

Following Christ

When Jesus spoke to the people again, he said: I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark, but will have the light of life.¹

This is an invitation to follow the Lord's life and teachings and be truly enlightened *and renewed in the spirit of your minds²*. Otherwise when *a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit.³*

Paul says, *for to me life is Christ⁴* and so we too are encouraged to meditate upon the life and teachings of Jesus which are more valuable than those of any of God's holy people; we find hidden manna when we follow his Spirit.

Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him,⁵ and when such as these listen to the Gospel they are not truly impacted by it. But those of you who take to understanding are directed to make a wholehearted effort to imitate his life.

It is of no use to discuss grand theories about the Trinity if we lack humility. *What is too sublime for you, do not seek; do not reach into things that are hidden from you.⁶*

Words do not make a man holy and righteous, but a good life will make you precious in God's eyes. What you preach, practice. Be aware of those similar to the Scribes and the Pharisees, *do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice.⁷*

If you knew the Bible and the sayings of the learned of what use would all of that be if you lacked God's love and graces. Better to feel contrition than to learnedly talk about it.

Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity⁸ except to Love the LORD, your God, and keep his charge, statutes, ordinances, and commandments always.⁹ Seek Yahweh and his strength, tirelessly seek his presence!¹⁰

This is the greatest wisdom: *Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well.¹¹*

Do not work excessively for short lived riches *but get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it.¹²*

It is foolish to desire a long life and not live a good and virtuous life. It is entrapping to follow the lusts of the flesh. Why be so concerned with worldly things if they are not preparing you for the life to come.

Let us turn to spiritual things *and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection.¹³*



This article is based on Book 1, Chapter 1 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

¹ John 8:12

² Eph 4:23

³ Matt 15:14

⁴ Philippians 1:21

⁵ Romans 8:9b

⁶ Sirach 3:21

⁷ Matthew 23:3

⁸ Eccl 1:2

⁹ Deut 11:1

¹⁰ Psalm 105:4

¹¹ Matt 6:33

¹² Luke 12:33

¹³ Hebrews 12:2