

They had Been with Jesus

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Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

When we look at the Apostles, they had not been to the rabbinic schools. They were fisherman. However, it was not their ignorance; it was their boldness because “*they had been with Jesus.*” This truth stood out and made an impression on the Sanhedrin Council.

The Apostles’ conviction on the truth of who Jesus is moved them to personally make changes in their lives, from being fishermen to being followers of Jesus, to being witnesses and bearing testimony of Jesus (Acts 1:8). For they had witnessed His character; they had drunk deeply from His teaching, considered the pieces of evidence which brought them to the verdict (speaking of Jesus): “*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12, ESV). They spoke boldly and were steadfast, uncompromising, and tenacious in what they had seen, heard, and touched.

When people look at you and me, when they hear the words we speak as we daily interact with them at work and at school, and examine our character, can they see in us that we have been with Jesus? We are not the Apostles of Christ. We did not walk with Him in the flesh; however, we have their testimony. We walk with Him by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), through the witness and testimony of the Apostles.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full (1 John 1:1-4).

For they were led into all truth by the Spirit of truth (John 16:15).

The things that are written and preserved for us are there to plant a seed of faith in the hearts of the seeking and open-minded readers (1 Peter 1:22-25). It is through adherence to the Apostles’ testimony that we can have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus. The word of God, when taken in, nurtured, cherished, and protected, has the power to change—transform—lives if we are willing.

Some years ago there was a cartoon of Garfield the cat. He had tied several books to his head, and the caption was, “I’m learning by osmosis.” Sometimes Christians want the word of God to be in them without the effort of prayerfully studying and applying. Many want to be associated with Jesus, and the benefits that come from Him, but don’t want to get close enough for Him to change them. They don’t want to commit.

If you have obeyed the Gospel because of your faith in Jesus Christ, Paul says you “*have put on Christ*” and “*have been united*

together with Him” in your baptism (Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:5). This is just the beginning of the transformation process. Now, you need to grow to be mature and maturing Christians. It is the Lord's

desire that we be changed and transformed from who we were (broken, in bondage to sin, worldly, and selfish). He can make us whole, free from sin and self, so that we can serve the Lord and His people.

It is God's plan and desire that we mold and shape our lives into the image of His Son (**Romans 8:29**), allowing His character, His life, and His light to permeate all of our being, inside and out. The Lord is seeking plants: children that look like Him! In this transformation process, we must constantly be pulling those stubborn weeds of the works of the flesh that can choke out the spiritual seed and our life in Christ, out of the garden of our hearts—putting them to death, killing the old man and his ways (**Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5ff**). We must focus our minds and efforts on bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-24**).*

We may not be what we want to be, but with the Lord's help, we are not what we were before committing to Christ, putting Him on, and being united together with Him in baptism. Prayerfully, we can be a little more each day like the Master: sharing a touch of love with those we are around each day, going the extra mile, and suffering long in patience. Desiring and seeking out the good in situations—no matter how difficult. Shining a ray of kindness, holding fast faithfully, and practicing a little more self-control. Doing what is right in God's sight, even when it might not be easy or always appreciated, proves what is "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (**Romans 12:1-2**). Living the transformation to His glory and praise!

Have you been with Jesus? How has being with Jesus changed your life?