

09.28.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “Imitation of Christ”

Scripture Reading: [1 John 2:3-17](#); [Ephesians 5:1-20](#)

Reflection: Pastor Henry

If I were to write, “Imitation is the _____ form of _____...”, would you be able to fill in the blanks with the correct words?

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery is a proverb that is attributed to Charles Caleb Colton in the 19th century. He used it in his work *Lacon: or Many Things in Few Words*. When this proverb is used or spoken about someone, it reminds us that when someone is trying to imitate what another person does, owns, or thinks, it’s a compliment to that person being imitated.

When I was a kid, playing basketball with my classmates and teammates, we all wanted to “Be like Mike.” Michael Jordan that is. He was the best player. We all wanted to play like him. So, we tried our best to imitate his moves and the way he played the game. (In case you are wondering, we didn’t do a very good job 😊)

Who did you try and imitate growing up? Who are you trying to imitate today?

In our text for this week from 1st John 2, John reminds us, those who have accepted Jesus’ invitation to come follow him, that part of what it means for us to follow Jesus is to “...live as Jesus did.” Listen again to what John writes in verses 5-6:

“This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”

John says if we follow Jesus and if we claim to live in Jesus, we must live as Jesus did. John says we must imitate Jesus’ life in how we live our own life. Notice with me that this command from John is not optional. John doesn’t we should try to live as Jesus did. Rather, John says we must live as Jesus did. Instead of trying to “Be like Mike” (or any other person), we must “Be like Jesus.”

The [Imitation of Christ](#) in Christian theology has been an important part of Christian ethics and spirituality since the beginning of the church. The Apostle John and the Apostle Paul in their New Testament letters to the church stress its importance for followers of Jesus. Saint Augustine, one of the early church fathers, stressed its importance during the 3rd century. Saint Francis of Assisi stressed its importance in the 1200s. Thomas A Kempis, a Dutch priest in the 1400s, stressed its importance in a devotional book he wrote entitled the [Imitation of Christ](#). This devotional is the most widely read Christian devotional work after the Bible.

But, if you were asked to give an answer for how vital is the Imitation of Christ to the church today in the 21st century, what would you say? How important is it to you? How important is it to the people you interact with? How important is it for us to “...live as Jesus did” at work, school, and at home?

Pastor Doug in his sermon this past Sunday reminded us that “When we love someone very much, we start spending quality time with them and then – we start looking like them. The principle here is, we become like those we love. As we grow to be like those we love, we begin to reflect their character, their wisdom, and their love. John is saying, if we “walk with Jesus” (2:6) we’ll not only learn to love him more and “look like him more and more,” we’ll start to love like him more and more.”

Are we loving and looking and living more and more like Jesus?

Prayer:

Father in Heaven, teach us to walk in Jesus’ love so we might learn to love as he loves. Jesus, teach us to keep our eyes fixed on you, to grow daily in our knowledge and obedience. Spirit of God, help us to reflect your love in a love-deficient world. AMEN.

Action Item for Day/Week:

If we are honest, we all are imitating someone/something in our lives. But are we clear about who or what that is? Take some time to honestly reflect on who or what you are trying to imitate in your life. Where does the call to live like Jesus fit into this picture?

Songs for today:

[Take My Life and Let it Be](#)

[To Be Like You](#)

[Only Jesus](#)