

10 Traits of the Jesus-Driven Church

The Word of God teaches us in Romans 8:29 that believers were predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Since this was written to the church in Rome, we understand the subject of the verse as the corporate body of Christ. Hence, local congregations are called to become Christ-like in their methodology, mission and essence.

Although there are numerous attributes that can be unpacked, in this article, I am narrowing the focus to 10 traits every Jesus-driven church must have. Of course, there was only one perfect human who ever lived (Jesus Christ) which means every other person and or community will fall far short of His glory, no matter how hard they try. The best we can ever do is to attempt to walk in His grace on our journey, understanding we will never find a perfect church or entity this side of heaven.

That being said, the following are 10 traits every Jesus-driven church must (attempt to) walk in on its journey:

1. A spirit of joyful service: Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom is the one who serves (Matt. 23:11). He modeled this when He kneeled down and washed the feet of His disciples (John 13). This was totally against the Roman/Greco ethos of His day, which taught that humbling oneself before others who were not your superior in rank was inappropriate and unacceptable. Consequently, the Jesus driven church will celebrate voluntary service for the good of others.

2. An expectation of the miraculous: When the apostle Peter was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, He described Jesus as the One who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). Thus, Jesus was equated

with the miraculous power of God when men were describing Him. Jesus even told His followers He expected them to do greater works than He did (John 14:12). Consequently, the Jesus-driven church will have in its culture a corporate faith that expects the miraculous.

3. A sense of divine mission and purpose: When Jesus preached His first sermon, He read from the prophet Isaiah the passage that prophesied His mission (Luke 4:18 from Isaiah 61:1-2). He was a man on a mission who had objectives and goals from day to day (read Luke 13:32). He told Pilate the purpose He had in His life was to testify to the truth as the king (John 18:37). In light of all this, the “Jesus-driven” church will have a compelling vision and ignite a sense of purpose and mission among their congregation.

4. Ample discipleship: As we read the four gospels, it is evident that the main focus Jesus had in His ministry was pouring into His twelve and then His seventy disciples (Read Luke 9:1 and 10:1). Local churches conformed to the image of Christ will also base their whole ministry on making disciples, not merely attracting crowds.

5. Genuine fellowship and community: Jesus did not merely teach His disciples, He lived among them and did life with them. He shared His pain with them, ate with them and prayed with them (Luke 14:14-46). The Jesus-driven church will also have as a core value the practice of genuine fellowship and community.

6. A focus on the Father: Jesus was always in the bosom of the Father and was described from the beginning as being with God (John 1:1, 18). Both these verses reveal how intimate Jesus was with His Father. He also said that He and His father were one (John 10:30) and that He only speaks what His father gives Him and always does what pleases His father (John 8:28-29). Consequently, the Jesus-driven church will walk in a spirit of adoption as sons of the living God and cry out of the

abundance of their heart “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15). This kind of church runs counter to the orphan spirit in the world and ministers healing to the brokenhearted and disenfranchised of society.

7. Prayer is a priority: Jesus made a regular practice of arising before dawn to pray (Mark 1:35). His disciples realized that the secret of His power was prayer, which is why they asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). It describes the days of His humanity as a time when He offered up prayers with loud cries and tears (Heb. 5:7). Since Jesus was a man of regular, fervent prayer, the Jesus-driven church will also be a community of much fervent prayer.

8. Patience and perseverance is an attribute: The Bible tells us that Jesus endured with patience the cross because of the joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Even though He was born God the Son, He did not minister or do any miracle the first 30 years of His life, which took great patience (Luke 3:23). Any church that conforms to Christ Jesus will be a church with a strong ethic of patience in the midst of tests and suffering.

9. They adopt a way of life, not a religion: Jesus said, “I am the way” (John 14:6). He did not say, “I am the religion.” The early church described its journey in Christ as a life and a way (Acts 5:20; 24:14). Churches that are overtly legalistic, ritualistic and religious (attempting to follow Christ based merely on rules and regulations) are not mimicking Christ, but man-made religion (Gal. 3:3; Col. 2:16-23). Obviously, the Jesus-driven church will express its relationship with Him in an organic, relational way.

10. They speak truth to power: Although the goal of many contemporary pastors and leaders is to avoid cultural conflict to become “relevant,” the Lord they claim to follow spoke truth to power. Even a cursory reading of Scripture demonstrates how He purposely healed people on the Sabbath,

which was an affront to religious leaders (Mark 3:1-5, John 5). He spoke about His kingdom to a Roman leader named Pontius Pilate (John 18:36-38), and He rebuked religious leaders for putting their traditions ahead of the word of God (Mark 7:1-23). The Jesus-driven church will never water down the truth but reflect adequately the whole counsel of God in their values, their words and in their mission.

In conclusion, there are many other things we can say in regards to being conformed to the image of Christ; however, if we attempt to walk in the 10 points above, we will leave a powerful imprint on the world around us. {eoa}