

Summary of Session 4: The Spirituality of Paul - Following Christ by Imitating Paul

1. Paul: A Spirituality Grounded in the Paschal Mystery

- A. Believers are conformed to the Crucified Christ
- B. Sanctified by God's grace in Christ.
- C. Through the power of God's Spirit.

2. Spirituality of Discipleship

- A. Key theme in the Gospels
 - 1) Jesus calls people to follow him.
 - 2) They learn from what He says & does.
 - 3) Teach others to do the same.
 - 4) Example: Mt 28:19-20.

3. Paul Calls Others to Imitate Him

- A. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8 "*you became imitators of me.*"
- B. Pattern of imitation:
 - 1) Paul imitated Christ
 - 2) The Thessalonians imitated Paul.
 - 3) They also imitated the churches in Judea.
 - 4) Other churches imitated the Thessalonians.
- C. 2 Thessalonians 3:7 "*imitate us.*"
 - 1) Paul embodied the Gospel he preached.
- D. 1 Corinthians 4:16 "*I urge you, imitate me.*"
- E. 1 Corinthians 11:1 "*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*"
- F. Philippians 3:17 "*Join others in being imitators of me.*"
- G. Pastoral problem:
 - 1) Converts have never seen earthly Jesus.
 - 2) Needed a model to imitate.
 - 3) Paul models this "newness of life."
Galatians 2:20 "*Imitate me, because it is no longer I, Paul, who live. But it is Christ who lives within me.*"

4. We Learn By Imitating

- A. Pope St. John Paul II
"To teach means not only to impart what we know, but also to reveal who we are by living what we believe. It is this latter lesson which tends to last the longest."

5. What Does it mean to Imitate Paul Today?

- A. Distinctive Aspect of Paul's Spirituality – How God manifests power & wisdom.
- B. 1 Corinthians 1:22-25: Christ the power & the wisdom of God.
- C. Sufferings to be Endured (1 Corinthians 4:10)
- D. Paul boasts in his weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10; 13:4)
- E. We grow in the spiritual life
 - 1) living by God's grace
 - 2) sharing in the Paschal Mystery every day
 - 3) living by the power of God's Spirit
 - 4) living by God's holiness
 - 5) living by the wisdom & power of God

F. Need for Paul's courage to call other people to imitate us

G. Witnessing to Christ – "Imitate me"

1) Pope Paul VI (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* [1975] #41):

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, & if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

H. Paul's Challenge:

1) 2 Corinthians 5:2 "Be ambassadors for Christ"

2) 2 Corinthians 4:7 *"We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God & not to us."*