

THE MARKS OF JESUS

“From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Galatians 6.17).

One of Paul’s strongest points in teaching the law of God was his ability to use examples. During the Roman Empire, slaves were used as part of the labor force. It was common for masters to brand them. This branding served two purposes. First, it told everyone to whom the slave belonged and it told the same people to whom the slave did not belong.

At the time of this writing, Paul was growing old, and his body was showing the wounds of countless conflicts, and the wrinkles caused by age. Most of his wounds came to Paul after giving his life to the Lord, and he speaks of them as the “marks of Jesus.” These marks told the people that Paul’s master was Jesus Christ and there were no other masters.

Our bodies tell people about us what kind of life we have lived. A person that works inside has a pale skin color, and a person that does manual labor may be more muscular than an office worker.

So should the body of a Christian be different than the body of a non-Christian? What about the cost of being different? *“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” (Matt. 5:29-30).* We should act different, and we should think differently. Now some of these marks are physical in nature and some are spiritual in nature. Some of the physical marks are the way we dress, the way we act, the language we use and the places that we go. *“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is*

renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,” (Colossians 3:8-10).

External marks alone will not get the job done. *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom. 2:28-29)* For their marks of discipleship, many people rely upon their baptism, their names on the church roll, and if they attend the church services on a regular basis. These are necessary and not spoken of lightly, but to some they are external marks only.

Some of the marks of Jesus that Paul bore were inward and not outward, spiritual and not physical. *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9)* The brand of Christ is on our mind and hearts. Before we act like Christ, we must think Christ like. *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).* What we concentrate on and determines how we act and react. So much of the time we concentrate on worldly things and allow ourselves to think like the world around us. We give lip service to being spiritually minded yet we are carnal. *“For ye are yet carnal: for where as there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1Corinthians 3:3).* If we are going to be Christ like we have to be different. *“And be ye 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.” (Romans 12:2)*

It is not difficult to identify the marks of Jesus on a Christian. They will be on his body and on his spirit; the patience, forgiveness, humility, desire to learn about Jesus, efforts to save others, and ourselves.

“25 Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may

have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.” (Eph 4)

The face of a Christian should be one of happiness, determination, and concern for those outside of Christ. Our words should be as grace, seasoned with salt, Colossians 4.6. Our conduct should match what we say. *“I said, ‘I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me.” (Ps 39:1)*

We describe Christ in a number of ways. We speak of Him as our Savior, Friend, our Example, and Teacher, but seldom do we speak of Him as our owner or Master. *“19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” (I Corinthians 6)*

Everything we have is God's and that which He has allowed us to have. Our time, talents, money, business, homes and the list go on. We are not to allow our physical blessings to become our Master. He is at all times the Master we are to serve.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon...33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:24, 33)

The Lord Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to claim as His own everyone that will bow to His authority. If one chooses to become His servant, he must obey Him. If he remains faithful, he must be marked as belonging to Christ. - -

Dennis Tucker