

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

There is no accusation which is quite so commonly and frequently brought against the Christian way of life as the charge of narrowness. It is a charge that is constantly brought against the individual Christian believer by that type of man who, in his desire to show his own breadth of mind describes himself as a man of the world. He is so broad that nothing but world dimensions can give you a true impression of the width and largeness of his views! I fear at times also it is true to say that there is no accusation concerning which the average Christian is quite so frightened as this charge of narrowness. To some Christians at the present time, it is more or less immaterial what men may say about them as long as they do not describe them as narrow. [Evangelistic Sermons at Aberavon, Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth]

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

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*Holding Fast to Christ
May 25th, 2025*

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12

Sermon Text: Colossians 2:18-19

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. (Colossians 2:18-19)

If you have been watching the news of late, you know that Rome is in the headlines. The new American Pope, the processions and glamour of the Vatican, world leaders including our President, Vice-President, and Secretary of State traveling to Rome to greet the Pope or to attend the last Pope's funeral extravaganzas.

The world might be impressed by all of this, but we are not. We must, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian believers, *hold fast to the head of the true Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is HE who supplies, holds together, and grows His Church with a true growth which is*

from God. The Apostle to the Hebrews wrote the same thing:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Holding fast to Christ. Looking to Jesus. Rome would draw us away from Him with her asceticism (severe treatment of the body), worship of saints and angels, claiming to have visions, indulging the flesh and senses with a message and a "church" that appeals to fallen man.

This morning, what I would like us to do is *look to Jesus and hold fast to Him* by refreshing our minds about *who Jesus really is*. Rome would put a false Jesus before us, as would many, many so-called

Protestant or evangelical churches and preachers today. In these perilous times the enemy will always be presenting a false Jesus, a false gospel, and a false church before us, working to turn us away from Christ. It is not a new tactic:

Luke 9:57-58 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." (58) And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (4) For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

The Lord Jesus, when He came down from the glory He had with the Father, did not come in pageantry and wealth. He had no earthly home. Often people will set up a kind of memorial for some famous person so that you can go and visit a house and be told "this is where so and so grew up." We've seen that very thing with this new Pope, and people traveling to Chicago to see the house he lived in as a child. Now the Pope has a palace.

So, let's turn our thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ by asking two questions:

But Jesus, the Lord of glory, *had no earthly home*. You find Him visiting in the homes of others:

1. What was He like when He came into this world, calling us to follow Him?
2. What is He like now?

Luke 10:38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

Nowhere to Lay His Head

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Compare this Jesus with the “Jesus” presented by Rome or by the “foremost” churches of our day. He had no home. He had no cathedral. He had no wealth. And it is the wealthy church which He rebuked:

Revelation 3:17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

What else do we learn about the real Jesus when He was in this world? –

Matthew 20:20-28 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. (21) And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of

mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” (22) Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” (23) He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

(24) And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

(25) But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. (26) It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, (27) and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, (28) even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The Jesus we must follow came as a servant, to serve. He did not come as a great one as the world considers greatness.

“But,” someone will say, “Rome teaches vows of poverty.” Answer: Rome’s vows are simply what Paul calls “asceticism.” Severe treatment of the body. As Martin Luther once practiced, later realizing the error and telling us that he had fasted until it almost killed him.

Someone else will say, “but Rome professes Jesus.” Answer: Rome’s Jesus is another Jesus, as we are clearly showing this morning. The Pope claims to be the “vicar of Christ.” Christ’s appointed representative and apostle in this world. Then the Pope should resemble Christ, should he not? Did we see Jesus robed and crowned in glamour and wealth as the Pope is? Of course not. Should not Christ’s apostle resemble Jesus?

Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will

enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ (23) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

How does the modern “Christian” celebrity preacher or mega-church resemble Jesus? And yet it is these which so many professing Christians are regarding as the church or as Christ’s people.

Isaiah 53:1-3 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (2) For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was

despised, and we esteemed him not.

“Looking to Jesus.” “Holding fast to the Head.” Jesus the true Shepherd of His real flock, whose voice His people recognize and follow.

Matthew 21:5 “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

You see the point? The Jesus we must follow is the Jesus whose voice we recognize. We must keep our eyes on the Jesus we meet here in the Bible and not be deceived by some other Jesus like that of Rome or much of modern evangelicalism.

Mark 9:35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone

who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

John 6:66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Paul’s experience in following Jesus, keeping his eyes fixed upon Him, was this:

2 Timothy 1:15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

2 Timothy 4:10-11 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (11) Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

1 Corinthians 4:9-16 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels,

and to men. (10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. (11) To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, (12) and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; (13) when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. (14) I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. (15) For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (16) **I urge you, then, be imitators of me.**

Is this what much of the so-called church of our day *imitating*? Is this what Rome looks like?

Matthew 24:4-9 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. (5) For many

will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. (6) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (9) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

Do we see the crowds turning away from the Pope? Do we see the Pope being hated by all nations?

Look to Jesus. Hold fast to the Head. Expect to experience what He experienced in this world:

Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! (23) Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your

reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

2. What is Jesus Like Now?

This Thursday is Ascension Day on the church calendar when we remember Christ's return to the glory He had from all eternity with the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ is no longer the suffering, lowly servant who came into this world to take our sins upon Himself and redeem us. WE are, as long as we are in this world. Paul said this:

2 Corinthians 1:5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

Philippians 3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for

the sake of his body, that is, the church,

We are seated with Him in the heavenly places NOW, yet for a little while our ascension into glory is not complete.

But the Lord Jesus, the true Head of the real Church, is ascended. He is at the right hand of the Father. What is He like now?

Revelation 1:9-18 I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet (11) saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

(12) Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden

lampstands, (13) and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. (14) The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, (15) his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. (16) In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. (17) When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, (18) and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

THIS is the Lord Jesus Christ. Does Rome look like this? Does Rome have this glory? *Rome is plastic. It's glory is not real. It is the creation of man. When the ascended Lord appears, men will shake and tremble. They will call on the rocks and hills to fall on*

them and hide them from His wrath.

Psalms 2:10-12 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Is THIS the Jesus the vast majority of professing Christians are serving today? No, they lead us away from Him. Rome largely substitutes Mary for Christ. Large portions of Protestants pray to another Jesus who promises to give them popularity and wealth and who judges no one.

Matthew 13:41-43 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, (42) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the

kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

You see it then. Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Hold fast to the Head of the Church. Follow Him no matter the cost for the present time. Don't be discouraged when you are slandered or accused or regarded as fools or mocked because your church is little.

John 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. (21) But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

What Jesus are you following as you walk through, as John Bunyan put it, the wilderness of this world? It is vital that we have this right. Satan would have us believe that because we are a very small church, not popular in the world or this community, that the Lord is not with us, that something is wrong, that surely Rome or the "bigger" church with lots of members and buildings and popularity in their worldly splendor are the right way to go – but this is all lies.

In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer, for Christ has overcome the world.

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. (Colossians 2:18-19)