

“PUNKS FOR JESUS”
Date: February 27, 2022
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Last week... We are all called to follow Jesus...in both general and specific Ways.

“Most Christians are either poorly trained or untrained all together.”

- Why is this statement true?

Most Christians are either poorly trained or untrained all together due to the difficult posture a person has to live within in order for training to happen.

When you start a new job, even the most basic job...

- Someone must train you. From Technical Skills, to Culture, to “How do I get in and out of the building?” – Training is an accepted part of your onboarding.

“Just getting the job doesn’t automatically qualify you to do the job.”

- When Jesus called you to follow and you accepted... “You got the Job!”

“Being like Jesus is the job of every Christ follower.”

- We are called to be these pictures of Christ to the world...

(Vs) Ephesians 5:1-2 – “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

- But let’s be clear... “Being saved by Christ is not the same thing as being imitators of Christ.”
- In other words... “Just being saved by Jesus doesn’t qualify you to automatically be like Jesus.”
- To be walking, breathing, touchable pictures of Him in the world requires training!

This is where that difficult posture I talked about earlier really starts to become so important...

- Before we know Christ, we are like a turned off television. All the potential exists within...It just lacks the power to come alive!
- Unsaved and Seeking...

(Vs) Isaiah 59:10 – “We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men.”

- But when we meet Christ... We're more like a TV that's on but full of static... Saved, but without a clear or developed picture.
- The writer of Hebrews described these untrained people like children learning to eat...

(Vs) Hebrews 5:13,14 – "Anyone who has to drink milk is still a baby, without experience in applying the Word about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by continuous exercise to distinguish good from evil."

- Without training, these people never develop and so eventually become blurry visions of Jesus to everyone around them...
- I believe that most people who have been hurt by other Christians and the Church were hurt by people and communities who accepted living with these static pictures of Christ as their example.

The only way for any person or group to avoid living a life of this Static Mess is Training...

- And, every Christ follower must start their training the same way...

"Taking on a posture of self-denial."

(Vs) Matthew 16:24 – Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

(Vs) Matthew 20:16 – "So the last will be first, and the first last."

The Apostle Peter has probably the clearest documented onboarding process, through denial of self, of any person of faith in the Bible...

- ... And, his is especially unique in that Jesus Himself leads it.
- Simon Peter, also known as Cephas, was one of the first followers of Jesus Christ. Upon meeting Simon, Jesus gave him a new name: Cephas (Aramaic) or Peter (Greek), which means "rock." Later, Jesus officially called Peter to follow Him, producing a miraculous catch of fish. Immediately, Peter left everything behind to follow the Lord... For the next three years, Peter lived as a disciple of the Lord Jesus.
- Being a natural-born leader, Peter became the *de facto* spokesman for the Twelve... More significantly, it was Peter who first confessed Jesus as...

(Vs) Matthew 16:16b – "the Christ, the Son of the living God," ... a truth which Jesus said was divinely revealed to Peter.

- Peter was part of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, along with James and John.
- Peter was enthusiastic, strong-willed, impulsive, and, at times, brash.
- ... Basically, he was often a Punk...
- In several instances, Peter showed himself to be impetuous to the point of rashness.
- For example, it was Peter who left the boat to walk on the water to Jesus, and then promptly took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink.
- It was Peter who took Jesus aside to rebuke Him for speaking of His death and was swiftly corrected by the Lord.

- It was Peter who boasted that he would never forsake the Lord, even if everyone else did, and later denied three times that he even knew the Lord...

Through all of Peter's ups and downs, the Lord Jesus remained his loving Lord and faithful Guide.

- Jesus reaffirmed Simon as Peter the "Rock," promising that he would be instrumental in establishing Jesus' Church. On the day of Pentecost, Peter was the main speaker to the crowd in Jerusalem and the Church began with an influx of about 3,000 new believers.

Now... After the denial of Jesus, and the restoration that Peter was the rock the Church would be built upon, we like to think that he never faltered again, and it was 'happily ever after' from there on out...

- But that's not any follower of Christ's story... The training never stops.

As Peter's going about his job... Building the Church as God has requested...

- God brings on a new worker. His name was Saul until he met Jesus, which happened while he was working to attack and extinguish the Church Christ was starting.
- He too was kind of a Punk! Jesus got a hold of his heart and eventually changed his name to Paul.
- It's like an outward example of what meeting Christ is still like today...

(Vs) Romans 12:2 – "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Paul begins his own onboarding and eventually walks out his 'denial of self' training, all the way until he can say without fear...

(Vs) Phil. 1:21 – "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

- This gave him eyes to see and hear... He was no longer living a life of static, but of "Consistent Christ-like Clarity," which is the goal!

While all this is happening, Peter was going about his work concerning the Church God asked him to build...

- During a specific visit to Antioch, Peter was enjoying the fellowship of the Gentile believers... However, when some legalistic Jews arrived in Antioch, Peter, to appease them, withdrew from the Gentile Christians. – He didn't want to be seen as 'Unclean.'
- The Apostle Paul saw this as hypocrisy and called it such to Peter's face...If ever there was a "Punk Written" verse in the Bible, this would be it!

(Vs) Galatians 2:11-14 – "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- He says to Peter... "You're not reflecting Jesus right now." Sometimes a Punk just needs to be called out by another Punk!

Despite his success, Peter was willing to be called out and willing to be trained.

- So much so, that at the end of his life, and in his final address, he encourages the Church to listen to Paul...

(Vs) 2nd Peter 3:15-16a – “And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand...”

- Punks be Punks till the end I guess...

In truth... I believe the overarching trainability of Peter to receive Paul’s correction at all is the very characteristic that made Peter the Rock the Church was built on.

- This is what people who are trainable do...they “Train for a better, more accurate picture to Jesus.”
- They Move from being “Static” Images, to Images of God...
- A Picture that’s clear: Vancouver...This is our city. Our small part of the world.
- It’s here that we are called to be imitators of Christ.
- Like Peter, the rock who this movement has been built on, we are supposed to be trainable still today. Question: But are we?
- Guess what, Kessid? ... We weren’t always good neighbors.
- **Note:** Everybody has a space like this within their heart...
- He says to Peter... “You’re not reflecting Jesus right now.”
- Sometimes a Punk just needs to be called out by another Punk!

You need others who can help you to see them...

- ... Relationships that you can be called out in.
- ... People who can highlight your most trainable opportunities...
- The World wants real community without this cost... But it’s impossible.

Real community only happens within groups of people willing to deny themselves for the sake of others.

- **A Promise:** “Every time you willingly receive these loving critiques, it will feel like a small part of your old self dies... And you will hate it!”

That’s why we arranged for us to do it all together...

- A Place where you can meet other “Punks” like you!

In the end, both my own and your posture for all this training will all boil down to the question of who will reign over our lives...

- “Me or Christ” ...Which Punk Wins?

MESSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS!

PONDER

What about the message did I feel...

- Inspired about?
- Convicted by?
- Sadness, grief, or loss about?
- Curious about?
- Hopeful for?

EXPERIENCE

Did anyone have a "Wow!" moment during the message that resonated in you? If so, what was it? (Could be a new scripture/Bible story you've never heard, a profound concept, etc.)

LEARN

What new/fresh thing did I learn about God? What new/fresh thing did I learn about myself?

APPLY

How can I challenge myself this week with what I've learned? What might responding well look like?