

#159 The Character of Christ

1 Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2 Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

3 Let us bow our hearts and our heads in prayer. Dear Loving Father, it is with reverence that we approach Thee this morning, knowing that had it not been for the love gift of your Son Jesus who shed His precious blood for our sins, you would not even look down upon our wretched lives, but now it has been made possible by His shed blood that when you look at us, you are looking through the blood of Your firstborn, and see our crimson sin as white as snow, and as wool. Help us Father to die to self, that the Life of Your Son that was shed on Calvary might live itself out in the bodies of this death. Be with us as we come to learn of Thee once more and to learn how to be the obedient child that you ordained for us to be, for we ask it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen! You may be seated.

4 Now, this morning I would like to read again from paragraph 174 of The Spoken Word is the Original Seed because brother Branham said something that bears more looking into, so let's read from pp. 174... Now, others will go by and say, "Well, you know what, I believe I'll try it a while." You'll choke. That's right. See? But when you really empty out, say, "Lord Jesus, no more of me, but You from this on," (See?) then it's going to bring forth a hundredfold. You believe that? I believe it too.

5 Now, the purpose of my reading this again is because brother Branham is talking about an attitude that we must have. Not just a lackadaisical effort that says, well I'll give it my best effort, no that's not what he wanted from us. What he is talking about is a full and complete surrender of self. A complete dying to self that Christ might live again in our vessels.

6 And sometimes we just do not know what it means to 2 Timothy 2: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: Now, we know in Romans 8 that it is the chapter where Paul deals with our son-ship and thus our relationship to God as our Father and Jesus as our Eldest brother in a vast family of brothers. But not only that, but this is the chapter where Paul deals with our coming into full manifestation as sons and daughters of God, and to do so he tells us we must be conformed to the Image of the first born son, and to get to that place Paul tells us in Romans 8:17-18 what I wish to focus on this morning, he says, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

7 Notice that we are told that if we suffer with him we shall also be glorified together with him. Now, the word glorified was translated from the Greek Word sun-doxazo which is a combination of two words, the word "sun" meaning "united together or union" and the word "doxazo" which means to magnify the doxa or "to magnify or manifest or express in our flesh the very opinion, values and judgment" of God.

8 When Jesus prayed to God in John 17 that we would be one with God even as He and God were one he said the following words... In JOHN 17:11 he prays, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. And how is it that we might be One even as which means in the same manner as Jesus and His Father were One?"

9 Jesus said, JOHN 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

10 Notice that Jesus tells us we become One with God through the same Word that He became One With God. JOHN 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

11 Therefore it is very apparent that we become One with God and Christ Jesus by receiving the same Word which brings us into the same Glory or same mind as the Father. Notice his words, And the glory (the doxa, the opinions, values, and judgments) which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

12 Now, in his sermon, HARVEST TIME PHOENIX AZ 64-1212 87 34 Brother Branham said, "Jesus said, "That they might be one, Father, as You and I are one." Not for some man to be over something, it never will work; one denomination wants to take over the other, and one man over the other. But that you might be one with God, like Christ and God was one; that's what the prayer is. He was the Word, and Jesus prayed that we might be the Word, reflecting Him. That's His prayer to be answered. See how Satan scruples it up in the carnal mind? But that wasn't Jesus' prayer, at all, that we might all congregate together and all have a certain creed and so forth. Every time they do it, they go further and further from God. He wants us to be one with God, and God is the Word. Each individual in his heart must be that one with God."

13 So you see, if we accept the same Word that Jesus accepted, Jesus told us that we will be rejected by the world just as he was rejected. But don't worry about that, because if we are to gain his character we must go through the suffering and rejection that he went through.

14 From the Church Age Book Chapter 4 - The Smyrnaean Church Age P:18 brother Branham in quoting the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:17-18 said, said, "Romans 8:17-18 "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

15 "Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. The reason for this is that character simply is never made without suffering. Character is a VICTORY, not a gift. A man without character can't reign because power apart from character is Satanic. But power with character is fit to rule. And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little temporary suffering we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation."

16 Notice when James and John came to Jesus with their mother and asked if they could sit at his right hand and at his left hand when he entered in to His Kingdom, I want you to notice what Jesus replied to them.

17 Let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew 20:20 and read, 20 Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. 21 "What is your request?" he asked. She replied, "In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left." 22 But Jesus answered by saying to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?" "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" 23 Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen."

18 And I want you to know that James had his head cut off and John was boiled in oil and sent to the isle of Patmos which was isolation and a hard labor camp located in a rock quarry where they did mining for the Roman government as punishment for whatever crime they were convicted of. In John's case it was for his testimony. He was guilty of testifying of Jesus Christ.

19 Notice in the next verse how upset this made the other disciples and how Jesus used this to illustrate the right kind of attitude that we must have if we are to correctly follow his example. 24 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 25 But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 26 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. 28 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

20 And Paul tells us in Philippians 2:1 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, in His very nature was as God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking on the nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself even more and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!

21 So this is the nature of the character of Christ Jesus and the Bible says that he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. And I think if we are honest with ourselves we will find that most of our suffering comes at the hands of those we love most. And it is not the suffering that God is looking at, but how we handle it that really matters to Him.

22 The prophet Isaiah prophesied of his suffering more than 400 years before the birth of our Saviour, Isaiah 53: 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

23 Look, the wounding wasn't for him, but for us, the bruising was not for him but for us, the chastisement was not for him but for us, and the stripes was not for him but for us. That is what real suffering is all about.

24 In the Book of Zechariah we see prophecy about Jesus Christ and how he would be wounded, and when asked where he received those wounds, he said, in the house of my friends. That is where you will receive your greatest wounds, in the house of your friends.

25 ZECHARIAH 13:6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer , Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. 7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. 8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part through the

fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

26 But why must that be? Because to take rejection from people you do not even know, would mean very little to you, but from those who you love most, it hurts the most, and you live with it daily and weekly and perhaps for years. So where can you expect your greatest wounds, and suffering to come? From those you love most. And how will it come? By not showing you the respect that they give others. By their scrutinizing every move you make, and assessing their own motives for everything you do, they remind you constantly of your humanity.

27 And dear friends, let me say this, consider first your own motives and your own imperfections before you critique your loves ones. Do not evaluate others with the same evaluation you give to yourself. As br. Marconda once said, "if you are going to be a legalist, be it to yourself, but don't be a legalist to others." And Jesus said, John 7: 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. And what is righteous judgment? It is judging by the Word, not by what you think is correct for the occasion.

28 Now, in closing I want to look at how Jesus Christ handled personal attacks on himself. Because he told us that we must suffer with him if we are to reign with him.

29 Let's turn to the book of Matthew and read the entire chapter on into verse 15 of chapter 23. Here I want you to see how he came back to the Word of God every time when men tried to attack him with words.

30 Matthew 22 15Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians.

31 So first of all let's look at this scenario. Here you have the Pharisees who were the professors and teachers of the law in that day. Men who knew the letter of the law like no other. Now, I do not know for certain if this is true or not, but I was told 30 + years ago that the Pharisees were so well trained in the law that they had to know the location of each and every jot and tittle in the Law, so that you could pass a pin through one letter in the law and they could tell you each letter it would pass through on it's way through the scroll.)

32 And notice how when men are against you, they do not care who their bedfellows are. They will join up with their enemies just to strike you down. And that is what we see here. The Pharisees joined together with the Herodians, which were those who looked up to Herod. These were very worldly people, so you have the most self righteous men coming together with the most worldly men to find something to find fault with the words Jesus had to say.

33 Now, look how they talk so sweet to try to get him off his guard, and our lesson is this, how many times have you fallen off guard yourself when someone used this approach to get you off your guard and then hit you with a question you were not looking for? That's one of the tricks the democrats use all the time. And that is how they tricked Sarah Palin into not being ready for their questions. They talked so sweet to her and then bang, they hit her with some pretty ludicrous questions, and she wasn't yet street savvy enough to see what was being done, so she didn't do so well. But that is the tactic of the devil, and we are shown here in Scripture how they do it. So be listening up and you will see how to overcome these kind of attacks.

34 And Jesus said in Luke 6: 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

35 And again in Matthew 5: 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

36 Now, in getting back to our story, let's read again from verse 15 so you can see his day develop for yourselves, and notice the way Jesus handles it...15Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. (See how they are building him up before they try to tear him down?) 17Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, 20and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription is this?" 21 "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

37 Now, here's the thing, He was aware of their motive for asking the question, and that is what we should always come back to when someone tries to trip you up with a question, ask them what their motive is? Why this question, and what does this question mean to them? Put it back on them. I don't know how many times, I guess more than I can think of that the enemy has laid a snare to try to trip me up when I am over seas teaching the doctrine. They plot and plan, but if you just don't try to use your own mind to answer, and let go then God will take over.

38 The Apostle Paul said in, Philippians 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

39 So learn to wait on God, and He will give you the answers. I will never forget way back in 2001 someone in Peru asked me to explain Isaiah 9:6 because he said, it calls the one who is born the mighty God, and the everlasting father. But I did not answer right away, I asked my Father for the answer reminding Him what he told us in Philippians 3 that if we be any other wise minded he would reveal it to us. And then the answer came back when he told me to just read it very slowly and take it one thought at a time, and so I did.

40 And it reads Isaiah 9: 6For unto us a child is born, And I said, if he is born then he has a beginning, and if he has a beginning he can not be the everlasting or eternal God...And if he is born then someone had to be there before him to give birth to him. And if he is born then this suggests pedigree and lineage, and if he is born this also suggests that someone had to carry him, and give birth to him, as born suggests to bring forth

41 Then I said, let's look at the next thought here. unto us a son is given: And I said, if he is given then he is a gift, and the giver is always greater than the gift. And if he is a gift then who gave him? And the answer is in John 3:16 for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. So God is the giver of the Gift of his son Jesus. Then we reads on, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: Now, in order for the government to be on this ones shoulder, he would have to be elevated to that place, and we find the Scripture tells us in the Book of Acts, 2:36 that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ. Now, if God made Him Lord then he wasn't Lord to begin with. ACTS 5:31 Tells us, Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And in Luke 1: 32 we read, called the Son of the Highest: the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: So it tells us he is the son of the highest, and he will be given the government to rule and reign.

42 The next thought I read was, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Now, I said, let's examine this last portion which deals with the name of this child, this Son that will be born: It said he shall be called Wonderful, (is wonderful a name? No.) It said he will be called Counselor, (is counselor a name? No. It is a title.) It said he shall be called the Mighty God, (is Mighty God a name? No.) It said he shall be called The everlasting Father, (is father a name? No.) It said he shall be called The Prince of Peace (is Prince of Peace a name? No.) Now, there is only one name of the Ever Lasting

Father, there is only one name of the Mighty God, there is only one name of the Counselor, etc. And that name is Jesus.

43 And Jesus told us in John 5:43 that I come in my Father's name, and Paul told us in Hebrews chapter 1 that Jesus received that name by inheritance.

44 So then I asked them what does it mean when it says, His name shall be "called". This word "called" what does it mean? Well, it was translated from the Hebrew word *qara* which means "to proclaim". So we see His name shall proclaim the Mighty God, His name shall proclaim the Everlasting Father, for it is the Father's name. And Jesus himself told us that no man knew the father but the son and he came to declare the father.

45 In John 17: 26 we hear Jesus in his prayer to His father say, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. In other words, I have proclaimed unto them Thy name and will proclaim it. That is the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6.

46 And in we hear the Apostle Paul quote the Old testament, saying.. Hebrews 2: 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

47 So we see that Isaiah 9:6 tells us that the Son of God will come and He will be born and given as a gift and He will proclaim the name of His Father, the mighty God, the everlasting Father. And that is exactly what Jesus did. He did not come to declare Himself, He said, the Father worketh and the son worketh hitherto.

48 Now, in getting back to our story of Jesus as we see him attacked by one group and then the next, I want you to notice how He keeps going to the Word of God for His answers.

49 23 That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 24 "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26 The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. 27 Finally, the woman died. 28 Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?" Now, notice how Jesus handles this attack... 29 Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. 30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. And then knowing these are Sadducees who do not believe in the resurrection, he adds the next verse to set them straight on their doctrine... 31 But about the resurrection of the dead, AHH HMMMM!!!! You guys are Sadducees are you not, and you do not believe in the resurrection from the dead, so he answers them by adding "have you not read what God said to you, 32 'I am, (Not I was, But I am) the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.'" 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his Doctrine.

50 Now, this didn't stop the conniving Pharisees, they didn't like it that he had gotten the best of their last dialogue, so they come back with another plan to catch him off guard.

51 34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. (O how the devil likes to get his ministers together to plot and plan against the anointed of God) 35 One of them, an expert in the law, put him to the test with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

52 Then after he answered their question, notice how he took the opportunity to ask them one himself. 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 "What do you think about the Christ? (What is your opinion about Christ?) Whose SON is he?" "The son of David," they replied. 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, 44" 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ' 45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" 46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions. Notice how Jesus took his battles back to the Word of God each and every time.

53 We see the same thing when he was put to the test by the devil himself when he was fasting in the dessert.

54 Luke 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. 4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, (Who said it? God said it, and He is again quoting God's Word) Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

55 Now to continue with our story, and as we do I want for you to notice how Jesus tells us of the motives of the Pharisees, and what their objectives are. So let's move forward from Matthew 22 to Matthew 23: 1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The professors of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

56 5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: (notice how he is showing up their motives) They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them "The Teacher" 8 "But you are not to be called 'The Teacher' for you have only one is your Teacher and you are all his brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11 He who is the greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. 13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! (now, the word hypocrite means a play actors, acting on the stage of life, playing out the part of someone you are not.) You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves refuse to enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. 15 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you (play actors, acting on the stage of life, playing out the part of someone you are not) You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

57 So you see, Jesus did not spare them at all but He used the Word of God to set them straight each and every time. Because after all he said everything he spoke, he was commanded by His Father what to say. An he is our pattern.

58 John 12: 50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

59 John 12: 49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

60 John 14: 10 the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

61 And one final word for you to remember as you depart. Matthew 12: 35A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.36But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

62 Matthew 5: 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

63 Ecclesiastes 5: 2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

64 Let us pray, ...