

23T14d Love of Christ- Honesty and Stewardship

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I'm Kip your host for this series.

What does it mean to live a life centered on and around the "love of Christ?" We have been exploring this in our series "Love of Christ" based on a book by Adele Calhoun titled "*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*¹."

Let's pray.

Last time we talked about how we can embody the love of Christ by blessing others or encouragement, and caring for our world, God's beautiful creation.

Let's remember God is very clear, we are to love others in a way that embodies the love of Christ through our lives, actions and words. We have been discussing different aspects of this throughout this series,

1. Encouragement (blessing others)
2. Care of the Earth
3. Compassion
4. Speech (Control of the Tongue)
5. Forgiveness
6. Humility
7. Justice
8. Solidarity (in Jesus' Sufferings)
9. Stewardship
10. Honesty (Truth Telling)

Each of these are part of embodying the love of Christ to the world and this list is not complete. You might be able to come up with more.

Let's start this session with, "Honesty". Truth telling seems to be a lost art in our world today.

"Holiness is not a condition into which we drift." John Stott

Our desire is to live an authentically truthful life

Next how do we define it? Truth telling involves speaking in a way that does not exaggerate, minimize, deny, rationalize or manage the truth.

But make sure your statement is, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil origin. (Matthew 5:37 NAS)

How do we put this into practice in our lives? It includes refusing to spin events and experiences in order to impress others. It is not exaggerating. It is not cheating on tests, taxes, insurance forms. It is keeping promises. It is repenting, and informing others when you have lied. Speaking the truth in love refusing to flatter. It is saying what you

¹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Transforming Resources). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

mean and meaning what you say. Refusing to slander another. Refusing to gossip or pass on gossip.

What is the evidence we are doing this? Our lives should so that we have integrity. People can count on us to be honest. We don't manipulate the truth. We are sensitive to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in your conscience when you lie.

What about, "What about Stewardship".

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving too little away. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small." C. S. Lewis

Our desire to live as a steward of God's resources in all areas of life and to live out with the awareness that nothing I have is mine.

Next how do we define it? Stewardship is simply using what God's has given you the way He wants it used. It is offering all of God's gifts to you, resources, time, talents and treasure, for the benefit and love of God and others.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21 NIV)

How do we put this into practice in our lives? It includes a systematic, intentional generous lifestyle. It is a free flowing of God's love to you for others. We recognize that everything in our life, our time, our money, our home, our family are not our own. It is sharing the resources God has given you: physical, mental, natural, economic and spiritual any way God wishes you to use them.

What is the evidence we are doing this? It is being liberated from greed, self-centeredness, money and other things. You embrace generous hospitality toward those in need. Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself by stewarding all your resources for God's glory.

Author Amy Sherman writes in her book titled, "Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good"², about how our vocations are actually mission fields. She debunks the myth of the secular. Everything is God's, including your job. She talks about us stewarding our careers in a way to extend the kingdom. She says we can transform our communities, if believers would just integrate faith with work.

² Amy L. Sherman, "Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good," IVP (2011).

Let's Pray.

That wraps up our series on embodying the Love of Christ. So how do we do it. We bless others by encouraging. We steward our resources, God's creation, really everything. We watch tongue, fight for justice, show compassion. We are humble, Generous, Honest. And we forgive. Among many other things.

One of my favorite authors, Dallas Willard, said, “ *all essential parts of the human self are effectively organized around God, as they are restored and sustained by him. Spiritual transformation in Christ is the process leading to that ideal end, and its result is love of God with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and of the neighbor as oneself.*” (*Renovation of the Heart*³)

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. If you liked the message, please share a link with a friend. You can contact me at kip@punla.org if you have comments or questions. So, until next time @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. God bless.

³ Dallas Willard, “*Renovation of the Heart*,” NavPress (2002).