

PORTRAIT OF A CHRISTIAN (5)

Feeling how Christ feels

A. Introduction¹

1. What kind of people ought we to be? What kind of people are we called to be like?

These are questions that are explicitly and implicitly asked in the New Testament, and the answers given generally focus on our character rather than our conduct.

God is more concerned about who we are (what our hearts are like) than what we say or do.

Because right conduct will come from having a right character, in the same way wrong conduct comes from having a wrong character.

Because right conduct can deceive others into thinking we have a right character.

2. Those whom Jesus saves, He promises will be changed by His Holy Spirit, as they are given new hearts and are transformed into His likeness.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

3. So, what kind of people ought those who have experienced this work of the Holy Spirit be?

What character traits will be found in them?

"Christian character is an internal nature conformed to Christ in five different areas, resulting in a variety of virtues." (Andrew Davis)

What are these five areas?

- a) Affection – what you love and what you hate.
- b) Desire – what you seek.
- c) Will – what you choose and what you reject.
- d) Thought – what you think.
- e) Emotions – what you feel.

Followers of Jesus love what Christ loves and hate what Christ hates. They seek what Christ seeks. They choose what Christ chooses. They think what Christ would think.

And they feel how Christ feels.

4. God reveals Himself to be a God who expresses various emotions.

He rejoices. He mourns. He gets angry. He is jealous. He laughs. He is compassionate. He grieves. He is wrathful.

¹ This series is based upon Chapters 11-16 of *An Infinite Journey* by Andrew Davis

"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him." (Psalm 103:13)

"The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain." (Genesis 6:6)

"God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day." (Psalm 7:11)

This shouldn't be surprising to us.

We see this truth about God reflected in those who bear His image, as humans express various emotions too.

However, unlike our emotions, which are tainted by sin, God's are perfect.

He knows the right time and circumstance to respond with each emotion, and this is part of His will.

We see this most clearly in His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the perfect human and true image of God.

Christ expresses what God feels and is the example for us of how we should feel.

B. Seeing how Christ feels

1. What emotions do we see Christ display?

"But the bodily expression of the emotions (in Jesus) is also frequently expressly attested. Not only do we read that He wept and wailed, sighed and groaned, but we read also of His angry glare, His annoyed speech, His chiding words, the outbursting ebullition of His rage, of the agitation of His bearing when under strong feeling, the open exultation of His joy, the unrest of His movements in the face of anticipated evils, the loud cry which was wrung from Him in His moment of desolation. Nothing is lacking to make the impression strong that we have before us in Jesus, a human being like ourselves." (B.B. Warfield)

He expresses compassion.

"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" (Mark 1:40-41)

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36)

"Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." (Matthew 15:32)

"Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." (Luke 7:11-13)

"Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said, "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10:21)

He expresses joy.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners".' But wisdom is proved right by her actions." (Matthew 11:19)

"At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure." (Luke 10:21)

"So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." (John 11:14-15)

He expresses grief.

"Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hen you in on every side." (Luke 19:41-43)

He expresses anger.

"He looked round at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored." (Mark 3:5)

"When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14)

"Jesus, once more deeply moved [*raging in himself*], came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said." (John 11:38-39)

"So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (John 2:15-16)

He expresses fear of the Lord.

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD – and he will delight in the fear of the LORD." (Isaiah 11:1-3)

How do we know Jesus feared the Lord? He listened to His Father's voice with care, obeyed His will with sincerity, served Him with loyalty, worshipped Him with all His heart, and delighted in Him with joy.²

2. All the different emotions that Jesus displays were marked by holiness.

He showed holy compassion, holy joy, holy grief, holy anger, and holy fear.

He never expressed how He felt in a sinful way.

Unlike us, He was not controlled by His emotions but had full control over His emotions.

C. Showing how Christ feels

1. Christians will feel not only the same emotions that Christ felt, but increasingly feel them in the same way Christ felt.

Our emotions will be less excessive, unbridled, ignorant, or ungodly.

² David Murray, Too Much Information (Proverbs 1:1-7)

They will be more controlled by God's Spirit and informed by God's Word.

2. What emotions will we display?

We will express compassion.

Compassion that marry our feelings with those of others.

Compassion that moves us to serve others.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." (1 Peter 3:8)

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15)

We will express joy.

Joy that comes from knowing God through Christ.

Joy that comes from having our sins forgiven and the gift of eternal life.

"Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!" (Philippians 3:1)

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is... joy." (Galatians 5:22)

We will express grief.

Grief over the damage sin does to our lives, the lives of others, and to this world.

Grief over the lost who are on the path to hell.

"Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom." (James 4:9)

"Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed." (Psalm 119:136)

"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel." (Romans 9:2-4)

We will express anger.

Righteous anger at that which displeases and offends God.

"In your anger do not sin." (Ephesians 4:26)

We will express fear of the Lord.

"The fear of the Lord is a continuum we advance along when we more accurately perceive God and the world He's made: Terror > Dread > Trembling > Astonishment > Awe > Reverence > Devotion > Trust > Worship." (Ed Welch)

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

"Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king." (1 Peter 2:17)

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)

D. Summary

1. One aspect of the portrait of a Christian is that they feel how Christ feels.

What should we do when our emotions are out of sync with His?

We are to preach Scripture to ourselves.

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.” (Psalm 42:5-6)

2. How then do we rightly align our feelings with those of Christ’s?

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42)

By using the ‘means of grace’: Word, Prayer, and Fellowship.