy...
 - a. For faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
 - b. In turn, faith produces joy - cf. **Ro 15:13**
- **Thus the need to read and study the Bible daily!**

B. OBEDIENCE PRODUCES JOY...

1. Obedience to the Word of God fosters joy in the hearts of the obedient
 - a. Notice the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:35-38**
 - b. Also the conversion of the Thessalonians - **1Th 1:6**
 2. Conversely, disobedience dispels joy and produces fear! - cf. **He 10:26-27**
- **Could lack of joy be an indication of lack of obedience on your part?**

C. FORGIVENESS PRODUCES JOY...

1. The guilt of sin is a major reason why many people lack joy
 - a. Awareness of such guilt causes stress, unhappiness, and worry
 - b. As Paul illustrated describing the dilemma of one struggling with sin - cf. **Ro 7:22-24**
 2. But where there is forgiveness, there can be joy!
 - a. Consider David's psalm of confession - **Psa 32:1-5,10-11**
 - b. The correlation between forgiveness and joy is also seen in **Psa 51:7-12**
 3. Those in Christ can enjoy forgiveness of sins and the joy that follows - **Ro 5:1-2,10-11**
- **If you have not yet received the forgiveness found only in Christ, there is no way to experience the abiding joy that comes only "in the Lord"**

D. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PRODUCES JOY...

1. It is a joy just to **witness** such fellowship
 - a. Paul experienced joy by witnessing love and fellowship in Philemon - **Phm 7**
 - b. He also found great joy in learning of the restoration of brethren - **2Co 7:7**
 2. How much more, the joy to **experience** such fellowship!
 - a. Paul rejoiced in the fellowship he had with the Philippians - **Php 4:10**
 - b. John spoke of the joy that comes of Christian fellowship reunited - **2Jn 12**
- **Are you developing the kind of Christian fellowship that adds to our joy?**

E. CHRISTIAN SERVICE PRODUCES JOY...

1. There is the joy of spreading the gospel
 - a. Barnabas rejoiced in the conversions at Antioch - **Ac 11:20-23**
 - b. The Christian Jews delighted to hear of the conversion of the Gentiles - **Ac 15:3**
 2. There is great joy in seeing the spiritual progress of others
 - a. This was a frequent source of joy to Paul - **Ro 16:19; Col 2:5; 1Th 3:6-9**
 - b. John wrote that this was the highest form of joy - **3Jn 4**
 3. Jesus also spoke of the "blessedness" (i.e., joy) of giving to others - **Ac 20:35**
- **Those willing to be involved in serving the Lord, whether it be through teaching or the**

giving of one's time, energy or money, will experience joy from such service!

CONCLUSION

1. **The way of joy** in Christ is available to all, presuming we are willing to receive it through:
 - a. Faith in Christ
 - b. Obedience to His Will
 - c. Forgiveness through His blood
 - d. Fellowship with His disciples
 - e. Service in His Kingdom

2. If you have not yet done so, why not begin experiencing **the way of joy** today by...
 - a. Obeying the gospel of Christ - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Receiving the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ - **Ep 1:7**
 - c. Participate in the fellowship of Christian love as you work toward bringing others to salvation in Christ - cf. **Ac 2:38-42**

Are you experiencing the joy that Christ intends for you to experience as you follow the Way of Christ...?

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Ro 15:13

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Peace

INTRODUCTION

1. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of peace**...
 - a. As foretold by Isaiah, the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace - **Isa 9:6-7**
 - b. As claimed by Jesus Himself, He offers a peace unlike any other - **Jn 14:27; 16:33**
2. The word **peace** conveys wonderful concepts...
 - a. “a state of harmony, tranquility”
 - b. “the absence of hostility, the absence of mental stress or anxiety”
3. In the Bible, the word **peace** is used to translate...
 - a. **Shalom** (Hebrew) - completeness, soundness, welfare, peace - **BDB Hebrew Dictionary**
 - b. **Eirene** (Greek) - often refers to the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ - **Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary**

[The inner tranquility and poise found in The Way Of Christ begins with...]

I. PEACE WITH GOD

A. WITHOUT GOD, NO TRUE PEACE IS POSSIBLE...

1. He is “the God of peace” - **Ro 15:33**
2. He offers perfect peace, peace like a river - **Isa 26:3; 48:18**

B. UNFORGIVEN SIN MAKES PEACE WITH GOD IMPOSSIBLE...

1. Sin separates us from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
2. Sin makes our lives like the troubled sea - **Isa 57:20-21**

C. THROUGH JESUS, GOD OFFERS PEACE TO THE SINNER...

1. We can be justified from our sins, and be at peace with God! - **Ro 5:1-2**
2. God’s love makes this peace possible - **Ro 5:6-9**
3. In Christ, we can be reconciled with God - **Ro 5:10-11; 2Co 5:18-21**

[Once we have peace with God, other forms of peace are possible. E.g., The Way Of Christ provides...]

II. PEACE WITH SELF

A. JESUS OFFERS PEACE WITHIN...

1. Peace that the world cannot provide - **Jn 14:27**
2. Peace unfazed by the world and its tribulations - **Jn 16:33**

B. JESUS PROVIDES SUCH PEACE...

1. Through **His teaching** (i.e., the Word)
 - a. To have faith - **Mt 6:25,30; 8:26; Jn 14:1**
 - b. To make God and His kingdom our priority - **Mt 6:31-34**

- c. To simplify our lives - **Lk 8:14; 10:41-42**
2. Through **His intercession** (i.e., prayer)
 - a. As we offer prayers of supplication and thanksgiving - **Php 4:6**
 - b. Whereby the peace of God guards our hearts and minds through Christ - **Php 4:7**

[By obeying His Word and being fervent in prayer, Jesus offers us the true antidote to anxiety and worry: a peace that surpasses all understanding! But there is more, The Way Of Christ also provides...]

III. PEACE WITH OTHERS

A. PEACE WITH MANKIND...

1. Jesus breaks down the barriers between mankind - **Ep 2:13-17**
2. He removes the racial, social and national barriers - cf. **Ga 3:28**

B. PEACE WITH FAMILIES...

1. Jesus provides peace for families seeking love and stability
2. Following Jesus' doctrine leads to peace in the family - cf. **Col 3:18-21**

C. PEACE WITH BRETHREN...

1. Jesus provides peace between brethren
2. Following Jesus' doctrine will lead to harmony among brethren - cf. **1Pe 3:8-12**

D. PEACE WITH CHURCHES...

1. Jesus offers peace for the ills of denominationalism
2. Heeding the prayer of Jesus is the cure for denominationalism - cf. **Jn 17:20-23; 1Co14:33**

E. PEACE WITH ENEMIES...

1. Jesus shows us how to have peace with our enemies
2. Through precept and example, Jesus shows us how to make peace - cf. **Mt 5:44; Lk 23:34**

CONCLUSION

1. The Way Of Christ is truly **the way of peace**, for Jesus helps us to have...
 - a. Peace with God
 - b. Peace with self
 - c. Peace with others
2. But is important to do this in the right order...
 - a. **Peace with God must come first**, for there is no peace for the wicked - **Isa 48:22**
 - b. **Peace with self comes next**, otherwise peace with others is complicated by our own turmoil
 - c. **Peace with others naturally comes last**, as we are then able to be "peacemakers" - **Mt 5:9**

Have you made peace with God (**by obeying the gospel of Christ**)? Have you found peace within (**by growing in the grace of Christ**)? Are you making peace with others (**by growing in the knowledge of Christ**)?

The Way Of Christ invites you to follow Jesus as He leads you to **the way of peace**...

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way." - 2Th 3:16

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Unity

INTRODUCTION

1. Thus far in this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is...
 - a. The way to **God**
 - b. The way to **life**
 - c. The way to **truth**
 - d. The way of **love**
 - e. The way of **joy**
 - f. The way of **peace**
2. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of unity**...
 - a. Christ did much and continues to do more to attain unity
 - b. Christians have the duty to maintain unity

[Let's begin by reviewing...]

I. HOW CHRIST ATTAINS UNITY

A. JESUS FORETOLD OF UNITY...

1. He spoke of there being one flock and one shepherd - **Jn 10:16**
2. Those "not of this fold" that would be brought in are likely the Gentiles

B. JESUS PRAYED FOR UNITY...

1. He prayed fervently that His believers be one - **Jn 17:20-23**
2. That the world might believe and know He came from God

C. JESUS DIED FOR UNITY...

1. His death on the cross broke the wall of division - **Ep 2:13-16**
2. So that Jew and Gentile can be one new body

D. JESUS SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. As promised, to guide the apostles into all truth - **Jn 16:12-13**
2. Thus they taught of "the unity of the Spirit"- **Ep 4:4-6**

E. JESUS ADDS THE SAVED TO HIS ONE BODY...

1. When people obey the gospel, they are added by the Lord to His Church - **Ac 2:38-41,47**
2. As the Church, they become members of His one body - **Ep 1:22-23; 4:4**

F. JESUS GAVE GIFTS TO HIS CHURCH...

1. Various offices or function designed to lead to the unity of the faith - **Ep 4:11-16**
2. Inspired apostles and prophets, to reveal the truth of God
3. Evangelists, pastors and teachers, to teach the truth of God

G. JESUS CULLS THE UNFAITHFUL...

1. Disciples who do not bear fruit are cut off - **Jn 15:1-2,6**
2. Churches that do not remain true are removed from His presence - **Re 2:5**

[Christ has done much to create and ensure unity! But we also have a duty to do our part...]

II. HOW CHRISTIANS MAINTAIN UNITY

A. BY HEEDING HIS PRAYER ...

1. Disciples should take Jesus' prayer for unity seriously - **Jn 17:20-23**
2. The apostle Paul certainly did - **1Co 1:10-13**
3. Thus we should discard any reality or semblance of division
 - a. Such as creeds and traditions of men that divide
 - b. Such as denominational names and organizations

B. BY ABIDING IN HIS APOSTLES' DOCTRINE...

1. That is what characterized the early church - **Ac 2:42**
2. The apostles' doctrine was accepted as the Word of God - **1Th 2:13; 1Co 14:37**
3. Thus we should be content with abiding in the apostles' doctrine
 - a. Not latter day revelations by self-professed prophets
 - b. Not new enlightenments by church councils or decrees

C. BY KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT...

1. The oneness of the body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God - **Ep 4:3-6**
2. Doing so in the bond of peace - **Ep 4:3; cf. 2Ti 2:23-26**
3. Thus we should strive for unity, but in a peaceful manner
 - a. Not compromising the truth of the Spirit
 - b. Not compromising the spirit of Christ

D. BY DEVELOPING THE MIND OF CHRIST...

1. Being of one mind through humility and respect for others - **Php 2:1-4**
2. Having the mind of Christ, who humbled Himself for us - **Php 2:5-8**
3. Thus we should work hard for unity, remembering Jesus
 - a. Who died that we might have unity in Him
 - b. Who did so with humility and love for the lost

E. BY AVOIDING AND WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNFAITHFUL...

1. Especially those who cause divisions - **Ro 16:17; 1Ti 6:3-5; Tit 3:10-11**
2. Also those who refuse to repent of their sins - **1Co 5:11-13; 2Th 3:6-14**
3. Thus we should do our part together with what Jesus does
 - a. Avoiding churches that contribute to religious division
 - b. Withdrawing from Christians who refuse to follow Jesus

CONCLUSION

1. The Way Of Christ is **the way of unity** because it is important to Jesus...
 - a. He prayed and died to make such unity possible
 - b. His apostles charged His followers to preserve that precious unity
2. Those who respect Jesus' efforts will follow **the way of unity**...
 - a. By abiding in His word, developing His attitude
 - b. By preserving His truth, withdrawing from those who do not

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” - Psa 133:1

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Prayer

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is...
 - a. The way to **God**
 - b. The way to **life**
 - c. The way to **truth**
 - d. The way of **love**
 - e. The way of **joy**
 - f. The way of **peace**
 - g. The way of **unity**
2. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of prayer**...
 - a. Jesus was a man of prayer who taught His disciples to pray
 - b. Prayer is too important for Christians to neglect as they follow Jesus

[Let's first look more closely at why The Way of Christ is...]

I. THE WAY OF PRAYER

A. JESUS WAS MAN OF PRAYER...

1. He sought solitary opportunities to pray - **Mk 1:35; 6:46**
2. He prayed before special occasions - **Lk 6:12; 22:39-46**
3. He prayed spontaneously - **Mt 11:25; Jn 11:41; Lk 23:34,46**
- **If the Son of God needed to pray, much more the children of God!**

B. JESUS TAUGHT OTHERS TO PRAY...

1. How they should pray - **Lk 11:1-4**
2. To be persistent and humble in prayer - **Lk 11:5-13; 18:1-8,9-14**
- **As disciples, we must heed our Teacher regarding prayer!**

C. JESUS NOW INTERCEDES FOR US IN PRAYER...

1. He is now our merciful and faithful High Priest - **He 2:17-18**
2. Making it possible to boldly approach God - **He 4:14-16**
3. He is our intercessor and advocate - **He 7:25; Ro 8:34; 1Jn 2:1**
- **His participation in our prayers help make them powerful (see below)!**

D. HIS APOSTLES STRESSED PRAYER...

1. By their own example - **Ro 1:9; Ep 1:16; Php 1:4; Col 1:9; 1Th 1:2**
2. By their teaching - **Ro 12:12; Ep 6:18; Col 4:2; 1Th 5:17-18**
- **Frequent, fervent prayer characterizes those who follow The Way Of Christ!**

[To stress further the importance of the role of prayer in the life of the follower of Christ, consider...]

II. THE POWER OF PRAYER

A. FORGIVENESS...

1. The Christian can find forgiveness through the blood of Christ - **1Jn 1:7-10**
2. Thus the erring Christian is told to repent and pray - **Ac 8:22**
- **Don't you want assurance of knowing that your sins are forgiven?**

B. PEACE OF MIND...

1. The antidote to anxiety is to pray - **Php 4:6**
2. The Christian will find their hearts and minds guarded by the peace of God - **Php 4:7**
-- **Don't you want peace of mind and heart that surpasses understanding?**

C. EMPOWERMENT...

1. Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be strengthened in the inner man - **Ep 3:14-16,20**
2. When we need to be strong, Christians can likewise pray for themselves!
-- **Don't you want power that is beyond our comprehension?**

D. OPPORTUNITY...

1. Paul realized that God provided him opportunity to teach others - **1Co 3:5** (NASB)
2. He knew that the Lord often opened doors for such opportunities - **1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12**
3. He therefore requested prayer that such opportunities would continue - **Col 4:3**
-- **Don't you want the Lord to give you opportunity to lead others to Him?**

E. BOLDNESS...

1. When the apostles needed boldness, they prayed and God delivered - **Ac 4:23-31**
2. When Paul needed boldness, he asked for prayers in his behalf - **Ep 6:19-20**
-- **Don't you want boldness when you speak to others about Jesus?**

F. WISDOM...

1. Wisdom is not knowledge, but insight that makes the best use of the knowledge one has
2. The Christian is promised wisdom through prayer without doubt - **Jm 1:5-8**
-- **Don't you want the wisdom that comes from above?**

G. HEALING...

1. Those who are sick should ask elders to pray for them - **Jm 5:14-15**
2. Those who have sinned should confess, and we should pray for one another - **Jm 5:16**
-- **Don't you want God's aid when in need of physical or spiritual healing?**

H. TRANQUILITY...

1. The Scriptures proclaim God has ultimate control over the nations - **Dan 4:17; Ro 13:1-7**
2. Thus we are commanded to pray for our rulers, that we may lead a quiet (tranquil, ASV) and peaceable life - **1Ti 2:1-2**
-- **Don't you want to live in peace and tranquility, for others as well?**

CONCLUSION

1. Without frequent and fervent prayer...
 - a. We miss out on so much that God desires for our lives
 - b. We will not remain faithful and true on The Way Of Christ
2. So let us follow **the way of prayer** as taught by Jesus and His apostles...
 - a. "...that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" - **Lk 18:1**
 - b. "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" - **Col 4:2**

"pray without ceasing" - 1Th 5:17

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Forgiveness

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is...
 - a. The way to **God**
 - b. The way to **life**
 - c. The way to **truth**
 - d. The way of **love**
 - e. The way of **joy**
 - f. The way of **peace**
 - g. The way of **unity**
 - h. The way of **prayer**
2. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of forgiveness**...
 - a. When Jesus taught how to pray, He stressed the need to forgive
 - b. Time and again, by precept and example, Jesus taught forgiveness
3. What does it mean to forgive...?
 - a. The Greek word is **aphiemi**
 - b. Literally: to send away, to give up, keep no longer - **Thayer**
 - c. To give up resentment against or the desire to punish; stop being angry with; pardon - **Webster**

[Let's first look more closely at why The Way of Christ is...]

I. THE WAY OF FORGIVENESS

A. TAUGHT BY PRECEPT...

1. **By Jesus**, in His sayings
 - a. Teaching on prayer - **Mt 6:14-15; Mk 11:25-26**
 - b. Instructing His disciples - **Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:3-4**
 - c. The parable of the unforgiving servant - **Mt 18:23-35**
 2. **By Paul**, in his epistles
 - a. To the Ephesians - **Ep 4:32**
 - b. To the Colossians - **Col 3:13**
- **For those forgiven or seeking forgiveness, forgiving others is necessary!**

B. TAUGHT BY EXAMPLE...

1. **By Jesus**, as He was being crucified
 - a. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." - **Lk 23:34**
 - b. In calling upon God to forgive, Jesus showed His willingness to forgive
 2. **By Stephen**, as he was being stoned
 - a. "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." - **Ac 7:60**
 - b. In calling upon Jesus to forgive, Stephen showed His willingness to forgive
- **Our Lord and His first martyr exemplify the spirit of forgiveness!**

[The Way Of Christ is the way of forgiveness. But forgiving others is not human nature: **"To err is human, but to forgive is divine"** (Alexander Pope). How can we be partakers of this divine nature..?]

II. THE PRACTICE OF FORGIVENESS

A. DEVELOPING FORGIVENESS...

1. It helps to remember **why we must forgive**:
 - a. We cannot be forgiven by God unless we forgive others - **Mt 6:14-15**
 - b. The unforgiving person will be punished without mercy! - **Mt 18:35; Jm 2:13**
 - c. Vengeance belongs to God, not us; our duty is to show mercy - **Ro 12:19-21**
 2. It helps to remember **as we try to forgive**:
 - a. Sins against us pale in comparison to our sins against God - **Mt 18:23-34**
 - b. We are called to follow the example of Christ - **Ep 4:32; 5:1-2**
 - c. Those who injure us need sympathy and love, which we owe them - **Ro 13:8**
 3. It helps to remember **practical reasons to forgive** (from the Mayo Clinic website):
 - a. Healthier relationships
 - b. Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
 - c. Less stress and hostility
 - d. Lower blood pressure
 - e. Fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
 - f. Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse
- **The spirit and willingness to forgive increases as we grow in Christ**

B. EXPRESSING FORGIVENESS...

1. We should forgive when others ask for it
 - a. Whenever a brother repents - **Lk 17:3**
 - b. Whenever a brother says "I repent" - **Lk 17:4**
 2. Can we forgive those who have not asked for it, or repented?
 - a. It is true that God requires repentance before forgiveness - **Ac 2:38; 3:19; 17:30**
 - b. But we are not God; God is the only true Judge - **Jm 4:11-12**
 - c. God is perfect, He knows the hearts of men; we are prone to misread and misjudge
 - d. Ultimately it is God who forgives the guilt of sin; we can only give up grudges
 - e. Harboring grudges hurts ourselves, making us embittered ("judges with grudges")
 - f. We are to forgive **as we pray**, not necessarily wait until one repents - **Mk 11:25-26**
 - g. Jesus and Stephen forgave others who had yet to repent - **Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60**
 3. What about, "I'll forgive, but not forget"?
 - a. "I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying, I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note - torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one." - **Henry Ward Beecher**
 - b. Forgiveness is the letting go of resentment; remembering is not letting go!
- **Knowing my own imperfections, I prefer to err on the side of being too forgiving**

CONCLUSION

1. We have considered why it is important to forgive others...
 - a. To receive forgiveness from God
 - b. To follow the example of Christ and His early disciples
2. This simply confirms what we studied previously...
 - a. The Way Of Christ is the way to life, love, joy, and peace
 - b. A path where forgiveness is both received and extended by those who are on it

***"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."* - Mk 11:25-26**

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Bearing Fruit

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is...
 - a. The way to **God**
 - b. The way to **life**
 - c. The way to **truth**
 - d. The way of **love**
 - e. The way of **joy**
 - f. The way of **peace**
 - g. The way of **unity**
 - h. The way of **prayer**
2. Now we shall consider that The Way Of Christ is the way of **bearing fruit**...
 - a. Jesus described it as a mark of discipleship - **Jn 15:8**
 - b. Disciples have been appointed to bear fruit - **Jn 15:16**
 - c. Failure to bear fruit results in being taken away and burned - **Jn 15:1-2,6**

[The end of unfruitful disciples is dreadful to contemplate. To ensure that we bear fruit and remain in The Way of Christ, note first that...]

I. BEARING FRUIT CONTINGENT ON ABIDING IN CHRIST

A. AS EXPLAINED BY JESUS...

1. We must abide in Him, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself - **Jn 15:4**
2. Abiding in him, we bear much fruit; without Him we can do nothing - **Jn 15:5**
3. Acknowledged by Paul, a successful fruit bearer - **Php 4:13; 2Co 3:5**

B. HOW WE CAN ABIDE IN CHRIST...

1. First, by putting Him on in baptism - **Ga 3:27**
2. Then, by abiding in His love, keeping His commandments - **Jn 15:9-10; cf. 14:15,21-23**

[To be a disciple, we must bear fruit. To bear fruit, we must abide in Christ. To abide in Christ, we must keep His commandments. But what kind of fruits will disciples bear...?]

II. BEARING FRUIT MANIFESTED IN VARIOUS WAYS

A. WINNING SOULS TO CHRIST...

1. As expressed by Paul in his desire to go to Rome - **Ro 1:13**
2. Disciples creating more disciples is a one way to bear fruit - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**

B. SHARING WITH THOSE IN NEED...

1. As expressed by Paul in describing the contribution to poor saints - **Ro 15:25-28**
2. Which was evidence of God's grace at work in the givers - cf. **2Co 8:1-2; 9:12-14**

C. DEVELOPING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER...

1. Indicating that one is walking in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16,22-23**
2. Evidence that one is diligent in growing in the true knowledge of Jesus - **2Pe 1:5-8**

D. PRAISING GOD AND GIVING THANKS...

1. The fruit of our lips in praise and prayer are spiritual sacrifices - **He 13:15**

2. Which we are to offer continually - **He 13:15**

[As we bear fruit in these different ways, we not only glorify God and prove to be fruitful disciples, we also experience the “abundant” life of which Jesus speaks (**Jn 10:10**)...]

III. BEARING FRUIT LEADS TO THE FULFILLED LIFE

A. WINNING SOULS PRODUCES JOY...

1. As Paul found to be case with the Thessalonians - **1Th 2:19-20**
2. As John realized with his “children” - **3Jn 1:4**
- **One reason many Christians do not live a life of joy is that they never bear fruit in leading others to Christ!**

B. SHARING WITH OTHERS PRODUCES HAPPINESS...

1. Those who give are “blessed” - **Ac 20:35**
2. The word “blessed” can be translated “happy”
- **If Christians are so materialistic and selfish that they do not share, they will never know the blessedness of giving!**

C. DEVELOPING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER PRODUCES ASSURANCE...

1. Growing in the true knowledge of Christ ensures an “abundant entrance” into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord - **2Pe 1:8-11**
2. Developing a Christ-like love gives assurance of one’s discipleship and salvation - **Jn 13:34-35; 1Jn 3:14,18-19**
- **Many Christians have no assurance; and no wonder, if their character remains unchanged as evidenced by little love for the brethren!**

D. PRAISING GOD AND GIVING THANKS PRODUCES PEACE...

1. Prayer is the antidote for anxiety - **Php 4:6**
2. For in response to prayer God will guard our hearts through His peace - **Php 4:7**
- **Failing to bear much fruit in regards to prayer, Christians will be filled with anxious lives, not abundant living!**

CONCLUSION

1. **The way of bearing fruit** is essential to The Way Of Christ, for bearing fruit is necessary...
 - a. To be a **faithful** disciple of Jesus Christ
 - b. To be a **fulfilled** disciple of Jesus Christ
2. If you desire to truly follow The Way Of Christ...
 - a. Abide in Him by keeping His commands
 - b. Produce fruit that glorifies His Father

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”
(Jn 15:8)

If you are not yet a disciple of Jesus, then let His own words lead you to become one - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Service

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is the way...
 - a. To **God**
 - b. To **life**
 - c. To **truth**
 - d. Of **love**
 - e. Of **joy**
 - f. Of **peace**
 - g. Of **unity**
 - h. Of **prayer**
 - i. Of **forgiveness**
 - j. Of **bearing fruit**
2. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of service**...
 - a. Jesus came to serve, giving His life as a ransom for us - **Mt 20:28; Php 2:5-8**
 - b. He continues to serve as our High Priest - **He 7:24-25**

[As we examine this facet of The Way Of Christ more closely, let's first take notice of...]

I. THE WAY OF SERVICE TAUGHT

A. JESUS TEACHES US TO SERVE...

1. He taught that service leads to true greatness - **Mt 20:25-28**
 2. He demonstrated the service He desires of His disciples - **Jn 13:12-17**
- **Service leads to greatness, but also to happiness ("blessed are you if you do them")**

B. HIS APOSTLES TEACH US TO SERVE...

1. Using our liberty in Christ to serve one another in love - **Ga 5:13**
 2. Using our gifts to minister to one another, that God might be glorified - **1Pe 4:9-10**
- **Service leads to the glory of God, as He provides the ability to serve**

[How might we serve those around us...?]

II. THE WAY OF SERVICE MANIFESTED

A. WE CAN SERVE IN THE KINGDOM...

1. In the area of **evangelism** (reaching the lost for Christ)
 - a. Someone led you to Christ, can you not lead another to Him? - **Jn 1:35-42**
 - b. Begin by being hospitable, offering acts of kindness and service
 - c. At the very least, invite to services, offer a Bible correspondence course
 - d. Hone your skills in evangelism, seek to improve your ability to teach the gospel to others
2. In the area of **edification** (building up the body of Christ)
 - a. Many have contributed to your spiritual growth, can you help others? - **Ep 4:16**
 - b. Begin by being present at every service, greeting every one present
 - c. Take a special interest in those who are new, encourage them
 - d. Offer to help teach our children, even if it only means to assist another teacher
 - e. Volunteer whatever service you can render in the work and worship of the church
3. In the area of **benevolence** (meeting needs of those in Christ)
 - a. Has anyone ever showed you kindness? "Be kind to one another" - **Ep 4:32**
 - b. Visit the sick or elderly in hospitals, and at home

- c. Render service such as cleaning, transportation, errands, etc.
 - d. Minister to the poor, hungry, or those otherwise in need
- **There are indeed many ways to serve in the vineyard of the Lord!**

B. WE CAN SERVE IN OTHER WAYS...

1. In the **home**
 - a. Husbands and wives serving one another
 - b. Parents and children serving one another
 - c. Siblings serving one another
 2. In the **workplace**
 - a. Managers and laborers serving one another
 - b. Employees serving one another
 3. In the **community**
 - a. Neighbors serving one another
 - b. The affluent and the poor serving one another
 - c. Friend and foe serving one another
- **There are many opportunities to demonstrate the way of Christ in our lives!**

CONCLUSION

1. The Way Of Christ may seem to be counterintuitive...
 - a. “Whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant” - **Mt 20:26**
 - b. “Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” - **Mt 20:28**
2. But the way of service leads to...
 - a. Love and respect in the hearts of others
 - b. Eventual exaltation by God - cf. **Mt 23:11-12**

In our journey along The Way Of Christ, let us follow **the way of service**, remembering the words of our Lord...

“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” - Matthew 20:28

The Way Of Christ

The Way Of Suffering

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series we have seen how The Way Of Christ is the way...
 - a. To **God**
 - b. To **life**
 - c. To **truth**
 - d. Of **love**
 - e. Of **joy**
 - f. Of **peace**
 - g. Of **unity**
 - h. Of **prayer**
 - i. Of **forgiveness**
 - j. Of **bearing fruit**
 - k. Of **service**
2. The Way Of Christ is also **the way of suffering...**
 - a. Jesus had to suffer to enter His glory - **Lk 24:25-26**
 - b. He calls us to follow in His steps, if need be

[As we examine this element of The Way Of Christ, let's start with...]

I. THE WAY OF SUFFERING TAUGHT

A. BY JESUS...

1. He warned His disciples they would be hated and persecuted - **Jn 15:18-20**
2. Yet He said they would be blessed for suffering for His name - **Mt 5:10-12**

B. BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. Paul warned his converts to expect suffering - **Ac 14:21-22; Php 1:29-30; 2Ti 3:12**
2. Peter wrote to prepare his readers for suffering - **1Pe 2:20-23; 4:12-16; 5:8-10**

[Those who followed The Way Of Christ in the first century knew well that it would be **the way of suffering**. Indeed, as we consider this subject more closely we can find several examples of...]

II. THE WAY OF SUFFERING MANIFESTED

A. IN THE EARLY CHURCH...

1. The apostles suffered for the cause of Christ
 - a. They were beaten and threatened - **Ac 5:40**
 - b. They suffered hardship for their service - **1Co 4:9-13**
 - c. They all suffered martyrdom, with one possible exception (John, who was exiled)
 2. Paul in particular suffered much for Christ
 - a. He lists many things he suffered as a minister - **2Co 11:23-28**
 - b. He later experienced years of imprisonment and was finally beheaded
 3. Christians during the first three centuries suffered much
 - a. By unbelieving Jews and Romans - **Ac 7:54-60; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; Re 2:9-10,13**
 - b. By emperors of Rome - such as Nero, Domitian, Diocletian
 4. Yet consider their attitude toward such suffering
 - a. They gloried in them, rejoiced in them - **Ro 5:3-4; Jm 1:2-4; 1Pe 4:16**
 - b. They knew that in Christ they were more than conquerors - **Ro 8:35-39**
- **As Jesus forewarned, many in the early church suffered for His name**

B. IN OUR TIME...

1. Many believers in Christ continue to suffer much
 - a. In Muslim and Hindu nations
 - b. In communist nations like China and North Korea
 2. Even in the USA and other western countries there are forms of suffering
 - a. Christians and their faith are often ridiculed
 - b. Many are sometimes rejected by friends, co-workers, neighbors
 3. Remember the words of Jesus - **Jn 15:18-20**
 - a. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you"
 - b. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own"
 - c. "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you"
 4. Remember the words of Paul - **2Ti 3:12**
 - a. "...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"
 - b. One cannot live godly in an ungodly world and not experience conflict
 5. Remember the words of Peter - **1Pe 4:14,16,19**
 - a. "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you"
 - b. "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter"
 - c. "let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator"
- **We need to be prepared for suffering, in whatever form it may come**

CONCLUSION

1. As stressed in previous lessons, The Way Of Christ is the way to...
 - a. A truly abundant life even now
 - b. A life of love, joy, peace
2. Yet God sometimes allows the wicked to persecute His children. Why...?
 - a. "Persecution often does in this life what the last great day will do completely - separate the wheat from the tares." - **James Milner**
 - b. Persecution (suffering) can have a purifying effect - cf. **1Pe 1:6-7**
 - c. Enduring it can make us worthy of the kingdom of God - cf. **2Th 1:3-5**

So if it should happen that we suffer for the name of Christ, let us not be discouraged, remembering the words of His apostle Peter:

*And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
(ESV) - 1Pe 5:10*

Note that God has called us to "His eternal glory in Christ", which leads to our last and final lesson in this series...

The Way Of Christ

The Way To Glory

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series of lessons we have examined The Way Of Christ...
 - a. As the way to **God, truth, and life**
 - b. As the way of **love, joy, and peace**
 - c. As the way of **unity, prayer, and forgiveness**
 - d. As the way of **bearing fruit, service, and suffering**

2. In this, our final lesson, we shall consider how The Way Of Christ is **the way to glory...!**
 - a. Jesus will one day come in glory - **Mt 25:31**
 - b. For which we are to patiently wait - **Tit 2:13**

[Not only do we look for Jesus to come in glory, but to be glorified with Him! For when we follow The Way Of Christ, we have...]

I. THE PROMISE OF GLORY

A. GIVEN BY JESUS...

1. To honor those who serve Him - **Jn 12:26**
2. To be with Jesus, to behold His own glory - **Jn 17:24**
3. To shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father! - **Mt 13:43**
- **A wonderful promise given by Jesus to those who would follow Him!**

B. GIVEN BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. By the apostle **Paul**
 - a. Called by the gospel for this very purpose - **2Th 2:14**
 - b. Experienced even now, as we grow as Jesus' disciples - **2Co 3:18**
 - c. Our temporary, light afflictions will result in an eternal weight of glory! - **2Co 4:17-18;**
cf. **Ro 8:18**
 - d. We shall appear with Christ in glory! - **Col 3:4**
 - e. We will be glorified together with Him! - **2Th 1:10,12**
 - f. As joint heirs together with Christ! - **Ro 8:16-17**
2. By the apostle **Peter**
 - a. To those with genuine faith - **1Pe 1:7**
 - b. To elders who serve faithfully - **1Pe 5:1,4**
 - c. For we have been called to God's eternal glory - **1Pe 5:10**
 - **Wonderful promises given to those accept The Way Of Christ!**

[To encourage us to remain faithful and steadfast on The Way Of Christ, we are also given...]

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF GLORY

A. IN TERMS OF OUR RESURRECTION...

1. Raised in glory, with a spiritual body incorruptible, immortal - **1Co 15:42-44,50-53**

2. Our lowly bodies conformed to Jesus' glorious body - **Php 3:20-21**; cf. **1Jn 3:2**
-- **Thus we have the hope being raised from the dead in glory and honor!**

B. IN TERMS OF OUR ETERNAL DESTINY...

1. The heavenly city, the New Jerusalem - **Re 21:1-7**
2. The great city, the holy Jerusalem - **Re 21:10-21**
3. Illuminated by the glory of God and the light of the Lamb - **Re 21:22-23**
4. The nations walking in its light, bringing their glory into it - **Re 21:24-27**
-- **Thus we have the hope of living eternally in glory and honor!**

CONCLUSION

1. With such a hope of glory, is not The Way Of Christ worth following?
2. Indeed, as we have stressed time and again, The Way Of Christ...
 - a. Is the way to **God**, the only way because of Jesus' atoning death
 - b. Is the way to **truth**, as Jesus has come to bear witness to truth
 - c. Is the way to **life**, both abundant life now and the eternal life to come
 - d. Is the way of **love**, loving God, our brethren, even our enemies
 - e. Is the way of **joy**, responding to the riches of God's grace
 - f. Is the way of **peace**, peace with God, self, and others
 - g. Is the way of **unity**, following Jesus without denominationalism, sectarianism
 - h. Is the way of **prayer**, with Jesus as our example and our high priest
 - i. Is the way of **forgiveness**, forgiving others so God may forgive us
 - j. Is the way of **bearing fruit**, proving to be disciples of Jesus, glorifying God
 - k. Is the way of **service**, serving one another as Jesus served us
 - l. Is the way of **suffering**, if need be, for righteousness' sake and the name of Christ
 - m. Is the way to **glory**, glorified together with Christ for eternity!
3. If you are not yet on The Way Of Christ, then take **the first steps**...
 - a. Obey the gospel of Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38**
 - b. Abide in the apostles' doctrine in fellowship with His church - **Ac 2:41-42,47**

If you have questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to ask. Together, we can encourage and help one another to follow in the Way of Christ, doing so in the words of the Psalmist...

You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

- Psa 73:24-26