

# **Dynamic Christian Living**

by

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## **CHAPTER TWO -**

### **Loyalty to CHRIST**

**"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7)**

LOYALTY is undoubtedly one of the finest traits of mankind. There is something about it that warms our hearts and renews our confidence in our fellowmen.

Because of the strength of this fine quality, its manifestation in fidelity to duty, willingness to sacrifice, etc., shrewd men have learned to play upon man's loyalty, making it serve their own ends which are sometimes evil or ignoble. Men have been stirred to great devotion to unscrupulous political or military leaders, and even willing to blindly follow their commands.

It is said that when the Germans took France in those appalling days of terrific blitzkrieg. French machine gunners, trained for warfare and placed there for the definite purpose of killing, were made physically sick and unable to shoot by the willingness of German soldiers to walk directly into the line of fire, rank after rank, without any regard for their own lives. They were apparently so stirred by loyalty to their leader that they were willing to die in what seemed like endless numbers in order to ultimately accomplish his purpose.

This is blind loyalty such as the world may use for its own purposes. But may we suggest that if men are willing to give that for worldly rulers, should not the Christian gladly give a higher measure of devotion to CHRIST? He does not ask a blind, unintelligent surrender, but one which is glad and free. He asks only that we exert for Him that high and holy impulse which urges man to stand true to the right and to his duty, that commendable desire to do that which he feels he ought to do, come what may. Faith in CHRIST of which we spoke in our previous chapter should normally be followed by loyalty to Him. Disloyalty is a token of failure - and perhaps of false profession.

As the first manifestation of loyalty we note:

#### **I. Following Christ (Mark 2:14-17)**

There is just no use talking about loyalty unless we are ready to render full obedience. When JESUS said: "**Follow me,**" Matthew (who was also known as Levi) arose and followed Him. He was a sinner and he knew it. He was a man of a despised calling, a taxgatherer, (verse 14) but his

heart was already eager for better things and prepared to follow at the call and command of JESUS. He did not ask questions, did not make any propositions to the Lord nor try to "make a deal", but simply responded at once to His call. That is real obedience.

One is reminded of the Sunday School teacher who was explaining to her class the words in the one hundred third Psalm which describe angels as being "**ministers of his [GOD], that do His pleasure.**" She asked the girls in her class: "How do angels carry out GOD's will?" One answered, "They do it at once," another, "They do it with all their heart," a third, "They do it well." Then after a pause a quiet little girl added, "They do it without asking any questions." What blessed spiritual discernment! That is real obedience - an unquestioning response to the command of the Lord, obedience to His blessed will.

Notice that Matthew recognized that following CHRIST was not just for his personal pleasure, but that it carried with it the privilege and the obligation (for it is both) of making Him known to his friends. He did not wait until he had made a new circle of acquaintances as a follower of CHRIST and then arrange for a feast, inviting the saints to sit down in fellowship with the Master. He may have done that later but he celebrated his entrance upon the new life of faith by a friendly and effective testimony before his old friendsmen who were publicans and sinners.

It may be well to note that a tax-gatherer in those days while a man of wealth and position, was also a greatly hated man. The usual system of gathering taxes was to sell the right to collect them in a certain area to the highest bidder.

He then had to return that certain amount to the government but was allowed to make as much above it as he could. This meant that tax-gatherers were extortioners and that they were hated and despised individuals. Such were Matthew's dinner guests to meet CHRIST, a notable gathering indeed!

It is true that a Christian will not want to continue his old associations as a matter of personal pleasure or for the sake of worldly fellowship. He is a changed man and will only be hindered in his spiritual life by such close association with unbelievers. But that does not mean that he should drop all connections with his former friends. Rather he should seek to win them for CHRIST.

We recognize that principle in other realms of life. Who of this does not know some friend who has been in one line of business and then has changed to another. He does not dismiss his old friends and acquaintances or former customers but rather tries to interest them in his new line of endeavor. They are what he calls his good prospects. They are his stock in trade as a salesman. Matthew recognized his opportunity of introducing his former friends to the CHRIST who had now called him and had transformed his life.

The testimony of a friend who has found liberty and peace and satisfaction in CHRIST is tremendously effective in reaching the ungodly for CHRIST. Only recently I read a letter from a young woman who with a girl companion had lived a very ungodly life. She had gone into the things which the world had called fun to the fullest extent; she and her friend had tasted everything the world had to offer.

Then one day she was converted. She had a real experience of the saving grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. She began at once to try to win her friend but she was wise enough not to go at it in untactful or clumsy fashion, but rather tried to be skilful in reaching her. To carry out this purpose she enlisted the help of another friend who was a Christian. She asked her to meet them and to talk to this girl about CHRIST when opportunity arose. They arranged it so that after the three of them had been together to talk a little while this young woman who was newly converted would slip away to the telephone and thus give her Christian friend a chance to talk to the unconverted girl.

When the time came she was alert for an opportunity to speak. She did not have to seek it very long. The first girl had hardly left to go to the phone when this hard, unbelieving girl spoke up and said, "I never saw such a change in any person in all my life, as in my friend. Something has really happened to that girl." This gave the desired opening, and the Christian worker tried to deal with her, but immediately she threw up all her defenses and would not permit her to reach her with the Gospel message.

Now, what should they do? Well, matters went on from week to week. The new convert began to attend evening school at a Bible Institute. She invited her friend to come with her and visit the classes, which she promptly refused to do. But, kindly and with every consideration for her friend, she kept asking her and kept showing her day after day what it meant in her life to know CHRIST. The result, well, you know the result - she won her for CHRIST.

We who have found the Lord and found Him to be the joy and delight of our lives must not be content to go on from there simply rejoicing in our own peace and in the fellowship of our new-found Christian friends. No, we must also go and try to win our unconverted friends to the Lord. JESUS died for them, let us not forget it!

Notice the words of JESUS in verse 17:

**"When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."**

It may sound strange to say it but the fact is that it is not good people satisfied with their own righteousness who get to Heaven. It is sinners who know themselves to be sinners and who are willing to be healed of the awful hurt of sin by the Great Physician who will one day be in Heaven to magnify the Saviour's Name. Saved sinners belong there - not self-righteous, good-enough folk!

We sometimes make a serious error and thus mislead little children by telling them that the way to get to Heaven is to be a good boy or a good girl. That is not the teaching of Scripture. Individual goodness or self-righteousness does have value in its proper place, but it is not sufficient to redeem us from sin. Only the goodness which comes through the redeeming grace of GOD in CHRIST can do that. Only born-again individuals are Christians. They are not saved because they are good. They are good because they are saved. JESUS came to call sinners, not the self-righteous to repentance.

We note as our second point that he who is loyal to CHRIST not only shows it by following Him but also by:

## **II. Faithfulness to CHRIST (John 6:66-69)**

It is one thing to begin following CHRIST - it is quite another thing to persevere in that well-doing day by day.

The Lord is looking for the man who will cut a straight furrow right to the end of the field. The picture before us here is a very interesting one. JESUS had been doing many miracles and a host of followers had flocked to Him. He had not only done great and wonderful deeds of healing and tender thoughtfulness, but He had spoken beautiful words about the Fatherhood of GOD, about the power of the HOLY SPIRIT in the life of the believer, etc.

They liked His words and His miracles.

Then, too, He had fed the five thousand, and these followers liked that. They were all in favor of a Master who could make bread and feed them. They felt that here was a leader worthy of the name, one in whom they could take interest. But now, as we see in the verses immediately preceding this portion of Scripture, JESUS had begun to talk to them about a broken body, about partaking of His flesh and Blood; and many of them did not like that kind of talk.

It did not appeal to them like the sweet and lovely words which they had heard.

We have many people of the same type in our day. They do not mind religious talk, which warms and comforts them but they definitely do not care for that which reaches deeply into their own lives - calling for a personal spiritual experience, and it is particularly distressing to have someone speak of sacrifice. We read that many of the disciples "**walked no more with Him**" (v. 66), are those who are quite ready to turn away in our day, too, when the teaching becomes personal and pointed.

How perfect a picture this is of the so-called "religious experience" of multitudes of men and women. They are quite willing to listen to religious generalities. They like to hear about GOD's goodness and His Fatherhood. They are willing to partake of the blessings of the church and of the Christian faith, but if anyone should chance to talk about the Blood or about partaking of a real sacrifice or of the need of a personal, spiritual experience with GOD, they immediately lose their interest. That is too narrow for them. But it is GOD's way - and the only way.

Herein lies a danger which we need to guard against. We expect the modernist or so-called liberal to preach this kind of a Christ-less Christianity, but we need to be on our guard also against those who, within the circle of the orthodox or conservative group, present similar teaching. Of course it is presented in a careful, guarded way - but it is there! This dangerous and treacherous teaching is becoming more and more common and the ones who should oppose it are saying less and less against it. Let us beware - and let us be faithful!

Unfortunately too much of the leadership in the field of young people's work and religious education has been along this line in recent years. Young people are gathered in conferences and

are given lectures on ethics and character building, stewardship and loyalty to the church. They engage in the discussion of social problems. They talk about being aware of social developments - about standing against the injustices in the world. They talk about what young people should do in the post-war world, about the glories of a war-less world (one is tempted to ask them "where is it?"). All too often they have not a single authoritative word from Scripture to present, and no vital message about the need of a spiritual experience of regeneration, consecration, or separation from the world.

There is real danger in this sort of thing. Those who have responsibility for the leadership of young people need to be alert to it. When we see it we should not hesitate to protest against it - kindly, tactfully - in the right place and at the right time, but definitely and courageously.

Let me give you an illustration. Some years ago I spoke at a really live young people's open air camp. One of the other speakers was a denominational secretary who had recently completed his training at a modernistic seminary.

He was an attractive young man, kind, cultured, athletic, and the young people were naturally drawn to him. I noticed that one of the subjects that he was to discuss had to do with the attitude of young people toward modern amusements. I knew something of the problem within that group on that point and was interested to hear what this young man would have to say to these young people. Although he had attended a liberal or modernistic school he was the representative of an orthodox and conservative denomination, and I had high hopes that he would be helpful to the young people.

Imagine my distress when he began to skillfully evade dealing with the subject by cleverly diverting their interest to one attractive thing after another.

There were, however, two young people, a young man and a young woman, of high school age, in the group, who were determined that they were going to have their questions answered. I was deeply interested in watching them maneuver the leader into a corner where he would have to answer. They finally had him pinned down where he absolutely could not escape. What would his answer be? Well, what do you suppose he did? He just said nonchalantly, "Well, I'm tired. Our period is just about over. The dinner bell will ring in a few minutes. You youngsters are getting altogether too serious in your thinking, any how, and so we'll close the session without any further discussion." The young woman, with blazing eyes, stood up and demanded that he meet her question, only to be turned away by a casual wave of the hand and an ingratiating smile and he walked off toward the dining room.

Of course, that situation spelled "opportunity" for me, for the young people turned to me and asked me if I had any word from the Lord for them regarding their problem. By His grace and blessing I was able to give them that word.

I found that it did not agree with some of their opinions but I noticed that they respected it and received it in a way which indicated that it would one day bear fruit in their spiritual lives. We must sometimes thus stand in a difficult place with a loyal and faithful word for the Lord.

True disciples will stand even more firmly in a time when others draw back. They will recognize that the words which CHRIST spoke here present the very heart of Christianity. Our Lord turned

and asked His disciples: "**Will ye also go away?**"

Peter, responding, perhaps in a better way than he ever spoke in his life (except for the confession of JESUS as the CHRIST in Matthew 16), makes it known that they have no intention of leaving Him.

His words suggest that the disciples had some questions which were not fully answered. They did not fully understand about CHRIST and His work, but they did recognize Him as the SON of GOD and consequently they had no purpose of turning back. What a blessed word of loyalty they had (v. 69) expressing a willingness to live or to die with the CHRIST and for Him.

One is reminded of what took place when Commodore Joseph Smith saw the first dispatch that came to Washington from Fortress Monroe indicating that the ship, Congress, on which his son was the commanding officer, had shown the white flag. He said without hesitation, "Then my son Joe is dead." It proved to be so. The father knew the quality that was in his son, and he knew that he would die before he would surrender or permit his ship to surrender.

Should not we thus in loyalty stand for CHRIST? Are you ready to quit, to surrender to the enemy, or will you say with Peter, "**we believe and are sure**"?

Observe that Peter and his brethren recognized CHRIST as the "**Son of the living God**," that is, as GOD's Son in a unique and intimate sense.

It is impossible to build true loyalty on any lower concept of CHRIST. There is no incentive to real service and sacrifice in the watered-out religious faith of the modernistic liberal. They have found that out, to their sorrow. The tragedy of modernism is that it tries to build Christian character without a foundation of Christian experience of the regenerating grace of GOD. It is a dead, disappointing thing - sad beyond words.

One must recognize in the spiritual as well as in the physical realm that a house cannot be built without a foundation. It is sad indeed - yes, tragic - that these people who seem to want their lives to be good and useful, and who may even have a real desire to please GOD, go on building, building, building, trying to establish character, good conduct, a better world - a warless world - and having it all crash in their hands because they do not build upon that foundation that which none other can be laid, JESUS CHRIST the Saviour.

Now we turn to our third point. Loyalty means following CHRIST. It means faithfulness to CHRIST, but here we learn that it also means:

### **III. Forsaking All for CHRIST (Philippians 3:7-11)**

There were many things in the life of Paul as a natural man of which he was justifiably proud. They are mentioned in the verses immediately preceding this portion of the Word. He speaks of himself as having much to boast of according to the flesh, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews (that is, not a proselyte but a real Hebrew,) and, as touching the law, a Pharisee, that is, of the strictest sect.

When he speaks of his zeal in persecuting the church and of the fact that according to the law he is blameless in his righteousness, we realize that from the purely natural viewpoint he could be proud of his background and of his record. But that which seemed so important to him before he knew CHRIST paled into insignificance in the light of his relationship to the Lord. In fact, it was worse than useless - it was rubbish.

We need to get our sense of values balanced. We have become too accustomed to artificial values. One looks at artificial flowers, for example, and says that they look just like the real thing. Well, they may approximate it, but that's all. I heard of a little girl who had been making artificial flowers in her slum home but who had never had an opportunity to see real flowers. When she did so at a summer camp she was astonished above measure and wanted to know who had made them. When she was told that GOD had made them, she said, "Well, our firm might as well go out of business because we can't make anything to compare with this." How true that is! Artificial values do a "fade-out" when they meet the real thing.

Paul says that the best this world could offer him looked like rubbish (and after all, that's what it really is) when he caught a glimpse of JESUS CHRIST. Is not that the experience of every Christian? It should be. The song writer aptly expressed it when he said:

"Turn your eyes upon JESUS,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace."

The experience of Paul, however, was only the beginning of a life of devotion on his part to his Lord. He seeks in these verses to express that attitude of heart and life, and uses words the depths of which we cannot fully plumb. We do not fully know what it means to know the power of CHRIST's resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, "**being made conformable unto his death,**" but we do know it speaks of a fellowship with CHRIST that is very deep and intimate and powerful.

The point is to know Him, not just to be acquainted with Him. It is not enough to know something about Him, to read a book that tells of Him, to know those who know Him, or even to belong to a church where He is worshipped.

One must know Him personally. Is that your experience?

Do you know Him?

If you do you will know something of what Paul means.

You will know that it is a life of power because CHRIST lives in and works through the believer; a life of sharing with Him the hatred and bitterness of the world, yes of death, if need be, for His sake, and in His name. All this, we note, will be in the assurance of resurrection. Yes, and in resurrection power.

There is something thrilling about that fact. We have a resurrection faith. Yes, the very power

raised JESUS from the dead is the power that can take a man and raise him out of spiritual death into spiritual life. And that same power is operative in the life of a Christian who is ready to yield to it. As he yields to the HOLY SPIRIT dwelling within him He makes of him a gracious and powerful witness for the Lord.

May we say that in speaking thus we do not mean that he will become a great platform leader or a speaker for CHRIST.

No, some of the noblest and finest witness, and the most effective witness, is that which is given in the quiet place, in the midst of the family, in the little circle of friends, in the schoolroom and the office, but given in the resurrection power of the SON of GOD.

We talked a good deal during war time of being "all out" for our country. That was quite right and proper. But it is even more important that we should have what we may well call an "all out Christian experience" with nothing held back, nothing thought to be too difficult or trying, everything gladly given in unstinted love and devotion to CHRIST.

I need not tell you that the Christian church languishes in weakness and relative uselessness because it does not have within it more of those who will forsake all to follow CHRIST in complete faithfulness and in utter sacrifice of all to Him.

Such an attitude on the part of Christians has become so uncommon that we readily note those who live in this way.

We say "He is a spiritually-minded Christian." Yet is it not true that this should be the normal Christian life? Failure thus to live should be the abnormal condition over which we would remark and be concerned.

We like the story which comes from ancient Venice of the law which from the earliest time forbade the erection of a monument in the public street to a person who had sacrificed for the good of the state. The reason for this was that all Venetians were supposed to be filled with loyalty to their city. That meant that the erection of such a monument would be a reflection on all others who were equally ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the state should opportunity arise.

On the other hand it was held that treason and disloyalty must be so rare that only those who were guilty of it should have publicity. For them there were erected in public places what were known as "stones of infamy" recording the names of those who had betrayed their city and their state. It is said that there were very few such stones erected.

There is sound sense here, peculiarly applicable to spiritual conditions in our churches. Should not loyalty be the normal attitude of the Christian and of the Christian church? the Spirit of sacrifice and of loyalty is, or ought to be, the expected thing. If we thought clearly about it perhaps it should not call for any special praise. We ought rather to note those who have failed to devotedly follow CHRIST and make them feel that their failure reflects dishonor upon His Holy Name. This should not be in an unkind nor tactless way, but if done in the spirit of CHRIST it might be most effective for His glory.

If this Venetian custom were adopted by the church - how many monuments would there be in your church community - that is, "stones of infamy" - marking failure in loyalty to CHRIST? Would you have one? Would I? That's the question we ought to be asking instead of fretting over the fact CHRIST expects loyalty and sacrifice. That is the normal thing. Failure to give it is to fail CHRIST.

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