

Chapter 17

REFLECTION OF JESUS



"REFLECTION OF CHRIST" Compliments of United Methodist Church, Mountain Grove, MO.

INTRODUCTION:

As the words are penned in this the last chapter of "My Jewish Messiah", methinks the reflections of his glory are never purer or more distinct than at this moment. Having followed the dusty footprints of his sandals on the highways and byways in his three years of ministry on earth, the compassion, love, and mercy he patiently showered down on others, will undoubtedly, linger in your senses like an exquisite sweet-scented perfume; one that will anoint your being forever.

In addition, the visual image of his gentle hands healing and caressing the sick and downtrodden in society will pluck at your heart strings eternally. Thus, the forcefulness and intensity witnessed in his eyes when turning over the tables in the Temple in anger because of their treatment, as well as a demonstration of his zeal for the House of God, will always serve as model of fairness and justice.

Then, after listening to his melodious, yet powerful, voice when delivering the Sermon on the Mount, you learned quickly that the beauty and music you were on a quest to find within yourself were only possible if originating from the Father; thus brought about by mirroring the beatitudes of the kingdom of God. Then, during the process of internalizing the teachings of the Master, you rapidly realized that your soul's disquieted longing that felt like a bottomless empty cavern could only be filled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the very breath of the living God. The water of life that flowed directly to you from the pierced side of our Savior on the cross was the only way to quench your thirst; a source of moisture that would never go dry; keeping your spirit refreshed and supple for all eternity.

Then, at the Passover of the Messiah held in the Upper Room, when you leaned your head upon the Savior's bosom accepting his invitation to come and dine; and thus partaking of his flesh and drinking of his blood, the fellowship felt more precious than the rarest of jewels. The Lord's invitation to enjoy this type of union with him surpassed mankind's ability to fathom; a concept of nearness that is without definition; especially when internalized while standing at the foot of the cross and hearing his words, "Forgive them. They know not what they do."

Finally, when hearing the accounts of the numerous eye witnesses that discovered the empty tomb and then communed with the RESSURECTED SAVIOR, assurance was offered that the Jewish Messiah arose and, indeed, had conquered death for all time. Thus, when the sun sets on your earthly life and the damask curtains are closed, his angels will immediately carry you on the wings of glory to your heavenly home where you will be with him forever. To know your Jewish Messiah is to love him!

BECOMING HIS DISCIPLES

Let us now focus on the three words, "Feed my sheep," that Jesus spoke to Peter after he asked him if he loved him. Folks, this command from our Savior applies to every follower; meaning all of us. Another way to state this directive from our Lord is to quote again the words he spoke to his disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Thus, simply standing motionless waiting for his return is not even a possibility. Instead, we are to strap on the Messiah's well worn sandals and go out into the world in service to others. Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg get right to the issue with this wonderful definition of discipleship in their book "Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus" by stating: "This approach involves not just information, but transformation. God's goal isn't simply to fill the world with people who believe the right things. It is to fill the world with people who shine with the brilliance of Christ." They go on to say, "As followers of Jesus, we are still called to live out the adventure of discipleship, becoming like Jesus through the power of his Spirit at work within us."

IMAGES OF DISCIPLESHIP




As the writer searched for images of Jesus painted by individuals from past generations, it was very interesting to note how different each one appeared. The renderings completed by the artists were fascinatingly dependent upon both race and geographical location. Study the mural to the left containing pictures of Christ and note the differences.

Do you think, perhaps, we are all supposed to see him in our own way? One thing I have witnessed when sitting at the bedside of a departing saint is their ability to recognize the Lord. A smile and look of recognition will cross the resident's wrinkled face accompanied by the words, "Jesus!" "Jesus!" To know him is to love him...and they do!

Oh, Sweet Jesus, do let me say, I am but one last breath away, from seeing Your heavenly, radiant face and feeling the warmth of Your embrace.

Consequently, just as these images above show great variances in the appearance of Jesus, the same is true of discipleship. Not one member of God's creation is the same! We have been uniquely molded by the hands of the Great Potter as special and blessed with our own way of serving. **"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them."** (1Corinthians 12: 4 NIV). It takes all of us to make up the body of Believers. Each one has a special roll in discipleship. Just because you observe an individual talented in something, does not indicate that you are lacking or inferior to that person. Without your service, the body is not complete.

Given this clarification of the Spirit's gifts, let us now put this principle into action. If we are to be a reflection of Jesus how does this look? Observe the following photographs of discipleship and you will see Jesus up close and personal! To know him is to love him!



A 12 year old child named Payton wearing an elf costume touches the life of a resident at Christmas time. The child chose to serve as a volunteer and would read to Garry after school. The bond that was established crossed all generations and nourished the hearts of both the young and old.

FIND JESUS AT WORK HERE!



Seven year old Preston reads to a bedridden resident at a nursing home. He chose his favorite shirt, hat, jeans, and his grandfather's tie just for the occasion. The interaction that went on between them was more priceless than gold. **WHAT DOES JESUS LOOK LIKE IN THIS? DO YOU SEE HIS REFLECTION IN THE PICTURE?**




Connie (left) is comforting Carol who is getting ready to be held in the arms of Jesus. **DO YOU SEE HIS REFLECTION IN THIS PICTURE?**

A volunteer (on the left) is reading a devotional to the resident of a nursing home. **SAY OUT LOUD HOW THE REFLECTION OF JESUS APPEARS IN THIS SETTING!**



Two nursing home residents (holding hands) are delivering peanut butter and jelly to an elementary school for children in need. The residents in their facility voted to give up a party so the funds could be used for this purpose.

DO YOU SEE THE REFLECTION OF JESUS IN THEIR SMILES?



Pearl, age 95, wearing yellow, worked by herself in her sewing room and made 595 quilts (Example in photograph to right as modeled by Betty) for abused children that had been pulled from their homes with just the clothing on their backs. **CAN YOU SPOT THE THREADS OF CHRIST'S LOVE IN THIS PICTURE?**



Heather, art teacher at Hillcrest High School and student Chaylen work together preparing illustrations for a book called "Gramme's Engaged" to be used for the elderly. **(OH, SWEET JESUS! WE SEE YOUR REFLECTION!)**

GO YE!

Friends, when we go forth as disciples delivering the good news of God's kingdom, let us model the following words from Charles Haddon Spurgeon in his book, "Morning by Morning" when he stated: *"We are here taught the great lesson, that to get, we must give; that to accumulate, we must scatter; that to make ourselves happy, we must make others happy; and that in order to become spiritually vigorous, we must seek the spiritual good of others."* Spurgeon goes on to say, *"Our efforts to be useful bring out our powers for usefulness."* In other words, when humbly submitting to the will of the Spirit, we then allow God the Father to change our commonness into that of being extraordinary servants. As we venture forth as disciples of Christ, we will consider it an honor to tenderly dry the tears of those in grief, soothe the children that are without parental guidance, offer forgiveness to those who have made mistakes, and help the less fortunate plant their feet on higher ground. Yes folks, by humbly bowing at the feet of God's children, we will be enormously blessed in return. Endeavoring to cheer the lonely, our spirits will be lifted in the process. Then, when teaching the Scriptures, we will have deepened our own understanding of God's Word because of putting into practice the commandment, *"³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.^{a]} ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^{b]} There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12: 30-31 (NIV)

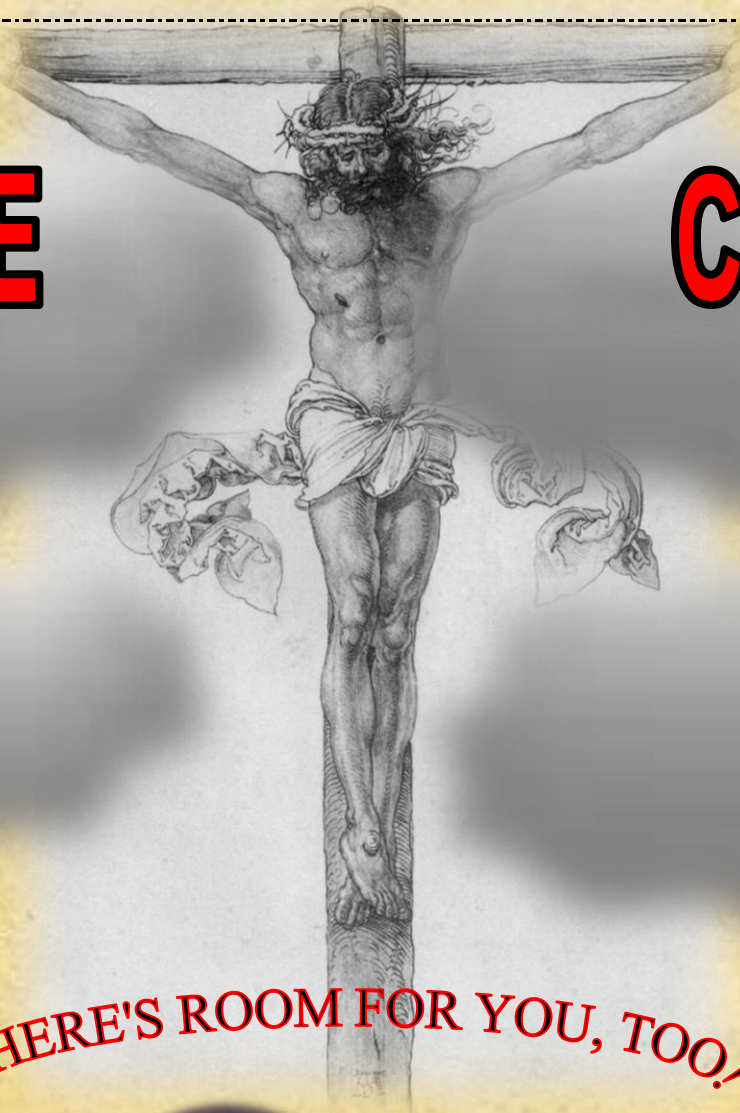
CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, when receiving the repeated urging from the Holy Spirit to take on the complex subject of, "My Jewish Messiah", the writer approached the task with feelings of humility and weakness; internalizing fully the necessity of allowing the Lord to lead every step of the journey. Thus, it was only after realizing that although Christians may differ on a variety of points but still have the desire to fulfill God's commandments, that the writer began the project. Even though individuals/denominations may approach many teachings in their own way, it is common knowledge that the Word on which Believers dine is the bread of life sent down from heaven.

Also, at this point, the writer would like to express gratitude to all those responsible for showing support along the way. It was due to your kindness that, what appeared at times as a mountain too steep to climb was truly an obtainable goal. The end result of this journey was that of falling more deeply in love with the Lord than ever imagined. His presence is now felt more acutely when listening to his Word, hearing the beautiful musical strains sung by the choir, praising him through prayer, and simply noting the sweet faces of those standing unified as one body in Christ. Then, when taking communion in front of the cross, the depth of his sacrifice and gift of grace penetrate to the very core of the heart. Given these personal reactions, the writer would like to end with an invitation to those that do not know Christ, to bow at the foot of the cross, repent and ask him into your life. My friends and I have saved room just for you with the assurance that someday soon; we will forever worship at the feet of the Jewish Messiah together in heaven. Please come and fill the space waiting for you in the picture below! Feed on the love and grace of our Savior! Halleluiah! Amen!

AT THE

CROSS



THERE'S ROOM FOR YOU, TOO!



YOU

SOURCES

1) *"Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus"* Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg

2) *Life Application Study Bible (NIV)*

3) *"Morning by Morning"* by Charles Spurgeon



GROWING IN THE WORD



- 1) Suggested Hymn: 'Nearer My God To Thee"—Found on home page of devotionalembbers.com
- 2) "To Know the Jewish Messiah is to love him! In what ways did you grow to love Jesus more dearly as you read this collection? Discuss as a group.
- 3) After looking at the photograph of different paintings of Jesus in this chapter, which was your favorite? Out of all the paintings of Jesus you have ever seen, which one stood out? Why?
- 4) Why is it important for each individual to have his/her own image of Jesus in mind? Is it necessary for Jesus to appear the same to all people?
- 5) Gifts of the Spirit are critical to your work as a disciple of Christ. Have you identified your gift/s yet? Have they always been the same or did they change as you went through the seasons of your life?
- 6) Was it difficult to discern your gift? What are things you might do to discern your gift? How can you make sure it is your gift verses your own desires of self?
- 7) How does discipleship look for you personally? Are you satisfied with your progress? Two words were described in this chapter regarding your work as a disciple (Information and transformation). Discuss the difference between the two meanings.
- 8) Think for a moment about your own work and that of your church. Is a transformation taking place through your work as a disciple? If so, describe it. If not, what can be done to go in this direction?
- 9) As the final prayer is read, the writer suggests you join hands with the individual/s in your group as a symbol of one body united in Christ.

PERSONAL TIME OF REFLECTION



Study the painting of My Jewish Messiah above one last time and reflect on the ways you have grown to love him more dearly. Make a list if you desire or say a prayer telling him what you love about him. It will not only touch your heart but also make that smile you see above even broader. TO SEE OUR LORD MORE CLEARLY IS TO LOVE HIM MORE DEARLY!

PRAYER

Dear Kind Father,

We close this study with hearts filled to overflowing in enormous gratitude and love for you. As you led us through these seventeen chapters, it was obvious your Spirit occupied every space of our being. At times we felt you so close that it was as if our hair was moving through the breath blowing from your precious lips. How sweet the fragrance was that emanated from your acts of grace and truth. When you touched the downtrodden in society, your gentle hands were soothing our wounds at the same time.

As we go forward, we ask that you transform our ordinary acts into extraordinary miracles; all for your glory. When we spread the news of your kingdom to others, help us speak the truth as you would have it be told with not only words, but also through actions of compassion and grace. As we wear your sandals, guide us on the straight and narrow path leaving footsteps for others to find. Above all, teach us to reach out to both the great and the small moving in one united body as we climb the mountain of life hand in hand.

Father, as the writer of this collection, I now request your blessing on all the hearts that have been touched by the words penned through your guidance. May each person always realize that you are the Alpha and Omega; the Jewish Messiah that paid the price on the cross and arose as our Resurrected Savior conquering death once and for all. No matter the trials and tribulations my readers face, please give them the strength and assurance that all Believers are praying for them. Lord, I ask that you hold each individual safely in your arms until we meet in our heavenly home where, as your children, we will be forever in your presence.

All these things are prayed in your precious name and for your sake. Amen!

Dear Readers, I am praying for you. Please pray for me! ***“May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.” (Numbers 6: 24-26) NIV***

Suggestion: Play the hymn, “God
devotionalsembers.com

Will Take Care of You” from
before departing.

