

July 26, 81
GOD'S IMITATORS

Eph. 5:1ff

INTRODUCTION:

Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children -- only place in the Bible where that bold word "imitate" is applied to the Christian relation to God.

Unique idea - underlies who teaching New Testament on subject of Christian character and conduct.

Copy - resemble Him is our duty.

Reason you do this is -- you are beloved children.

There is no stronger demand - Matt. 5:48 "You therefore, must be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

This is no less than God's character.

Our standard is nothing less than God's own character.

Obviously there are areas we cannot imitate God -- that is why Paul went on with a broader scope - "walk in love - light, etc."

Clement of Alexander said, "The true Christian wise man practices being God."

He uses language wise men could understand. The training of an orator, depended on three things -- theory - imitation - practice!

The main part of the study was imitation of the masters who had gone before him. Told to imitate the masters of speech.

A side thought on practice. They say Preachers need practice -- Walter K. Ayers, Evangelist, Arlington, Texas said he was in Baylor in college. And finally some little church, Ark. invited him to supply one Sunday. He invited one of his friends to be his song leader that day. They got together and practiced. He said it lasted an hour every time! The Sunday morning they went - dressed a special five dollar suit he had bought for the occasion. The Sunday School ended about a quarter of eleven. At five of eleven they had some announcements and turned the service over to his song leader who got cold chills and three minutes after eleven it was time for the sermon. He got up and at eleven minutes after eleven, he was giving the invitation! Never so embarrassed in all his life.

Note - your imitation and practice is one direction.

Imitate in love - Old Testament - odor of a sweet Saviour. As old as sacrificial system.

Means - will - pleasing to God.

1. SUBLIME PRECEPT - Love

Our holiness cannot be like God - by nature we are not holy.

My faith is not like his faithfulness.

My obedience is not like his authority.

My emptiness is not like his fullness.

"Who is like unto thee o Lord?"

Our love only corresponds.

We are to imitate in our lives - God gives love liberally. "Spared not His son."

Our pattern is Jesus Christ.

Learn to love for the good of **others** - that grips us very tight. Love is more than sentimental talk - it is shown in action - lifting the burdens - not just church talk.

You say you are a Christian - child of God. Can a person look at your life and see anything about love which counts no cost and no sacrifice.

God likes love - and will be forgiving love.

When a person obviously does not like you or perhaps tries to harm you, what then?

Do we remember "Be ye imitators of God."

Sense of being loved will make loving a nothing else will - only power to eradicate, love begets love.

Bible does not cut love into two parts as God's love - one division.
Man's love in another. They are tied together.

Dr. Louis Talbot was in Paris, Texas. A wealthy widow and her servants lived next door. He finally met her one morning and she asked him to come in the house, told a sad story. Her husband had been murdered. She asked, "if she had to forgive her husband's murderer before she could be saved?" He told her she could not be saved on the grounds of her forgiveness, but salvation comes because Christ died on Calvary for our sins.

Later the Pastor of the church there preached on "The Wonders of Christ".

The timid woman rose to her feet and said Mr. Talbot - "I forgive everybody, and I forgive the man who blotted out the sun for me, the man who murdered my husband."

When the woman made that confession, the congregation saw the way of God.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."

John 3:16.

Month after month - carry grudges in hearts. Talk of burying the hatchet. Bury and leave the handle sticking out. Walk in love. Sweet smelling Saviour.

Don't put the cart before the horse.

Nile floods the fields of Egypt - brings greeness. Abundance.

Snow has melted in the far off wilderness.

If we are to go out into life we must do the same as living illustration.

*Couple at Wed. last night - sawed - lost the Ring Benjamin -
Bank Bonnard - The man had lights soiled & soiled - soiled
\$1000 - not more can - found in game Burdow paid - He paid Best
My last solemm word, press upon your consciences. On the finger & the ring! -
Now -*

Something is wrong with a man's Christian confidence who says I share in the
love of God in Christ - yet never moved to imitation of that love!

We have feasted upon that redeeming love - yet it has never quickened us with
the necessity of copying it!

"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom
he hath not seen?"

Express your love to the limit, God did!