

Indelible

The Marks of Authentic Christian Faith

Easter Sunday April 4, 2010

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Message Truth:

Were you to honestly evaluate your life, would you say that you are making a mess or leaving your mark? The Scripture teaches us that we were “bought with a price.” If you are a Christian, do you feel that you are giving Christ His money’s worth? What differentiates a Christian from a non-Christian? What are the marks which define authentic Christianity? Today and in the following weeks we will seek to answer these questions. A Christian is simply one who has asked God for forgiveness and been forgiven. Many people claim to be Christians, but not all who claim the name are truly His. I have found ten distinguishing marks of authentic Christian faith. The first mark of a genuine work of grace is love. A Christian loves completely. Next, true Christians are obedient to their Master. A Christian will obey consistently.

What marks are you willing to bear for the love of your master?

⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

Isaiah 51:6

Indelible adjective 1. (of ink or a mark) unable to be removed. 2. Unable to be forgotten.

Origin Latin indelebilis, from *in-* “not” + *delere* “delete.”

1. A Christian I _____ C _____.

As a true follower of Jesus Christ, you love God and others more as time goes on.

³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35

● Christian love p _____ our Christian faith to non-Christians.

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other. John 15:12–17

● The m _____ for our love of others is Jesus' love of us.

● Jesus s _____ the reality of His love for us by dying for us.

● For Christians, loving one another is not o _____.

³ We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. ⁴ Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 2 Thessalonians 1:3–4

- The love which genuine Christians have for one another i_____ over time.

2. A Christian will o_____ c_____.

You used to do your own thing, but since you've come to Christ you're now more concerned with what God wants you to do.

³¹ *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.* John 8:31

- I cannot be His disciple and not k_____ Jesus' teaching.

²⁷ *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* John 10:27

- A Christian will l_____ to and f_____ Jesus.

²¹ *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."* John 14:21

- To say I love Jesus and then not obey Him is a l_____.

¹⁰ *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.* John 15:10

THE BIRDCAGE

Boston preacher Dr. S.D. Gordon placed a beat up, bent, rusted bird cage beside his pulpit when he told this story. An unkempt, unwashed little lad about 10 years old was coming up the alley swinging this old caved in bird cage with several tiny birds shivering on the floor of it. The compassionate Dr. Gordon asked the boy where he got the birds. He said he trapped them. Dr. Gordon asked what he was going to do with them. The boy said he was going to play with them and have fun with them. The preacher said, "Sooner or later you'll get tired of them. Then what are you going to do with them?" The lad said, "I have some cats at home. They like birds. I'll feed them to my cats." Dr. Gordon said, "Son, how much do you want for the birds?" The boy, surprised, hesitated and said, "Mister, you don't want these birds. There just plain old field birds. They can't sing. They're ugly." The preacher said, "Just tell me. How much do you want?" The grubby little lad thought about it. He squinted up one eye. He calculated and hesitated and said, "Two dollars?" To his surprise, Dr. Gordon reached into his pocket and handed the boy two, one dollar bills. The preacher took the cage. The boy, in a wink, hurried up the alley. In a sheltered crevice between buildings, Dr. Gordon opened the door of the cage and tapping on the rusty exterior he encouraged the little birds, one at a time, to find their way out through the narrow door and fly away. Thus accounting for the empty cage beside his pulpit, the preacher went on to tell what seemed, at first, like a separate story. About how once upon a time, Jesus and the Devil had engaged in a negotiation. Satan had boasted how he'd baited a trap in Eden's garden and caught himself a world full of people. "What are you going to do with all those people in your cage?" Jesus wanted to know. The Devil said, "I'm going to play with em, tease em. Make them marry and divorce and fight and kill one another. I'm going to teach them to throw bombs on one another. I'm going to have fun with them!" Jesus said, "You can't have fun with them forever. When you get tired of playing, what are you going to do with them?" Satan said, "Damn them. DAMN THEM! They're no good anyway! Damn them! Kill them!" Jesus said, "How much do you want for them?" Satan said, "You can't be serious! If I sell them to you, they'll just spit on you. They'll hate you. They'll hit you and beat you. They'll hammer nails into you! They're just NO GOOD I tell you, THEY'RE JUST NO GOOD!" Jesus said, "How much?" Satan said, "All of your tears and all of your blood. That's the price." Jesus took the cage, paid the price and opened the door. Paul Harvey's footnote: Jesus lived a good life in a wicked world to show us it could be done. And he died. And he rose again. To show us...we could do that too.