

## Practising the way of Jesus

When we become Christians, followers of Jesus, we die to our old way of life and we come alive to Christ. Water baptism symbolises this. We go down into the water, like being buried in a grave, and come up out of the water, like being resurrected from the dead.

We learn that to be a follower of Christ means to die to our own, self-centred, ways of living. Rather, we learn to come alive to living in his ways, no longer living for ourselves. We realise that we are to become like Jesus and do the things he did, practice his ways.

Early Christians referred to themselves as “followers of the Way”. They saw themselves as walking with him, walking in his way, and in his ways, doing what he did.

### What is the Way of Jesus?

If we think about some of the many things Jesus did, we might include performing miracles, healing the sick, teaching God’s ways, feeding people and washing feet, grieving with those who were grieving, and living a self-sacrificial life.

At the heart of everything he did, was love. Jesus came to show us what God is like, and God is love. (1 John 4:16)

As disciples we are called to:

- Be with Jesus
- Become like Jesus
- Do what Jesus did

The second and third of these are summed up in these verses:

*Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. (Eph.5<sup>1-2</sup>)*

Let love be your motivation as you learn to imitate him.

Consider these verses:

*If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. (1 John 3<sup>17-18</sup>)*

*If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing. (1 Cor.13<sup>3</sup>)*

It should be clear that to practise the way of Jesus we must be motivated by love AND we must put that love into action.

### A limitation?

Despite the vast quantity and breadth of what Jesus did he was, nevertheless, limited. Jesus himself explains in this verse:

*So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. (John 5<sup>19</sup>)*

How did he know what the Father was doing? He spent time with the Father. This too is the way of Jesus.

Whatever else God calls us to do he calls us to spend time with him so we can see what he is doing, learn his ways, and walk in them.

There are many ways we can spend time with the Father. It's not complicated, but we must be intentional. We can:

- pray / be silent
- read the Bible / meditate on it
- rest (the sabbath principle)
- serve (not a task or a job but a way of life)
- obey (do what he says to you)

'Self' will find all sorts of reasons not to do these things but remember, self must die.

As we spend time with him, we get to know him better and we develop our relationship with him. Also, we learn his ways, the way of love. And with his help, we learn to put his ways into action.

### **Conclusion**

- **Be with Jesus** – make it your way of life to spend time with him.
- **Become like Jesus** – learn to be motivated by love.
- **Do what Jesus did** – “imitate him in everything you do.” If you want to practice the Way of Jesus, you are going to have to do something