

Example

This lesson might be called Koine Greek 101. I am most assuredly not a Greek scholar, and while I did take a course in Koine Greek while at Florida, I am not by any means a student of Biblical Greek, nor do I want to be thought of as one. But one of the things I did learn is that the Greek language uses different words to convey degrees of emphasis or different nuances in their meaning of the same concept that English doesn't do. We are probably most familiar with this with the words translated by our word love. Eros, agape, and phileo are all Greek words translated as love in English, but they all have different directions of their meanings. We understand that, and so we pay attention to those nuances and differences as we look at the passages where they are used. What I have learned and continue to learn as I look at the scriptures and do my best to rightly divide them, is that it is amazing the depth of understanding and meaning that God's Word has, especially when you take into consideration the original meanings of the words in the Greek, and the depth that gives to the intent of the passage.

Our text for this lesson is found in...

Phil 3:17-21

1

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. **18** For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. **20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

2

The statement of Paul here, is both a commandment, as much an imperative as any, to follow his example, and a warning concerning those who appear to walk according to the pattern, but are, in fact, enemies of Christ. Note the contrast that Paul makes between those that truly follow the pattern and those that don't. The pretenders are destined for destruction, while those who sincerely and truly follow the pattern have a citizenship in heaven. So...

3

"What does it mean to follow his example?"

While very similar in context to Phil 3, the statement Paul makes in...

1 Cor 11:1

4

11 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

This has a difference that is illustrated in the differences in the meanings of the Greek words used. When we look at Phil 3 and 1 Cor 11 translated into English, we see what seems to be the same thought. "Follow my example", be "imitators of me", but when we begin to understand the differences in the meanings of the originals, the depth of what God is telling us begins to emerge.

In Phil 3 the term Paul uses that is translated "example" is...

Tupos

5

(NT:5179) primarily denoted as "a blow" (from a root tup—, seen also in tupto, "to strike"), hence, (a) an impression, the mark of a "blow," John 20:25; (b) the "impress" of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image, Acts 7:43; (c) a "form" or mold, Rom 6:17 (see RV)

This is joined with hupo to make...

Hupotuposis

6

(NT:5296), "an outline, sketch," akin to hupotupoo, "to delineate," or to define, it is used metaphorically to denote a "pattern," an "ensample," 1 Tim 1:16

Another word that gets translated as example is...

Hupodeigma

7

(NT:5262), lit., "that which is shown" (from hupo, "under," and deiknumi, "to show"), hence, (a) "a figure, copy," Heb 8:5, RV, "copy," for KJV, "example"; 9:23; (b) "an example,"

In all three of these definitions, the idea is that there is an impression or outline that is left or revealed from the original. Over the past 30 years, I have played and coached softball for many teams. Part of the fun of those experiences is getting smacked with the ball on occasion. The worst and by far the longest lasting was a few years ago while coaching my granddaughters fast pitch travel team, I was pitching batting practice to our best hitter in a batting cage that had artificial turf in it. Cameron was a terrific hitter and when she made solid contact she had a ton of power. I was throwing pretty hard to get the girls ready for the next tournament when she got a hold of one. She hit a line drive that bounced about five feet in front of me and picked up speed off of the turf and caught me in the shin. Instantly I had a tennis ball sized swelling that was black and blue, but the most interesting thing was that you could count the seams of the softball that were outlined on my leg where the ball had hit me. It had struck with such force that the imprint of the seams lasted for about six months. I still have a mark on my leg from the impact. That is the idea behind tupos, the term that Paul uses to say follow my example. That when we allow the pattern to have its effect on us it leaves an impression, an outline that is clearly visible.

Now, that term "tupos", translated example, has a different connotation than does the term that Paul uses in 1 Cor. 11 translated "imitator". There are a couple of Greek words that get translated this way...

Mimeomai

8

(NT:3401), "a mimic, an actor" (Eng., "mime," etc.), is always translated "to imitate" in the RV, for KJV, "to follow," (a) of imitating the conduct of missionaries, ongoing, 2 Thess 3:7,9.

Mimetes

9

(NT:3402), similar to mimeomai "an imitator," so the RV for KJV, "follower," is always used in a good sense in the NT. In 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Eph 5:1; Heb 6:12, it is used in exhortations, accompanied by the verb ginomai, "to be, become," and in the continuous tense

Where "tupos" means to leave an externally visible impression, something that can be seen by others, "mimeomai" is an internal changing, an understanding and adopting as our persona that which is to be imitated. That is what Paul is saying in 1 Cor 11, that, as an actor strives to understand their role and put themselves into the part, Paul is saying that we need to take the pattern into ourselves and adopt it as who we are. John illustrates that in...

1 John 3:24

10

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

So, when the two ideas are put together we see that we are not only to make the pattern our life style, "mimeomai," but we are to exhibit that life style so that all who see us see the impression, "tupos," that is left over from accepting and living God's Word. Think of it as God's stamp of approval. This whole idea is a consistent thought throughout Paul's writings, as seen in...

1 Cor 4:16

11

16 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me.

The danger might be that some would think that Paul is setting himself up as the epitome of what we should be following as some in Corinth did...

1 Cor 1:12

12

Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

But Paul is not telling anyone that he is to imitated just because he is Paul, we that dispelled in the passage we read in 1 Cor 11...

13

"Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ"

Paul is not commanding that they pattern themselves after himself, but rather to, like as he did, pattern themselves after Christ. Christ, His Word, is to be the pattern followed.

This is borne out in the Greek word

14

"Summimētēs"

This occurs only in...

Phil 3:17

15

Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

This is not the same as mimētēs, an imitator. Again the depth of nuance is seen here. The preposition σύν, means together, that is, with Paul. 1 Cor 11:1 declares "Be ye followers, mimētaí - imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." What Paul is saying is...

16

"Together with me, imitate Christ"

Another way to put it is: "In the measure, or way, that I imitate Christ, you imitate me." Paul knows that he, as a human being, is not worthy of imitation, but because he was an imitator of Christ, and only because he imitated Christ, his manner of life was worthy of imitation. It is the same as saying, "Imitate that which you see in me, but only in as much as you see it as being Christ in me." The word "summimētaí," imitators together or with, must have as its object not Paul, but Christ. Be imitators together with me of Christ. Let us both imitate Christ. Christ is to be understood as the object of Paul's statement, although it is not actually contained in the passage. It is the same as in Cor 11:1, "Even as I am of Christ."

That is the statement made in...

1 Thess 1:6-7

17

6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Paul is saying, "Observe what I say and what I do in the Lord and you do likewise; follow my example." It implies that his example is worth following because it is by the authority of God through Christ as revealed in the Word.

Heb 6:10-12

18

10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. **11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope

until the end, **12** that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

And in...

Eph 5:1

19

5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children

This concept of putting Christ into our hearts and patterning ourselves after, imitating, Him, is vital to the Christians journey to the goal of eternal life.

Which raises the question then, in what, or how, was Paul an imitator of Christ?

1 Cor 4:16

20

16 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me.

The correct translation is...

21

"Be my imitators"

When 1 Cor 4 is studied, it shows the easy affluent life of the Corinthians and the contrasting sacrificial life of the Apostles. The conclusion is this:

My life of sacrifice should be an imitation of the life of Christ, which is worth following. There is more joy in sacrifice than in selfish enrichment. That is what Paul is expressing in 1 Cor 11, "Be ye followers [imitators] of me, even as I also am of Christ". As we look then at the things Paul brings out we begin to see how we are to be imitators of Christ.

1 Cor 11:2

22

2 hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you

Paul had delivered to the Corinthians, without any change, the teaching that he had received from Christ. So then, this teaching should remain unaltered by the Corinthians and all the subsequent generations of Christians. Christ's teaching must always remain as it was taught by Him and delivered by the original apostles of Christ.

Now as we look at chapter 11 a little more closely we see in verses 3-16 that Paul discusses the line of authority and in part the structure of the family, the head is God, then Christ, then man who is the head of the wife.

In verses 17-20 Paul discusses the divisions that he had already chastised them about and tells them that he has heard that these divisions are even influencing how they partake of the Lord's Supper. He admonishes them for making the memorial of Christ nothing more than a common meal. He condemns them for diminishing the memorial and in doing so diminishing what Christ did for them.

In verses 23-27, Paul reinforces what the Lord's Supper is for, its purpose being to commemorate the death of Christ. He leads from this purpose into the point he was making earlier in the chapter, it always comes back to how we have made ourselves imitators with Paul of Christ.

That is his point beginning in verse 27 through the end of the chapter. We have had many discussions on how does one eat the supper in an unworthy manner? The context here is that we are to examine ourselves in light of the Word, in light of the sacrifice of Christ, and in light of the Love of God. Partaking of the Supper is to bring to our minds the truth that is Christ's sacrifice. It is to help show us where we are at in our effort to be imitators of Christ. The supper, if taken with an open heart and mind in remembrance of Christ, should help us to judge ourselves in light of that sacrifice. When a man has not conformed himself in mind and deed to the truth from God, when he

has not followed the pattern, that is the man Paul was talking about in Phil 3. They are those who seem to be walking, but are really enemies of Christ, because they are not with Him in all they do.

That is what Paul is saying his comments in Phil 3:17:

23 *"Follow me in my example and watch others that are doing the same"*

Paul is saying to note or observe those who are seen to also be imitators of Christ and of him, Paul, as exhibited in their deeds and words. Paul also says to watch out for those who try to appear to be walking according to Christ and His Word but are in fact...

24 *"Enemies of Christ"*

They are called this because they were teaching, as many are today, that the message of the cross in a Christians life ought to be avoided instead of welcomed. Most of them misunderstand the message of the cross. It means to take on and accept whatever suffering, difficulties, or problems that might occur. We become imitators of Christ, when we love others, like He did, when we make ourselves as a servant, like He did, when we recognize the authority of God the Father, like He did, when we give ourselves for others, like He did, when we obey the Father's commandments, like He did, only then will we be able to become a citizen in Heaven with Christ.

Otherwise, we are nothing more than pretenders, feigning to walk when we are nothing more than enemies of Christ.

Continuing in the passage from Phil...

Phil 3:18-19

25

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Brethren, where are we at in our effort to be an imitator of Christ?

26

Am I a pretender?

Pretending to walk while nothing more than an enemy?

OR

Have we given ourselves to God through following the pattern that he established, the real key is in...

Phil 3:19-21

27

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Christ will Himself transform us into a fellow heir with Him, but only when we subject ourselves to Him and...

28

"Live His Example"