



The Voice Of Truth

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Hillcrest church of Christ

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What Is Influence?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Influence is that moral or spiritual force, or power, by which we have an effect upon a person. The power of influence is staggering! Webster defines influence as "The acts or power of producing an effect." Human behavior is **POWERFUL!**

There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life. It is the most powerful, undeniable argument for Christianity; read carefully **Matthew 5:13-16**. Here Jesus is saying that the citizens of His kingdom are to have a saving influence in the world. Salt is good and useful for purifying and preserving. Faithful followers of the Christ are to the human race what salt is to food. They are to preserve the life of Christ in the world.

Jesus said if the salt has lost its genuine salty quality, it is fit for nothing; this is the reason it is cast into the street where it is trodden under foot of men. So, if the disciples of Jesus have lost their savor, they, too, are good for nothing, but to be cast out. The salt of Palestine is not made from clean salt water, but from marshes along the sea, and is so mixed with impurities as not to keep its quality very well. Sometimes it becomes utterly worthless, without taste and without value; it's good for nothing, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown. This is the reason why it is cast into the street. A Christian who doesn't have that saving influence in the world is good for nothing, but actually destroys the cause of Christ! If Christians become untrue and degenerate spiritually, they cannot have a good influence on the world. Christians should guard against losing their identity in the world; rather, they are to influence the world to become Christ-like. The Christian is not worldly, but he is always touching lives of the world.

The world urgently needs worthy examples of Christians. Christians are to imitate God in purity in order that the world may see God living in us! How is your influence????

THE CROSS

Jimmy Pettigrew

What does the cross mean to you? To me, it means **VICTORY!!!!** The cross gives us the victory over our enemies. Paul said, "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world,*" **Galatians 6:14**. Paul glories in the cross of Christ. Let us examine the importance of the cross, which gives US the victory over our enemies.

The cross gives victory over sin. The little word sin reveals mans' basic failure and problem. Sin has always been a problem for the whole human race (**Romans 3:23**). Sin is the transgression of the law (**1 John 3:4**). All unrighteousness is sin (**1 John 5:17**). Sin separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). Sin brings death (**Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4**). The cross of Christ reveals the tragedy of sin. Christ died for the ungodly (**Romans 5:6-10**). God made His Son a sin offering (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). It wasn't the nails that held Christ to the cross, but our sins and His love for us! Through Christ's blood, men may now be redeemed from the rule of sin (**Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19**); cleansed from the guilt of sin (**Hebrews 9:14**). As Christians "*walk in the light*" of God's word (**Psalms 119:105**), they are kept cleansed from sin (**1 John 1:7; 2:2**).

The cross gives victory over self. Sin is basically selfishness. The selfish nature of sin is seen in the personal desires of the prodigal son (**Luke 15**). One of the most difficult things is denying self. Because of the power of selfishness, Christians must "*deny self*" (**Matthew 16:24**), and give ourselves to the Lord. "*Crucify self*" (**Galatians 2:20**). One must be willing to surrender to the Lord to serve Him; give of them selves (**2 Corinthians 8:5**).

The cross gives victory over Satan. Satan is identified as the "*god of this world*" (**2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-2**). He uses enticements to lead men into the fulfillment of lust (**James 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 2:11**). Christians, by the power of Christ's blood, can be delivered from the world (**Galatians 1:4; 6:14**). There is power in Christ's death to motivate men to flee sinful, worldly lusts and live for the Lord (**John 12:32-33**). Men can cease to be Satan's servants (**Romans 6:17-18**). Christ gives us the victory if we will follow Him!

Will You Follow Him?

Jimmy Pettigrew

"...*These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth...*" **Revelation 14:4**. Jesus is the one we should follow, "*Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,*" **1 Peter 2:21**. He is "*the way, the truth and the life...*" **John 14:6**. Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (**Luke 9:23**). We need to walk as Christ walked (**1 John 2:6**).

Why is Jesus the one we should fashion or pattern our lives after? He was tempted like us, (**Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15**) and did not sin (**1 Peter 2:22**). He is "*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (**John 1:29**), the Son of God (**John 3:34**) and lives forever (**Revelation 1:18**). Salvation is only found in Him (**Acts 4:12**). Truly He is "*King of kings, and Lord of lords,*" **Revelation 19:16**. These are some of the reasons why man should fashion, pattern and "*follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,*" **Revelation 14:4**.

The perfect pattern of Jesus describes the Christian life as a life of service to God (**Luke 22:42**). It is the Christian's responsibility to serve God, not mammon (**Matthew 6:24**). Serving God means serving Christ, which in turn, means following and living for Christ (**John 12:26; Philippians 1:21**). It is mockery to claim to be a servant of Christ while living in disobedience to Him (**Luke 6:46**).

Living for Christ demands us to live differently. Jesus Christ changes people for good. Those once enslaved in sin (**Ephesians 5:8**), now walk in newness of life (**Ephesians 4:24**). To be a Christian, our manner of life is different. We do not live the way we did before. The Christian is distinctive!

Can people see a change in you? Are you following the Christ?

POINTS TO PONDER...

Today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

This time, like all other times, is a good one if we but know what to do with it.

It is one of the most compensations of life: that no man can help another without helping himself.

Each of us is a noble creation! Let us not fail to exhibit it in action and good deeds.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17