

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Speaker: Lay Director

Time: Sunday 10:15 a.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose:

This talk should help clear the mind of the participants of any false images they may have of the Christian life. These false images must give way to the concept that the ideal Christian life is Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20). Some Lay Directors tell a deeply personal story of living the Christian life—failing, but forgiven. Others help the group stay focused during the false ideas of a Christian life by giving personas (even images) of each mistaken idea or by using masks as a way to engage each myth (representing ways we think we have to present ourselves/masks we hide behind if we believe false ideas). There are six myths. While posting images or masks, they could be hung up in the form of a cross. Many options for visuals are possible.

Outline: Begin Your Talk Here

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1–13

Response (ALL): Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up: its faith, hope, and patience never fail. (1 Corinthians 13:4–7)

Introduction:

God's love is beautiful, especially as it is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians. Perfect love, as demonstrated in a perfect life, was accomplished by only one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that love, we are God's beloved children through faith. When we live our Christian lives, we do so in the love that Christ has shown to us and given to us. There are many false ideas, however, of what the Christian life is all about.

I. False Ideas of What It Means to Live the Christian Life

- A. False: Living the Christian life means never having committed serious sin at any time in one's life.
 - 1. True: All Christians committed serious sins.
 - 2. True: Peter was a follower of Jesus, yet he denied his Lord three times. Nevertheless, Christ received him back and forgave him.
- B. False: Living the Christian life is a thing of the past.
 - 1. True: We are holy; but not because of our own deeds or actions. We are holy because Jesus lives in us.
 - 2. True: We don't say I "was" baptized, but I "am" baptized. Baptism is a reality every day. We are forgiven and made holy in Jesus.
- C. False: Living the Christian life means being a "Jesus Freak."
 - 1. True: Christians do not have to be constantly concerned about appearances. Religious articles of clothing, jewelry, or music are fine, but they don't make us holy.
 - 2. True: Christian living does mean genuine love and care for those around us.
- D. False: Living the Christian life means isolating ourselves from society.
 - 1. True: Being a Christian does not mean being a religious escapist who spends all his or her time in prayer, worship, and Bible Study while ignoring the needs of others.

2. True: Being a Christian does mean working at school, home, work, community and living like Christ in these callings.
- E. False: Living the Christian life means trusting in our labels.
 1. True: Christian identity does not rely on the label “Lutheran” or the Rite of Confirmation.
 2. True: God gives us faith through Baptism, and we hold to that faith with firm conviction by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- F. False: Living the Christian life means keeping all the rules.
 1. True: Christian living does not mean being “legalistic.” When people follow the rules to earn God’s favor or to look good, they are doing the right thing for the wrong reason.
 2. True: Being a Christian does mean living in the freedom of the Gospel—the Good News of Jesus death and resurrection for me.

II. Signs of a Christian Life

- A. AUTHENTICITY that goes beyond the cultural stereotype; not the super-pious type, but instead a life that points to Christ. (*This could be contrasted with points A & F above. Christ gives us the freedom to live authentically.*)
- B. GROUNDED IN CHRIST, rooted in the truth of God’s Word and therefore not using double standards or being guided only by emotions. (*This could be contrasted with point B above. With Christ in us, we are holy and living in our Baptism daily.*)
- C. JOY: living the Christian life, not because of obligation, but out of love for Jesus Christ, who first loved you and gave His life for you. (*This could be contrasted with point C above. We display an inner joy rather than simply an outward appearance.*)
- D. BEARING FRUIT: When connected to Jesus, the Vine, we cannot help but bear fruit of the Spirit (John 15:5; Galatians 5:22–23). (*This could be contrasted with point D above. We bear fruit out in the world and through our callings.*)
- E. COURAGE to do what is pleasing to God (knowing the difference between right and wrong) and making the effort to do what is right in spite of obstacles and difficulties. (*This could be contrasted with point E above. We seek to live by the power of the Holy Spirit rather than trusting in our labels.*)

III. Living Your Christian Life

- A. Begin by remembering who lives in you, and the one for whom you live.
 1. “I have been put to death with Christ on His cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:19–20).
 2. “I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. For His sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I might gain Christ and be completely united with Him.” (Philippians 3:8–9)
- B. Don’t compare yourself to others, wishing you could be as “saintly” as others. Be your new self in Christ. (John 21:2–23)
- C. Consciously let Christ live in and through you. (Colossians 3:12–17)

Conclusion: *Invite everyone to follow you to the chapel for a visit with our Lord.*

QUESTION (asked by Assistant Lay Director after the group returns from the chapel):

What does it mean to be a Christian? OR What myth do you sometimes believe? What is true?