

The Qualities of Disciples

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of compassion and mercy in Christianity, as valued by the Qur'an and taught by Jesus' disciples.

Scripture: Luke 6:36, Romans 12:9, James 1:27, 1 Peter 3:8

Topics: "Christian Discipleship", "Godly Character"

Description

Paul Bramsen emphasizes the importance of qualities admired in people according to the Qur'an, highlighting compassion and mercy as the two special qualities extolled in both the Qur'an and the Bible. These qualities are described by Jesus' disciples as living in harmony, being sympathetic, loving sincerely, showing humility, and practicing hospitality. The preacher challenges Christians to embody compassion and mercy, reflecting the character of God and pleasing Him by caring for the needs of others.

Transcript

What are the qualities you admire in people? Do you consider their color, their shape, their appearance and their way of dressing? Would you list good health, confidence, truthfulness, popularity, leadership skills? The Qur'an gives us a better guide than these things. In fact, there are two special qualities extolled in the Qur'an. God has given these qualities to Christians although the Qur'an admits that some Christians do not express them.

Let me share a few of the teachings written by three of Jesus' disciples. According to these men, which two qualities are the best to have?

One disciple wrote:

"Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:8b-9)

Another wrote:

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." (Romans 12:9-16)

Still another disciple advised:

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world . . . Mercy triumphs over judgment . . . Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom." (James 1:27; 2:13b; 3:13)

Now that you have considered these brief passages, written by three of Jesus' disciples, which two qualities do you think the Qur'an mentions about Christians? You can easily check your answer by reading Sura 57:27.

Yes, the two characteristics are compassion and mercy. How different these qualities are from what we usually seek! Compassion and mercy do not seem to elevate people who possess them. We tend to link compassion and mercy with weakness rather than strength, with women rather than men, with unheroic people rather than statesmen and politicians. This is because we do not understand God's ways.

Why does the Qur'an value compassion and mercy? These qualities describe people who truly care about the needs and wants of others. These qualities are used to describe God. (i.e. irrahman irraheem). A man whose character reflects the personality of God is truly a blessed one.

Much of what unbelievers admire and strive for is really useless and selfish. It is the person who is able to concentrate on others, caring for their needs, who comes closest to truly pleasing God. Perceptively, the Qur'an affirms that compassion and mercy are basic Christian beliefs and practices. The Bible, in which I place my trust, says:

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

It is a great challenge for Christians to live up to this marvelous lifestyle.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-bramsen/the-qualities-of-disciples/>

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