

'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' - Marks' Mission Week! August 2nd, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,

"To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27 (NIV)

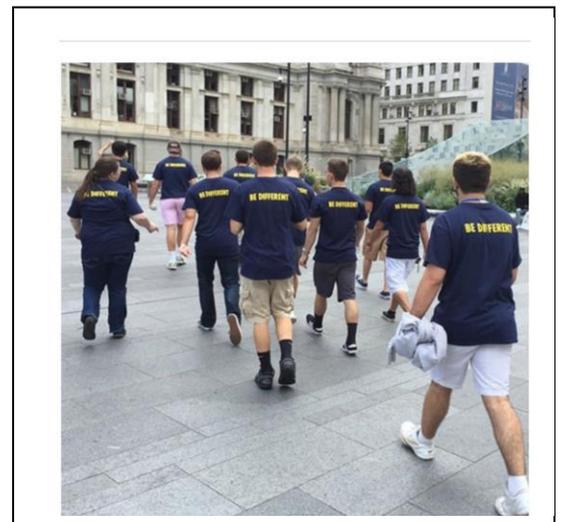
Have you ever thought about making Christ "attractive" before others? This week I was thinking about how inconsistent believers can tend to be. We have moments when the picture of our lives doesn't match what we want the world to know.

If you've ever parented toddlers, you know what their catchphrase is, right? "Mine!" While that's expected of toddlers, it's certainly not okay for believers in Christ. As followers of Jesus, our watchword isn't *mine*, but *yours*; not *me*, but *you*; and not *self*, but *others*. We want to attract the sweetness of who Christ is before the world. So, this week while I am off from preaching and we have our missionaries Steve and Kelly Marks update us about Thailand, I wanted just to share some visual pictures that I've found on Facebook. When you look at the pictures, you will see something that isn't consistent. You will see something that doesn't look right. As you search the pictures, ask yourself: "Is my life matching constancy of showing 'Christ living in me?'"

As we live out that attitude on the stage of this world, unbelievers take notice. And it could be that we are so compelling in the way we treat one another that we actually attract those unbelievers to Jesus Christ. Here are four pictures of reminders of what we should be this week:

1. Here is the first reminder: "Be different!"

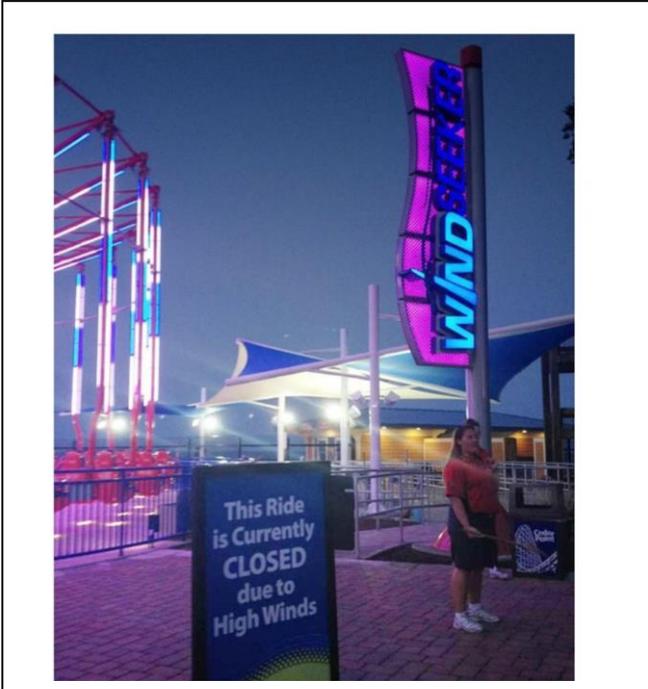
What's wrong with this picture? Are we being different? Do you see the shirts? They all say on the back 'Be different.' Here is a crowd of people proclaiming to be different, but what is different? They all look the same and dress the same. They are all going in the same direction. They aren't being "different." So it is in Christ. We are to be different in a Christ-like way. "Be of one mind," or, as some translations say, be like-minded (see John 17:21). Like-mindedness is not you agreeing with me about everything; it's cooperating in the midst of diversity. We can disagree about secondary issues as long as we all agree on the core, essential doctrines of Christianity. So how are we to treat one another, practically speaking? The apostle Peter wrote, "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be



tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

2. Here is the second reminder: “Be consistent!” When the world looks at us, we need to show that we follow the ways of Christ by "having compassion

for one another." The Greek word for *compassion* literally means to feel the same thing—to have sympathy. The best definition I've ever found for sympathy is this: "Your hurt in my heart." In other words, we can't be callous toward one another; we're to share our joys and our sorrows (see Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:26).



When others see our lives do they think “Christ” is thrilling, or do they fear that there is danger? Do they see a “closed” sign for Jesus hanging over our doors? Are all they really seeing is “this life for Jesus is closed because of high winds of suffering or trials?” May the Lord help us show consistency in Himself.

3. Here is the next reminder: “Be connected!” The key to showing others that Christ is real is the difference of love. What we don't want to look like to the world is the “answers for connection” and having disconnect in our “love.” "Love as brothers." I grew up with four sisters and a younger brother, and while I do love them, this text doesn't necessarily make me think of some high ideal. A better translation would be: "Love one another as brothers should love." This is one of the proofs that you and I are saved (see 1 John 3:14). We are told that we need to show Christ love and not fight with each other. Our enemy is working hard to destroy us. How many Christians are fighting over opinions and political views? How many Christians are showing dividedness instead of sacrificial love for each other? Are we tenderhearted? A literal translation of “tenderhearted” is this: "Have good bowels." Yes, you read that right. Two thousand years ago it was believed that the deepest emotions a person felt were in the intestinal region. So this essentially means "Be deeply concerned for others." The church ought to be a place where the walking wounded feel at home because of how great we are at being tenderhearted toward one another. Do we have stomach twisting compassion for each other during this Covid-19 or any other issues of racism? We are not showing a united front if we are not

showing we are all following and connected to Christ. "Be courteous," or as other translations say, "be humble-minded." Put simply, humility is the grease that keeps the gears of relationships running smoothly.

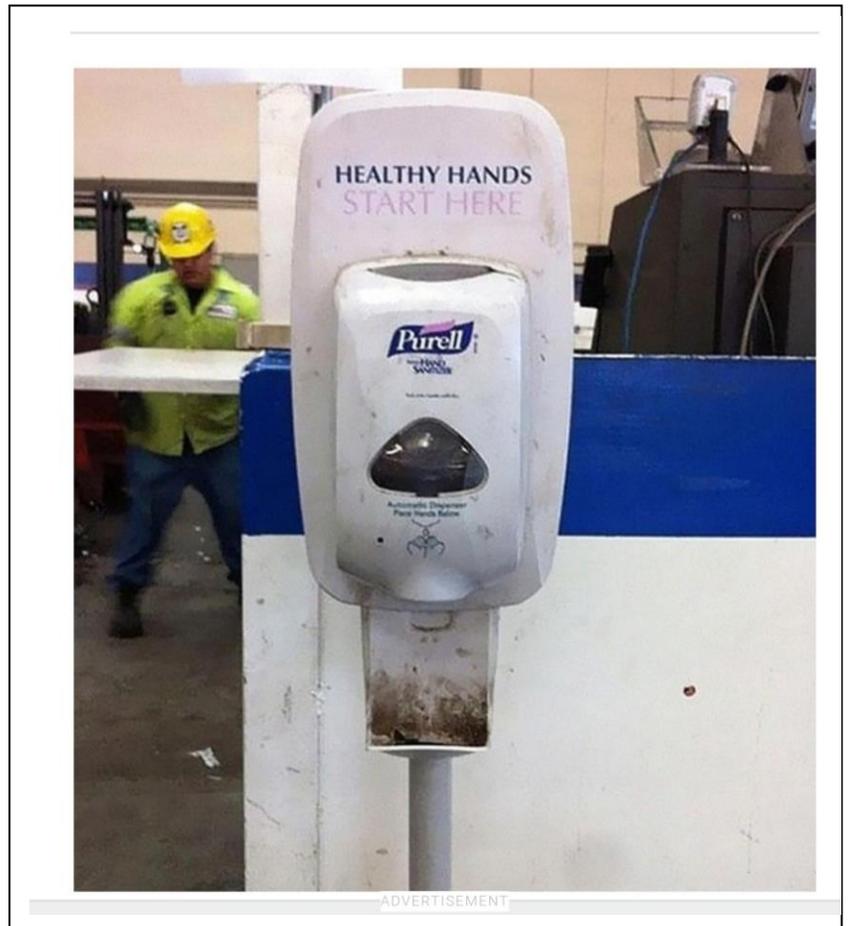
4. Here is the last reminder: "Be pure!" 1 John 3:1-3 says, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Jesus is coming!

A little boy once prayed, "Lord, somewhere in Your Bible it says that a thousand years is like a day to You. And it also says that You own the cattle on a thousand hills, which means a million billion dollars is like one dollar to You." Then he prayed, "Lord, could I just have one dime?" And the Lord spoke to him and said, "Sure, just a minute."

Here's the great hope of the church: Jesus Christ is coming back. We're expecting, anticipating, and looking for that event to happen, for Him to come and fix all the injustices of this world. But 2,000 years later we're still waiting and asking, "Why the delay?"

The apostle Peter wrote, "Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). That's simply to say that what seems to us like a long time is really a short time to God. God counts things differently.

And this is the reason for His delay: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (v. 9). He wants to see as many people saved as possible. I'm glad He's waited 2,000 years, because otherwise I wouldn't have been around to enjoy His salvation.



Knowing that Christ is coming keeps us pure! How often are we like that picture of talking about being pure, but we show our impurity and dirt instead? Remember 1 John 3:3 goes on to remind us that "All who have this hope [Jesus is returning] in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure" (NIV). We're by no means faultless, but we are forgiven, and we prove this by showing Christ's love to one another, to the hurting and the unlovely alike. That's how we'll attract unbelievers to our sweet Savior.

Psalm 34:8 says, "Taste and see that the LORD is good." There really is a sweetness and beauty about the character of Jesus, whom we love and serve. I pray that, like Him, we would be compassionate, tenderhearted, humble-minded, and loving this week, especially as we commemorate and celebrate His death and resurrection in the midst of an unbelieving world.

So remember loved ones, take these pictures for a reminder to live consistently this week. And maybe I will have more next week for us, I pray that in the meantime the Lord would help you trust in Him, depend on Him, and lean hard on the strong arms of Jesus, knowing without a doubt that He is coming back.

Let's pray,

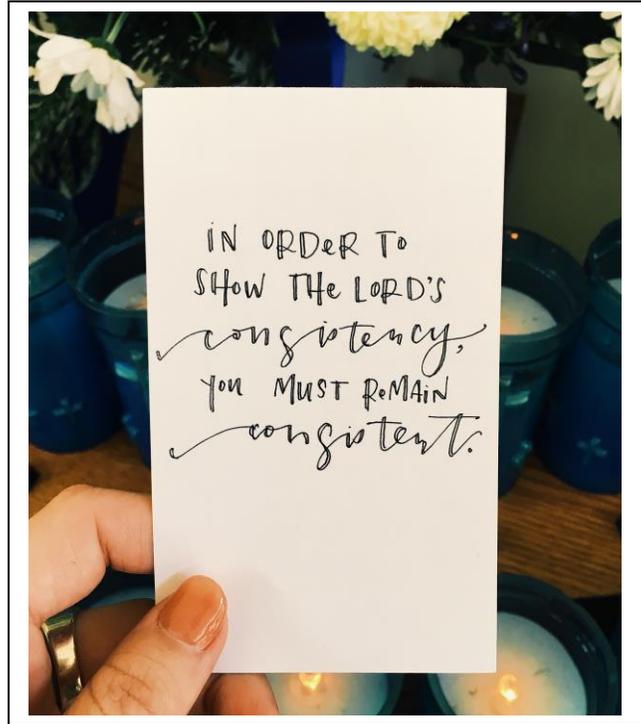
"Loving Heavenly Father,

Yours is surpassing greatness, unspeakable goodness, and superabundant grace. Help us live and walk by faith consistently. Your steadfast love greets us each morning, and Your faithfulness is our constant companion. Yet we mourn our sins and profound ingratitude to You. We have not put our hope in You as we should. Instead we bicker and fight and present an inconsistent picture before a watching unsaved world what Christ is. Father, forgive us. Thank You that Jesus is coming. Bring us nearer to Him. Thank You that in Christ, we are not condemned, for He died in our place, and You will not point out our inconsistent sins and weaknesses, for Jesus has leveled them, and His beauty covers all our deformities. Thank You for Your wonderful Son whose unshakeable hope in You in the midst of life's worst circumstances has not become our own. Holy Spirit, help us to turn away from our inconsistencies, and arguments, and shame to hide ourselves behind the cross. Cause us to place all our hopes in the powerful blood of our Savior and His perfect righteousness. When life is painful and difficult, help us to show consistency through the strength of Your Spirit's filling. Let us know afresh the joy of our salvation: Christ has been faithful for us, so You will always be faithful to us, for

*You cannot abandon the Son of God, to whom we are inseparably joined.
We pray in Jesus, Amen.”*

**Consistently praying,
Pastor Corvin <><**

Quotes:



**What you do
every day
matters more
than what you do
every once in a
while.**