

# **THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

**By  
Buddy J. Duncan**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	page 2
The example of Jesus is the perfect example	page 5
Conformity to Jesus is required	page 6
Christians are to walk as Jesus walked	page 7
Jesus is our example in humility	page 9
Jesus is our example of obedience	page 11
Jesus is our example of benevolence	page 15
Jesus is our example of forgiving injuries	page 17
Jesus our example of overcoming the world	page 19
Jesus our example of not being of the world	page 22
Jesus our example in suffering wrongfully	page 23
Jesus our example of suffering for	
Righteousness	page 25
Conclusion	page 28

## Introduction

We start out very early in life wanting to follow the example of someone. It may be our mother, father, big brother or sister, a school teacher or it may even be our athletic hero. Boys most often want to imitate their fathers and girls often want to imitate their mothers. Some even want to imitate a preacher.

May I suggest that you follow a famous preacher; his name is Jesus of Nazareth. His ministry is still being imitated today. Although no one has ever reached the perfection that he obtained many are attempting to imitate the example Jesus set forth. If you will but take the time to read the four gospel [Matthew, Mark, Luke and John] you will ascertain Jesus as a preacher worthy of imitation; He went about doing good: (Acts 10:38) *“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”* He also healed all manner of sickness: (Matthew 15:30) *“And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them.”* He even had power over Satan to cast out devils: (Matthew 8:16) *“When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.”* Jesus even had the power to raise the dead; on one occasion he raised a man by the name of Lazarus; there could be not question whether or not Lazarus was dead or not for he had been in the grave for four days: (John 11:17) *“Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.”* Jesus told Martha [Lazarus’ sister] that Lazarus would rise again: (John 11:21-23) *“Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (22) But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. (23) Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.”* Martha told Jesus that Lazarus had been dead so long that “he stinketh”: (John 11:39) *“Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”* Even this was not a hindrance to the power of Jesus: (John 11:43-44) *“And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.(44) And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and*

*foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.”*

Granted you and I cannot imitate Jesus by performing miracles because those days have ceased. Writing about spiritual gifts and performing miracles Paul said they would cease: (1 Corinthians 13:10) *“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”* By carefully studying this chapter and the preceding chapters you will find that the subject is spiritual gifts and miracles; therefore, when that which “perfect is come” [referring to God’s completed Word] that which was in part would cease so the days of miracles has stopped. Just because we can’t perform miracles does not mean that we should not try to imitate the other good works that Jesus went about doing.

I know that I can never accomplish what Jesus accomplished because I will never have the wisdom and knowledge that Jesus possessed. Neither are my thoughts always as pure as Jesus’ thoughts were while he was living, walking and ministering on this earth. Nonetheless his example does give me something to strive for.

The purpose of this writing is to inform what is expected of us as Christians. I do this in an effort to encourage everyone who reads these words to become a better servant of God. It is the desire of Jesus that his servants follow him: (John 12:26) *“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”*

### **The Example of Jesus Is The Perfect Example**

If you are going to imitate anybody surely you will want to imitate a good example; Jesus is not only a good example he is “the perfect example”: (Hebrews 7:26) *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”* We will consider each of these aspects of Jesus later as it is my purpose for these aspects of Jesus to be the

bulk of this booklet. But for now let us direct our attention to the perfection of Jesus example.

When Jesus came to this earth he took on the nature of man, by this I do not mean that he took on the sinful nature of man, rather as a man he was hungered and became thirsty, he even had passions like you and I; he even wept: (John 11:35) "*Jesus wept.*" This may be the shortest verse in the entire Bible yet it tells us an awful lot about the character of Jesus. It tells us that he had feelings and compassion. Do you have compassion? Do you weep? The occasion when Jesus wept was the same occasion when Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave. Are you aware that we are to be happy with those who are happy and cry with those who cry? (Romans 12:15) "*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*" I am not suggesting that you laugh with those who tell dirty jokes, nor should you be happy when anyone is boasting of their accomplishments or any thing that is unlawful for all of these are evil. If someone obeys the gospel shouldn't we rejoice with them because of their salvation? I have seen some come up out of the water grave of baptism with tears in their eyes [these were tears of joy]; I may not have cried with them but I certainly did rejoice with them. Don't you believe that our Lord also rejoices when someone becomes a Christian? If you believe this don't you agree that Jesus is our perfect example? The greater remaining part of this book will be an effort to show that Jesus is indeed our "perfect example" and that we are to conform to his example.

### Conformity To Jesus Is Required

We are required to conform our lives to the holiness of our Creator and His Son: (1 Peter 1:14-16) "*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: (16) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" In this epistle Peter refers to the recipients as "obedient children". Through obedience they had become children of God by adoption. As obedient children Peter exhorts them "not to fashion themselves" according to their former lusts. This phrase is very similar to what we find in (Romans 12:2) "*And*

*be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” So we find both Peter and Paul making virtually the same exhortation. To paraphrase these exhortations I would state it this way; “Since you are now children of God be conformed to example of Jesus”. To be “fashioned” to the lust of the world is to be indulged in the lusts of the world; of course this is against everything a Christian should indulge in. These “lust of the world” are lust of the flesh and are of the devil; this wars against the soul: (1 Peter 2:11) *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”* We are well aware that our souls are the most valuable possession we have: (Mark 8:36-37) *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* You might be able to own everything in the world but if you lose your soul you are still the loser. There is a very simple solution to this; all you have to do is to transform your life to the life of Jesus, remembering you can learn how Jesus lived by reading the four gospels.

### **Christians Are To Walk As Jesus Walked**

I don't know whether Jesus walked with a limp, bent back or upright but how he walked physically is not the point that I am making; I am thinking of how Jesus walked spiritually. John said if we claim to abide in Jesus we also must walk as Jesus walked: (1 John 2:6) *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”* If we come to realize that we are living in sin and become aware of the consequences of sin we will more than likely want to obey the gospel; when we do this from a true heart we can then honestly say that we “abide in him”. I am fully aware that not everyone who claims to “abide in him” actually does “abide in him”. How do I know? I know because they are not walking as Jesus walked. If you do not walk as Jesus walked you cannot claim to “abide in him”. Perhaps this is what we should tell those who make this false claim, maybe it would wake them up. As Christ lived, acted and walked so should we live, act and walk.

The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus “walked in love”: (Ephesians 5:2) *“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”* Christ walked in love and Paul informs us that Christ even proved his love for us by giving himself as “an offering and sacrifice” for our sins. To further emphasize how much Jesus loved us he made this sacrifice while we were yet sinners: (Romans 5:8) *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Many a soldier has died in battles but they did so thinking it was for a good cause and for people they loved; in most cases they thought they were willing to die for good people but Jesus died for sinners. Jesus once said *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13) To prove his love for you and I as well as all mankind this is exactly what Jesus did; he gave his life for you and I. This is how Jesus walked; are you walking according to the example Jesus set before us. If you want the blood of Jesus to cleanse you of all sins it is important to walk as Jesus walked: (1 John 1:7) *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* Are you willing to lay down your life for the brethren? According to John you should be: (1 John 3:16) *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* Again I remind you that Jesus laid down his life for us and if we truly desire to walk as Jesus walked we should be willing to do likewise.

Jesus has given us a new commandment concerning love: (John 13:34) *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* Hasn’t God always commanded man to love one another? Of course He has; so what is new about this commandment Jesus that Jesus gave? The new part of Jesus’ commandment is that we are to love “one another as Jesus has loved us. Brethren if we bite and devour one another we are not walking as Jesus walked! I may not always agree with my brethren but that does not mean that I don’t love them.

### **Jesus Is Our Example In Humility**

Jesus is our example in humility and we are to be like minded: (Philippians 2:5-8) *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in*

*the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”* The Arabic version renders verse 5, "let that humility be perceived in you". Here Paul pictures Jesus as the great pattern of humility and his commandment to us is "let this mind be in you". Christians are to display the same disposition of mind in all of their practices. Jesus emptied himself of all the glory he possessed in heaven and he assumed the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. When he assumed the form of a servant was proof that he had emptied himself of his heavenly glory.

Verse seven says Jesus "made of himself no reputation". In fact the complete opposite is true of Jesus; he took "upon himself the form of a servant". How sad it is today when we see some who are more concerned in gaining a reputation than they are in proclaiming the truth. It is virtually impossible for anyone to be a servant like Jesus when their only concern is to gain a name for themselves. Seeking a reputation is not following the example of Jesus in humility.

Jesus proclaimed himself to be a servant: (Luke 22:27) *“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.”* This verse is taken from the context of the conversation that Jesus had with the twelve at what we refer to as the last supper. Christ gives them a situation that is plain and obvious. In those days the servant would stand behind and observe those who were dining and wait on them. The obvious point that Jesus was making is that he who sat at the table and ate was the most honorable person. Jesus then tells them that he had taken on the form of a servant. It had only been two days since Jesus had gird himself and took a basin of water and a towel and then he washed the feet of his disciples. Christ throughout his whole life while upon this earth had conducted himself as a servant; friends this should cause us to forsake any feeling of superiority or ambitions for superiority. May we always follow the example of our Lord and Savior who was "meek and lowly": (Matthew 11:29) *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

## Jesus Is Our Example of Obedience

If you desire to be loved by Jesus and his Father there is one sure way of knowing that you have the love of both and that is by keeping his commandments: (John 15:10) *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”* Every parent wants their children to obey them; Jesus is not our heavenly father but he does want us to keep his commandments. When you consider the price he paid so we might have salvation I think you will agree that Jesus has every right to give us the commandment to obey him. Always remember this; even though Jesus was God’s Son he obeyed: (Hebrews 5:8) *“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”* In the very next verse the Hebrews writer tells us how important it is that we obey Jesus: (Hebrews 5:9) *“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”* If you want to go to heaven “obey him”!

Allow me to point out the consequences of not following Jesus’ example of obedience; first we turn to Romans 2:8 *“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,”* If you do not obey you face “indignation and wrath”. Gill makes this comment of “indignation and wrath; “wrathful or fiery indignation, the hottest of his fury.” Both of these words express the opposition to God and the punishment for not obeying the commandments of Jesus.

Paul describes the fate of both the disobedient and the obedient: (Romans 6:16) *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* He says the sinner is destined to death and he is not referring to the physical death; rather the sinner is destined to suffer the second death: (Revelation 21:8) *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* This “second death” is eternal separation from God. Paul contrasts the different destinies of the disobedient and the obedient, the destination of

the obedient is “righteousness” or to put it another way is to say they will be justified and will receive eternal life and a home in heaven.

Finally, Paul gives us warning that Jesus is coming again and information of what will transpire when he comes: (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”* This “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” is exactly what John meant when he wrote about the “second death” (Revelation 21:8). Unless you are an atheist this is something that is feared by everyone. Keep in mind this can be avoided simply by obeying the commandments of Jesus. We know that it is possible to obey as we have the example of Jesus obeying his Father’s commandments.

### **Jesus Is Our Example of Self-Denial**

Self-denial just may be the hardest example of Jesus that we are called upon to imitate; nonetheless, it is something that we must strive to accomplish. It might be easier if we look to the example of Jesus: (Romans 15:3-4) *“For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. (4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”* As far as I can tell from reading the four gospels Jesus never once tried to please himself, he always sought to please God by doing His will. I don’t exactly know what it is; it may be selfishness but most people are more concerned about themselves today than they are in pleasing Jehovah God. To point out that we don’t deny-self just listen to most conversations and make a mental note of how many times the words “I, me and my” are spoken. Here is a Biblical example of this attitude: (Luke 12:16-19) *“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. (19) And I will*

say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” This is far from the example of “self-denial” of Jesus’ example.

Maybe Jesus anticipated that few would follow his example of self-denial so he gave us a commandment: (Matthew 16:24-27) *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”* In this discourse Jesus said with words that can be understood by everyone that we are to “deny” ourselves. When we “deny-self” we surrender our will, affections and even our bodies and souls to God. We won’t seek our own happiness as being supreme; instead we will seek to be pleasing to God. We will even lay down our lives if required to do so: (Revelation 2:10) *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful **unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.”* Did you notice the words “follow me” in Matthew 16:25? Jesus would not have said “follow me” if he had not and would not be willing also to deny-himself. Jesus instructed his disciples to “follow” him: (Matthew 4:19) *“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Not everyone who says they will follow Jesus will actually do so: (Matthew 8:19-22) *“And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (20) And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (21) And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (22) But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.”* All too often people find and make excuses for not following Jesus.

I remember all too well a cousin of mine [who was as close as a blood brother to me] who I taught the truth when I asked him to obey the truth his reply was; “The religion of Ma and Pa is good enough for me”. Maybe he did not want

to admit that his mother and father were wrong. I recall another man and his mother who obeyed the truth after the death of his father every time the need to be obedient to the word of truth was mentioned he would remember his father had never obeyed the truth and you would see tears well up in his eyes. So I know first hand that not everyone will follow the example of Jesus in denying-self. If you are not willing to deny-self it may very well bring grief to your loved ones; but it will certainly bring grief to you on the Day of Judgment if you are not willing to follow Jesus!

### **Jesus Is Our Example of Benevolence**

Jesus said; “It is better to give than to receive”: (Acts 20:35) *“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* Jesus is telling them “I have taught you with words and examples”. Jesus didn’t just teach a good lesson he showed them by doing that which he taught. He taught them how to provide the needs of the sick and those who were unable to labor and provide for themselves. The weak here denotes the poor, the needy and the infirmed. The simple truth is that the giver is more blessed and happier than the receiver. If all the good deeds and act of benevolence Jesus did were recorded the world could not contain them all: (John 21:25) *“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”*

To illustrate how benevolent Jesus was I refer you to 2 Corinthians 8:9 *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”* Jesus had been very rich in heaven as he had all the fulness of the Godhead in him. But he gave that up when he came to our earth; he had no earthly wealth. Jesus’ family was poor, his earthly parents were poor and he was poor all his life while on our earth. In his human nature he became the opposite of what he possessed in heaven. Why would Jesus give all this up? I firmly believe that Jesus did this as the text suggest that he might pay the debt that you and I owe as sinners. If you

want to consider someone who has paid of a huge debt for you I would point you to Jesus. This giving himself for our sins is the greatest debt ever paid.

### **Jesus Is Our Example of Forgiving Injuries**

As the apostle Paul stated Jesus is our example when it comes to “forgiving: (Colossians 3:13) *“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”* This is a very interesting passage as it contains a lot of instruction for the Christian. First Paul wrote “forbearing one another”; which is worthy of a few comments. Let me begin by saying we are to bear one another’s burdens. This in itself is sometimes very difficult to do as we might think we have more than enough burdens of our own to bear I can’t stand to take on anymore burdens. Included in this though is the idea of Paul is that we bear one another’s weaknesses. Again we might think that I only have the strength to bear my own weakness. And perhaps the hardest thought of the phrase “forbearing one another” is that we should not seek revenge; whether it be by word or deed. Let us remember what Jesus said: (Matthew 5:39) *“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”* (Luke 6:29) *“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.”* Not only did Jesus command this he also practiced what he taught as he was hanging on the cross: (Luke 23:34) *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”* If many of us were to be treated as Jesus was treated I am afraid we would fail the test. But if Jesus commanded us to forgive those who mistreat and abuse us we must forgive as he did.

Next Paul wrote “forgiving one another” (Colossians 3:13). If you are able to do the first command of this verse you ought to be able to “forgive one another”. This is in accordance to what Jesus taught when he was teaching his disciples how to pray: (Matthew 6:12) *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* At this time Jesus also taught the benefits of forgiving: (Matthew 6:14) *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:”* Aren’t we all seeking God’s forgiveness? To insure the forgiveness of God we must forgive the trespasses that are committed against us. Does this make the

words of Paul easier to understand? “The idea is, that if another one has given us just occasion of complaint, we are to forgive him; that is, we are: (1) To harbor no malice against him; (2) We are to be ready to do him good as if he had not given us occasion of complaint; (3) We are to be willing to declare that we forgive him when he asks it; and, (4) We are always afterward to treat him as kindly as if he had not injured us - as God treats us when he forgives us” [Barnes]. You might find the question of Peter about forgiveness and Jesus’ reply interesting: (Matthew 18:21-22) “*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? (22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*” No doubt Peter thought that forgiving someone seven times was a large number because the Jews were only required to forgive trespasses three times: (Amos 2:6) “*Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;*” After the third trespass God would punish the transgressor so Peter thought he was giving Jesus a large number. I expect Peter was shocked to hear Jesus’ reply that we should forgive “seventy times seven”. By this Jesus meant that men should be willing every day of his life be ready to forgive those who sin against him. As often as men repent and acknowledge their faults we are to forgive. All the while remembering that God forgives those who forgive others (Matthew 6:14).

Without a doubt the greatest demonstration of forgiveness that has ever been demonstrated on earth is found in Luke 23:34 “*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*” Will you follow Jesus’ example of forgiving?

### **Jesus Is Our Example of Overcoming The World**

Since everyone of us are living in the world and we are a part of the world Jesus’ example of “overcoming the world” is needed by all and Jesus said he had “overcome the world”: (John 16:33) “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*” This verse is the beginning of a conclusion to a sermon that Jesus delivered to his apostles. These words may include everything

he had ever taught them as they can be taken to include everything he had told them. He had told them how he must depart from them; of his going to prepare a place for them and the various persecutions and afflictions they would be called upon to endure. He tells them that he had spoken all these things to them so that they might have “peace”. The peace that he spoke of was not in this world as he warns them that they shall have “tribulation”. There is a peace by Christ that he has made by the shedding of his blood and there is peace being in him which is enjoyed by faith looking to his blood for pardon, justification and atonement.

He then tells them to “be of good cheer” i.e. be happy, don’t worry. The reason for this is that he had “overcome the world”. You and I have reason to be “of good cheer” since our sins are forgiven and every day that we live our reward of eternal life draws closer. Our encouragement is that Jesus has “overcome the world”. We know that Satan is the “prince of the world”: (Ephesians 2:2) *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”* Another reason to “be of good cheer” is we know that Satan’s time of power is limited: (John 12:31) *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”* (John 16:11 *“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”*) Satan may be an influence to many in this life but when we get to heaven and spend eternity with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and all the saints Satan’s power and influence will no longer exist.

Jesus has overcome the world with all its lusts and sins by the sacrifice of himself. Brethren, we too can be conquerors through Jesus Christ; yea, we can be more than conquerors: (Romans 8:36-39) *“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Don’t these words of Paul impart “good cheer” into your hearts? All of this is possible because Jesus “overcame the world” and should encourage us to do likewise.

I have suggested that we should overcome the world but the only means of doing this that I have suggested thus far is to imitate Jesus; I would like to expound on this thought with the words of John: (1 John 5:4) *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* To paraphrase the words of John I would say “whosoever is born of God overcometh the world”. One night Jesus told Nicodemus that only those who were born again could enter the kingdom of God: (John 3:1-5) *“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?(5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* Without a doubt John says only that those who are born of God are empowered to overcome the world [1 John 5:4]. Of particular interest is the faith that John brings up. How important is faith? Look to Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* If you don’t have faith you will never obey the gospel, you will never have salvation and you will never be able to follow the example of Jesus in “overcoming the world”.

### **Jesus Our Example of Being Not of The World**

(John 17:12-16) *“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (13) And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (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. (15) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”* Even though

Jesus was still in the world he speaks as though he was out of the world [verse 12] because he knew that he would shortly be leaving to go back to heaven. He said that he had kept them by God's authority and doctrine. In verse fifteen Jesus asked that God would not take them out of the world by translation as the manner He took Enoch and Elijah or by the usual manner of death. In his prayer it was Jesus' desire that God would "keep them from evil". This is a perfect demonstration of Jesus' love for those who are his. Verse seventeen is a repeat of verse fourteen where they are given as a reason of the world's hatred to them, and here in verse seventeen he is showing that they are exposed to the evil of the world; therefore, he is asking God that He would take notice of them and preserve them as long as they remain in the world. May we always remember how Christ lived his life while he was in this world and imitate his example; not forgetting that he prayed for others while he was here on earth. Do you pray that God will protect and preserve your brothers and sisters in Christ? Jesus did and so should we.

### **Jesus Our Example In Suffering Wrongfully**

Do you know of anyone who believes that Jesus deserved to be persecuted and crucified as he was? I know of no one who would dare to make such a claim! Let's read what Peter wrote about the suffering of Jesus: (1 Peter 2:21-23) "*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*" Look close at verse twenty two; Peter records that Jesus 'did not sin' nor could anyone accuse Jesus of having any "guile" in his mouth. Did Peter believe that Jesus deserved to be persecuted and crucified? You and I should take particular notice of verse twenty one where Peter states that Jesus left us an example and we should follow his steps. I ask you to give some serious consideration to the example that Jesus has set before us. He is our example of grace, faith, love, zeal, meekness, humility and duty. Jesus was constantly found praying and he frequently attended public worship. He fulfilled righteousness by being baptized: (Matthew 3:13-15) "*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be*

*baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*” I cannot help but wonder why so many hesitate to follow this example of Jesus. Jesus is our example of doing God’s will and his people are to follow and imitate his example.

### **Jesus Is Our Example of Suffering For Righteousness**

We now turn to (Hebrews 12:1-4) *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (4) Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”* The Hebrews writer begins this chapter by encouraging readers to constantly exercise their faith and patience amidst constant afflictions. The “cloud of witness” no doubt is making reference to the martyrs seeing they had suffered in the truest sense for the cause of true religion and had paid the highest cost of giving their lives for the cause of Christ. Although the writer is not identified in this epistle like many I believe the apostle Paul to be the writer; therefore, I will refer to Paul as the writer. Paul is encouraging them to remember the example of the martyrs in verse one. He wrote “let us lay aside every weight” which no doubt refers to every burden or every hindrance in running the Christian race. By bringing up the subject of “the race” Christians are reminded of the prize of the heavenly glory the successful runner will receive.

In verse two Paul tells them and us to “look unto Jesus” because he is the “author and finisher of our faith”. He is not telling them to “look unto Jesus” with their physical eyes because he was not visible at this time for he had ascended to heaven before this was written. Therefore, he is encouraging them to look to the

example that Jesus had set before them and us. I feel it is necessary to include you and I for the written word is for all mankind for as long as God permits this earth to stand. Jesus should be looked upon as our Saviour because God sent him to earth for this very purpose. By giving himself Jesus did become the “finisher of our faith”. Not to be forgotten is the fact that Jesus is now seated at the “right hand of God”. My all time favorite scripture is found in John’s record of the gospels in chapter fourteen: (John 14:1-3) *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* By knowing where Jesus is now and realizing that he is coming again to receive me “unto himself” I know that if I am found to be a faithful servant someday I too will be in heaven with God and Jesus. In this second verse Paul also reminds us that Jesus “endured the cross”. This is to remind us that Jesus endured the suffering, shame and pain of dying a terrible death when he was crucified for our sins. Much more could be written about the suffering that Jesus endured but as Paul did I will only remind you of Jesus’ suffering. What was Paul’s motive for reminding them of the suffering of Jesus? Was it not to remind them of the example Jesus set before them and that they should follow his example? This is the very reason I have included this in my writing; I want to remind you of the example of Jesus’ suffering for righteousness and you and I may be called upon to do likewise.

## Conclusion

Every example of Jesus that I have mentioned has been done with a purpose in mind; that purpose was to remind you that we are to follow the examples that Jesus has given us. I feel that I should at this time make a stronger exhortation; the exhortation that I make at this time is that we are predestinated to follow the examples of Jesus. As proof of this exhortation I will refer you to (Romans 8:29) *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”* “

has been the subject of almost endless disputes in regard

to its meaning in this place. The literal meaning of the word cannot be a matter of dispute. It denotes properly to “know beforehand;” to be acquainted with future events” [Barnes]. Paul is telling us that God in His special knowledge and unchangeable purpose predetermined that Christians be in conformity to the image of Christ. Jesus is the Son of God and so are Christians through adoption; Jesus is the beloved of God and so are we though not in the same sense. Christ had nor did he feel any guilt of sin and Christians have no guilt of sin as they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ when they obeyed the gospel. So we see that upon obedience there are many ways that we are like Christ.

The thrust of Paul’s message is that we are to resemble God’s Son. The message must not be misunderstood to mean that God has determined to save people regardless of what their character may be. God will not save them in their sins; we are required to repent [turn away from] sins before we are forgiven. The primary thought is in respect to their character after salvation. Friends, the only evidence that we are recipients of God’s grace is that we are in fact conformed to our Lord Jesus Christ; this is the only satisfactory proof of our salvation.

According to Romans 8:29 this conformity to Christ is not required of a few; but as Paul states “many brethren” are to be conformed to the “image of Christ”. Too often we hear verses like this and we think within ourselves that it does not apply to me. Paul’s message is not just to one or two, for that matter it is not for just a few; it is a message that must be read or heard and applied to “many brethren”. I hope [desire and expect] that the words of this book has encouraged you to be a follower of the example that Jesus has set before us.

I suppose I could have just given you the words of Paul from Romans 8:29 and you would have the same message that I have passed along to you with many words. So just in case I failed to convey my message to you I will again print the words of Paul: (Romans 8:29) “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*”

[Note all emphases of scripture either by underlining or bold letters is mine, BJD]

Written and Published by

Buddy J. Duncan

Published April, 2009

Sedalia, Mo. USA

Email:buddyduncan@att.net