

What Christians are Called to Be

Acts 4.

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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

We are called to be the manifestation of God's delight in the Son of His love. We are in union with Him today where He is in heaven; and if this is to be practically the case, everything in us must come directly into judgment.

If I took a child of five years old, and could fill its little heart with that thought, it would feel it must not say, "I will," and "I will not." God made nothing whatever of Peter's will, or of Paul's will. If the Lord had put the key into Peter's hand, he must go and open the door to the Gentiles, whatever his Jewish will might say; and when Paul forgot that implicit obedience to the Lord's will was his place, and would go to Jerusalem, he became a prisoner, and thus was carried to Rome. If you say, "I will," you are not the expression of the Father's delight in the Lord Jesus Christ. How far does this come home like a hook laying hold of each of you? If self-will is not according to Christ up there, have I not to judge myself? The Lord does not put us two or three together to hide our individual walk. How little a time are we together compared with what we are in solitude with the Lord! I have individually to do with Christ. He loved me, gave Himself for me. Will is the grand contrast between Christ and us. The great mark of antichrist is, that he will do his own will. This principle goes into everything. Whenever taste comes in, will comes in — "I should like." This is will.

We have two marks of the early Christians here, which should come as a probe into our Christian circumstances, and into our hearts. Mark how near God these people were. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and the place was shaken. Where is there a company like that now — a company that can, so to speak, command the expression of the delight of God the Father; a company whose prayers are heard, and who ask the very thing that God delights to give, and to give at once? There are individuals who pray, and get answers; but where is the company who have the ear of God? Then mark the devoted and pilgrim character of these early Christians. To a Jew, giving up his possessions was an immense thing. It was saying plainly that his springs were above. How little of that beautiful character of unselfish devotedness comes out to light now! I do believe that the eye of God which looks down on us has still on it the tracings of what came out on the day of Pentecost. God looked on a risen and ascended Christ in heaven, and gave the Holy Ghost, with the light of the glory of God beaming on His face. He looks down now on us with all that carried in His eye. I would not admit that the apostle Paul or Peter had a single blessing that I have not; they had nothing that was not in Christ and I have all that is in Him. We have the same Christ; but is there the same character stamped upon us? Are we as pilgrims and strangers in whom God is showing forth the pleasure He takes in the Son of His love?