

The Marks of a Believer

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[0 : 0 0] me introduce the thought here. It's really just kind of taking some liberty with this verse in verse 17 where the Apostle Paul writes this. He says, from henceforth let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Now I think Paul is referring to some literal visible scars and marks in his body that he earned, if you want to call it that, because he's served the Lord Jesus Christ, a man that's hated, God in the flesh, despised by the world, despised by, in his case, the Jews and their religion. And he was beaten several times for his faith in Jesus Christ and for his service to him. And so he actually literally did bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Well, because these marks are identifiable, and in his case he's identifying them with Jesus Christ and they're visible marks, I want to take that thought and like I said, take a little bit of liberty with it and talk about some things that are, maybe you would call them marks of identification for a believer. I don't, I mean, if you get physically beaten because you love Jesus Christ and you're serving him and somebody attacks you and now then you may have some visible scars like possibly we're talking about with the Apostle Paul. But what I want to talk about is the outward things that can identify you as a Christian. Now you're not a Christian because of outward things. You're a Christian or you're a saved, born-again believer because of an inside thing, that is Christ in you. And if you take Jesus Christ as your Savior, he comes on the inside by his Spirit and washes you and creates a new creature in Christ.

And you get your sins forgiven because your sins, the way the Bible describes it, are cut away from your soul. And God separates your soul from the body of the sins of the flesh and now you're a new creature in Christ and you have holiness in that new man. You have righteousness which is not earned or it's not yours. It's God's righteousness. It's the Lord Jesus Christ in you. And so there's something inside that takes place and that's what salvation is. And it may never show up on the outside. It may not. It should, but it may not. And for some people it never does. And so the people question whether they're saved. Are you truly saved? Are you really saved? Because I don't see it. And that's a shame. If a birth takes place, it takes place on the inside, the spiritual birth. If somebody's quickened, as the word is in the Bible, quickened, who were dead in their trespasses and sins, if God gives them eternal life, that's eternal. It takes place in a moment and it's forever. Whether it bears fruit in their life, whether they yield to the spirit or resist him and fall back into sin or get, you know, the Bible just, this is kind of off doctrinally here, but the Bible likens the word of God to seed that's sown and the devil comes and snatches it up. And the thought being the word of God can bear fruit in a life of any believer. But sometimes I give you an illustration of this before.

We're not getting very far. Just tell you that right now. I was a witness to a guy I used to work with when I was in Bible school and he was an apprentice in the trade and he was a helper to me for a year, about a solid year. And he was a young guy and he was, he had, the only background he had was Church of Christ and we're going to hit this right away about baptism. And he really didn't know anything. And so we, just day in and day out, I'd witness to him. I'd have preaching on in the truck. We'd drive sometimes two hours to a place to work and drive back in the afternoon. And so we'd be in the truck and I'd have Christian radio on if I could and just as much stuff. And anyway, long story short, eventually this kid, he gets saved and he comes to church with me. And that, that very weekend, like it was, I want to say it was a Thursday or Friday that he got saved. He comes and says to me, he goes, he goes, yeah, I had some people come and knocking on my door. And I said, well, what do you mean? He goes, well, they're from a church and they were, and I told him, no, I'm already going to go to another church tomorrow. Like this was a Saturday, I guess. And I thought, oh, what were they talking about? Or what did, and as he, as it came out, they were Jehovah's Witnesses that were going through the neighborhood. And I thought to myself, this kid trusts Christ and gets born again and is saved. His destiny is now fixed. And immediately he says, I've never had

anybody knock on my door ever inviting me to church. The very next day, I believe it was, the devil sends some people to get him messed up and to suck him into a cult and suck him away from any form of truth.

That man would have never grown in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He would have never grown in truth. There would be never fruit or spiritual fruit in his life in any way. He came to church and he came to, it was actually, there was a special meeting going on and this guy was preaching. And he was a preacher from North Carolina and he was just ripping up and down the way they say they shuck the corn and peel the trees or the bark and all that. And he's preaching up a storm. And one thing he said was something about men wearing earrings. He just like, he just threw it out like a big sissy wearing an earring and something like that. And this kid was wearing earrings and, and I didn't say anything. I didn't elbow him. I didn't do anything. I just thought, and you know what? The next time I saw him, he didn't have his earrings. And that's just, it is what it is.

[5 : 30] But that was something he felt in this place. I mean, he knew it was real. He knew what this was a Lord dealing with him. And he just felt this like, why do I have these things in my ears? What is that all about anyway? And, and this, this little old preacher just pitching a fit about some things in the Bible.

It just, there was some evidence, but I want to point I was making was the devil can show up and take that away pretty quickly, or at least try to divert it. And there may be not any marks of identification, any outward evidence. We're not saved by your outward evidence, but there is characteristics of a Christian that ought to, if you're walking with Jesus Christ, if Christ is your life, if for me to live is Christ, then there ought to be some things that show up. And I want to talk about them. And let me ask you this and just throw this out and give you an example of a, I want to describe a people to you and see if you can pick this out, who this people is. They're identified mostly by their characteristics. Most people don't know anything about what they believe, what they do in their home, but they just, there's some outward things that they pick and they recognize. The men often wear dark trousers and suspenders. If they're married, they're bearded and they have rounded haircuts, like bowl-shaped haircuts on their heads. The women have long, plain, homemade dresses and they're never, very rarely are they a bright color, but often a pastel, soft color. They wear dark aprons and they usually have long and straight hair. If you would ever, I've never seen them here, but if you'd ever encounter them on the road, they'd be in a buggy pulled by a horse. And they typically are on farms and they refuse electricity in their homes. They refuse telephones in their homes. And I am describing all outward identifying marks of what people? The Amish. The Amish are all over this land, whether you know it or not. They're not just in where I'm from and we call it Lancaster

County. They're everywhere. They're in Indiana, Ohio. They're out through the Midwest. But you know what? You all picked that out pretty quickly by my description. Did I tell you about what they believe? Did I tell you about what they say? What they call them? No, I just told you some things that we observe with our eyes and you know who they are. You know who they are. My comments were all about outward traits and what they display. But my question this morning is what is it that identifies you as a Christian that tells the world that you belong to Jesus Christ? What is it? Is it that you go to church on Sunday? You know, a lot of people do that.

It's not as many people out here in the West Coast as elsewhere in the country, but a lot of people go to church. Does that make them a believer in Jesus Christ? Is that enough of an outward mark? Is it enough?

Some people sing, God bless America. Does that make them a Christian or make this a Christian nation because they sing a song like that? Any crooked politician will stand up and sing that song at the right time in the right crowd. Does that make him a born-again believer in Jesus Christ?

[8 : 38] So what is it about you that the world can observe that will point them to the Lord Jesus Christ? All right, the first thing I'm going to say here, and I'm going to take a little time with this one. I'll call this one your submersion. And what I mean by that is baptism. I want to explain a little bit about what baptism is because it's really confusing today. It's a mess what people believe about baptism today.

I got into a little conversation with Rick the other day here in my office and this kind of spurred some of these thoughts the direction I went here. And it's symbolically today, I believe, the same in the past in the early church time. But it doesn't quite carry the same weight today, I don't believe. I

mean, it can, but it doesn't always do that. When people grow up, you got to, if you have a big church and they have a baptismal tank or pool in the back and people come in and they, there's certain churches, we had, we had 10 saved and 10 baptized last Sunday. And they boast these numbers all the time.

They're just running them through the water and in and out. And it's a confusing thing. And it's not nearly, doesn't hold nearly the weight of the biblical times when somebody would be baptized. And just to give you an idea, I got a little light on this when my parents were in Poland. They were missionaries in Poland, a Catholic country. And when they would preach on the street and they would witness and hand out tracts and eventually somebody would be interested and they'd be able to talk with them. And they'd be able to open the Bible and show them the truth from the Word of God.

And they'd place their faith in Jesus Christ to save their soul. And they'd start coming to church. And over some time, after a lot of this, a few people, they'd have a baptism service. And they'd publicly go out to a place. And when they do this, that person would say, would be baptized and they'd be saying, I am identifying with this faith, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[10:28] And doing it publicly, these people would have their families reject them. They would have their families and churches excommunicate them. You're not welcome here anymore. Because in their mind, they've just walked away from their faith or from what they've been trained and what they believe and from their culture.

And they've walked on to believe this cult. They're getting baptized again. And so it's a real thing. And it was a real thing, especially in the early church.

They're saying, I'm not worshipping idols anymore. I'm worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. And the baptism wasn't some... Peter says it's not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.

It's not washing your sins away. It's an outward and a visible testimony of what's taking place on the inside.

That's what it's supposed to be. That's what it always is supposed to be. An outward evidence of something that you're identifying with. Christians in the past were forsaking their families.

[11:31] Not intentionally, but they were kicked out. They were forsaking their culture and the religion they were raised in and then abandoned by their communities. They say, well, if you're going to do that, then you're not one of us.

Today, it's become acceptable. Baptism has become acceptable because it's viewed as a religious deed. It's viewed as something that churches do.

And you do it to babies, you do it to toddlers, and you sprinkle them, or you throw them in a tank quick and pull them out. Or even if you say, as a daughter, I was baptized, or this church emphasizes it, that church emphasizes it.

And so it's been acceptable to say, I've been baptized. And I've asked people, I've asked them point blank, if you died right now, do you know that you'd go to heaven? And someone would say, well, I'm pretty sure.

And I say, well, what makes you so sure? And several times, the first thing out of my well, I've been baptized. So you got wet. What did that do for you?

[12:34] They don't know. That's all they know is I'm supposed to do that, right? Because that's a religious thing. Now, I grew up around a pastor who would call this, he would use this term, say baptism is a mark of identification.

Saying that believers are identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ, specifically with the gospel of Jesus Christ. What baptism is, we call it today, we call it believer's baptism.

It's for believers. Someone who's placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, and they want to then take an outward and public gesture indicating of what they've done, indicating where their faith lies.

And the question comes up, well, is baptism necessary for salvation? The answer is no. Not according to this book. Now, this is a longer teaching, and we're not going to deal with this today, but you have to understand there's more than one baptism in the Bible.

And people don't understand that. They see the word baptism, and they think, oh, dunk them in water, and that's it. And it's not. You've got to study your Bible and understand. John baptized. The Bible says it was called a baptism unto repentance.

[13:41] And what he was doing was preparing the people, making ready, the Bible says, Israel for their Messiah. They were coming out, repenting. He says, repent for the kingdom of heaven's at

hand, and he's baptizing them in Jordan.

What's that about? It has nothing to do with believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, on his death, burial, and resurrection. It has nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with Israel receiving their Messiah, receiving that this is the one that God said would come and is going to establish a kingdom for this nation.

And we're believing on him, and we're going to follow him. And he wasn't even around yet. John's preparing them. They're saying, we're ready. We're going to follow the preaching. That's a total different baptism. And I'm not going to spend time with the baptisms in the Bible, but today the one for you is the one that's called believer's baptism.

We call it that. It's not a biblical term, but it's a biblical idea that believers are baptized. They are immersed into water to state outwardly and publicly to everybody that they know, to their family, to their friends or coworkers, to whoever they knew before that they were lost in, in religion or whatever it was.

They're stating, I'm not believing and trusting that anymore. I'm identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ, that he died and was buried for my sins, and that he came up the third day, he rose again.

[15:00] And that's a picture, an outward picture of what that is. It's a proclamation that you are already saved. That is, it's a public proclamation that I've been born again.

I believe in Jesus Christ. He's my Savior, and I want you all to know that. What you're seeing is a new person, because the old one went down with Christ, and the new one is alive to live for Jesus Christ.

And so baptism is that. It's exactly that. It is not a part of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul declares the gospel, and he says it's the death that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried and that he rose again the third day.

And then he was seen and witnessed of all these people. He doesn't say, oh, and then you get baptized. Baptism is associated with salvation only in the respect that believers publicly identify with Jesus Christ, and they do it as a testimony.

Now, still working my way through this first point of submersion, because baptism is not based on getting wet, or salvation, I should say, is not based on getting wet in a pool, in a creek, in a river or a lake, because the water can't do a thing for you.

[16:19] Often churches, they don't think of this, but the water that they fill their tanks up with is the same water that they fill their toilets up with. It's the same water. Ask a plumber.

Yeah. There's nothing holy about the water inside the baptismal tank. And some money-hungry liar will send you something in the mail, a little vial of water, and say it's holy water because it's from the Holy Land.

That water's not holy either. Nothing holy about it. Well, Jesus walked on this dirt. So? So what? He did a lot of things.

He walked on the water. You got, oh, we got water from the Sea of Galilee. And they believe it to be holy. People were fooled. I've got to say this again. You need to know your Bible, or you'll be deceived so quickly by fools trying to make money or not knowing their Bible.

All right, baptism is not an essential part of the gospel. There's nothing holy. There's nothing sanctified about the water. Flicking it on a baby does nothing but make the baby wet or cry them or make them cry or get them irritated.

[17:29] The water's not holy. No man can make water clean that's unclean. No man has power at all because he's a vile man himself, a sinner, and he can't say some words and turn something unclean into something clean and then flick it on somebody and let that do something.

It's not the way it works. It never has. Like I said, Peter used those terms, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. That's not what baptism is.

You can get sprinkled. You can get dunked. It doesn't wash away your sins. It can wash away the filth of your flesh. You can bathe and shower and clean up the outside, but it can't wash away the sins.

It never has and it never will. However, for many years, religions or certain denominations all over the world have been promoting a false doctrine or a heresy, calling baptism a rite or calling it a sacrament, implying that it's sacred or holy, and they call it holy baptism.

And sadly, there's nothing holy about it. The Apostle Paul even said, I thank God I baptized none of you, save just a handful of people. It wasn't part of his ministry. His ministry, he declares, is to

preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[18 : 45] So baptism is not holy. In the Bible, it's called an ordinance. An ordinance given to the body of Christ because you can't see a spiritual birth take place on the inside.

You can't view that transpiring in an individual. And so therefore, it's a way for that believer to publicly illustrate it. And in doing so, identify with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So I'm going to call baptism a matter of identification as well as a matter of testimony. It identifies and testifies two things that I'm identifying with the death and burial of Christ and then with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When a person's baptized scripturally, they're saying and testifying that I'm a born-again Christian and I'm not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I'm identifying with him.

He is my Savior. This is me showing you that I'm identifying with him. It's an opportunity for you to do that. It's testifying that the old man of sin is dead and buried, according to Romans chapter 6, and that the believer has put off the old man with his deeds and is risen to walk in newness of life, is raised out of the water, a new creature.

[20 : 05] Now, you're not raised a new creature. You're just proclaiming, I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. So I'll call this first point our submersion.

It just matches my outline, so forgive me if you don't like the term. But baptism is a mark of identification as well as a testimony. Don't be deceived and think it's about being holy.

Don't think it's necessary for salvation. Understand it is instituted or to be instituted as a public and observable means by which believers can identify with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You don't get saved and then get baptized and now you're okay. There's a denomination that teaches that until you're baptized by the specific pastor of this denomination, until that takes place, you're not saved.

Your sins aren't forgiven. Their teaching is that your sins are forgiven under the water. And here's where the real thing gets nasty is that according to the Bible, it's the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses our sins.

[21 : 06] And so their teaching then, they won't admit this, but their teaching has to have the blood in the water because that's where the sins are forgiven. They teach it's the water or in the water and it doesn't work with scripture and they won't like to admit that.

I told you there's a lot of false teachings about this stuff, a lot of confusion about it, and I want us to understand biblically what it is. So it's identifying with Jesus Christ, but there's other ways.

There's other ways that you can be identified with Jesus Christ as well as be a testimony for him.

So first we'll say by our submersion, by being publicly baptized and declaring to everybody.

That's why just getting baptized in a church service or in a church building, to me it just doesn't carry the weight doing it in front. I mean, you can declare to the rest of the people here, you can declare to believers, I'm saved just like you, but it doesn't quite declare to the world and to your family.

Now I'm not saying let's go down to Santa Monica Pier and line the pier and we'll go out into the water and crash in the waves. We could do that. But inviting your family, inviting your neighborhood, inviting everybody that knows you and knows you before you were saved and saying, look, I want you to see this.

[22 : 21] That's what it's about. I want you to know I'm different and I'm a believer in Jesus Christ and the baptism was a public testimony of that. You got to take it back to these times when Paul's preaching the gospel for the first time in these churches.

They're nothing but lost heathen and he's teaching them what Jesus Christ did for their sins, that he died for them and that he rose again the third day. And as he's teaching them and then he shows them, hey, you can take this to the streets.

You can publicly show them that you're identifying with Jesus Christ. Those people would be forsaking their idols, forsaking what their moms and dads and their grandparents and their heritage has trained them, their gods, if you will, and they're saying, this is the one I'm worshiping.

And they did it publicly. So that was an outward mark, maybe not in their flesh, but an outward mark visible to the world, identifying with Jesus Christ.

Now come to 1 Peter 2 and I want to show you another one. The first one we'll call by our submersion. If you've never been baptized scripturally, it's a good thing to do.

[23 : 37] It's a good thing to do before not just me, but before your family, before anybody who knew you before you got saved to tell them, I'm different now.

And I'm believing in Jesus Christ for my salvation. And the life I live now is for Him. All right, 1 Peter 2. And secondly, I want to say that another outward characteristic is by our subjection.

Our subjection. Peter writes to Jews that are scattered from back in the time of the Acts. If we read back in Acts chapter 8 and chapter 9, there's the apostle Paul or Saul at the time and he's trying to put them in prison.

They're scattered. They take off everywhere. Peter then writes to this scattered group of Jews that are all over the region who have run for their lives and they continue to preach the word that they knew.

They left their land and they get this term Christians. And they're directed toward a people that were different from the world. And that's in Acts chapter 11.

[24 : 47] And Peter encourages them to let it be seen. So look at chapter 2 of 1 Peter and look at verse number 13 with me. Peter tells them this, Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of the evildoers and for the praise of them that do well for so is the will of God that with well doing he may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

So this category is to the government submitting to them. Turn to chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3. Verse number 1.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, who's adorning, and he goes on to talk about some things about that wife. So he talks about it in the marital relationship, submitting. Now come to chapter 5, 1 Peter chapter 5. And look at verse number 5. Now what Peter wants the world to observe in us and to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ is our subjection.

[26 : 31] In the realm of government, we're not to be rebels. We're not to be revolutionaries. We're not here to overthrow anything in the name of Jesus Christ. That's not why we're here. It's not our place.

Or whether it's a spouse, the government, the spouse, or even as he says, each other, we are to be clothed in humility, the absence of pride.

And it's for a purpose. There's a reason that we clothe ourselves in humility and are in subjection. In verse number 2 of chapter 3 about the wife says, speaking of the husband, it says, while they behold, that's seeing something, your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

The husband that is a lost man is beholding, in this case, a believer's conversation or their manner of life and that they're in subjection to them as in the Lord.

And it's not because they're shy. It's not because they're introverted. No, it's they've adapted an attitude on purpose. They want to show them Jesus Christ.

[27 : 36] They want them to know there's something different about me and it's not my pride. It's because the Lord Jesus Christ lives in me. And so outwardly they choose to be in subjection.

Whether it's government, whether it's in the home, whether it's in the church in chapter 5, all of them were to be clothed in humility and were to do it on purpose. To be a testimony to one another, to be a testimony to the lost.

Our subjection is to be evidence of Jesus Christ in you. The Lord Jesus Christ said, I am meek and lowly. And if he's in you, guess what's going to come out of you?

It's not going to be your pride. God says, pride do I hate. We read it. God resisteth the proud. God has no interest in pride.

It's something that a Christian has to do on purpose is to put himself down and be clothed in humility. It's an identifying mark of a Christian that they swallow their pride on purpose.

[28 : 39] And in some cases, in 1 Corinthians, it's to suffer themselves to be defrauded. And who wants to do that? Somebody who wants Jesus Christ to get the glory.

That's who. In Philippians chapter 2, the Bible says, In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a

servant and was made in likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he did what? He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Our subjection. By our submersion, that is our public testimony by submitting to baptism is a sign, a mark to the world that we're believers in Jesus Christ.

Something else is an inward quality that's to be displayed outwardly. It's our subjection, our humility. Our humility. One of the biggest things that destroys so much relationship-wise is pride.

[29 : 57] I have it inside of me. You have it inside of you. It stinks to God. He despises it. You look at the list of his abominations in Proverbs 6. What's the first one?

A proud look. He hates it. God is, and that's probably what the ultimate fall, the original fall there of Lucifer was.

His heart was lifted up because of his beauty and by reason of his brightness, and down he went.

Pride. Thinking something about yourself. When Jesus Christ says, no, don't think about yourself.

Think about others. Esteem others better than yourself. Oof. That's a tough one to do. It's a tough one to do at work. It's a tough one to do at home. It's a tough one to do in church even.

Somebody likes to talk about themselves, and you know what you want to do? Talk about yourself.

You want to one-up their story. It's pride. It's not just that it reminds you of something.

[30 : 54] It's you can't shut up about yourself. Because inside of us is a filthy man that loves himself and wants everybody to love him too and know about all his good qualities and all his good traits and how faithful he is and how just he is and how wonderful he's acted in his life.

But I'm getting off track here. Our subjection, our humility, it ought to be evident. It's evidence of Christ in you because that's the mind that was in Jesus Christ and it's the mind that he calls to be in us.

I've got two more and I can tell that it'll just go too long this morning and I'll save these for the future. Our third one, or the next one is here in 1 Peter 4. It's our sanctification and we'll deal with that at another time.

But maybe the message here is for some of you if you've never been baptized scripturally that that's time to get that taken care of and if that's the case, see me and let's talk about it and just establish if that's something that we need to do.

If that's not the case, if you've been baptized scripturally, I keep saying that, according to the word of God, then move on to the next one and practice being clothed in humility.

[32 : 14] Practice swallowing your stinking pride and remember that you're not that important.

You're not the most important person in your home. You're not the most important person in your car when you're alone.

If Jesus Christ is in you, your life is for him and it ought to be about him and it ought to reflect him and it ought to reflect that he's living in you and changing you from the inside out.

And pride's a tough one. It's a tough one. It's harder for some than others. And, you know, everybody has their own little sins that doth so easily beset them. But if you realize and you recognize this morning that pride is the one that continues to take you out and take you down and keep you from doing what's right or keep you from mending relationships or from hurting situations or even your witness before others in Jesus Christ, then you're going to need some help with that. And you're going to need to submit that to the Lord Jesus Christ. And you're going to need his help with that. And how do you get his mind in you? How do you get to where the pride will start seeping out of you and the humility begins this book?

You get this book and read in the Proverbs. Just start reading this book. The more you submit yourself to reading this book, it'll start to clean you up little by little by little. The more you spend time on your knees before the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll get up and you won't want to be the person you were before you got down.

[33 : 44] You won't want to talk that way. You won't want to show off. It'll help you to swallow your pride. Those little things, that walking with Jesus Christ, your relationship with him will help you in your personal struggle with the old man and his sins.

It's the truth. It's that. We're going to stop there and I'm kind of stopping in the middle of something, I understand. But that's just the nature of it this morning. Thank you for being here. Thank you for coming out to church on the Super Bowl Sunday.

I hope you... ..