

**THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF CHRISTIANITY**

Luke 5:26

## INTRODUCTION

- A. LK 5:26 – “We have seen strange things to day.” Παράδοξος - This word is quite common in secular Gk., Philo, Josephus and the LXX. It always denotes an “unusual event contrary to belief and expectation” (τό παρὰ δόξαν ὅ ν, cf. the LXX verb παραδοξάζω, “I do something unusual”). In the NT it occurs only in LK 5:26, where it is designed to emphasize the unusual aspect of what was seen in Jesus: εἶδον παράδοξα σήμερον.
1. This statement is an appropriate description of the Christ.
  2. This was one of the outstanding characteristics of Him that gave Him the power of appeal.
  3. His life from His birth to His ascension was marked by wonders, surprises, and amazements.
  4. It was distinctive.
- B. Other statements that point out the distinctiveness of the Christ. MT 7:28-29; LK 4:22; JN 4:27; LK 3:48; MT 19:25.
- C. Let us discuss the Distinctiveness of Christianity.

## DISCUSSION

- I. DISTINCTIVENESS (“STRANGE”) IS THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.
- A. Loss of distinctiveness is loss of power. The power of the church is not where it is like other religions but where it is unlike them. It is in its distinctiveness that it asserts its real influence.
- B. Christ recognized this not only in His own life but pointed it out to His disciples.
1. “And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?” (MT 5:47).
  2. Christ was not satisfied that His disciples should do as much as others.
  3. In a real sense we are only His disciples when we surpass others.
- C. What does the church more than others! If we cannot do more for the world than other religions we would do well to question ourselves whether or not it is the Lord’s Church other than in name.
- D. Does the church answer more questions, cover more ground, offer more comfort, and invest the soul with more vigor and strength than other religions?
1. In short does the church raise and elevate above the level of other religious groups?
  2. Does it meet all the needs of all men? If not something is wrong!
- II. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE (“STRANGE”) IN THAT IT HAS A DIVINE MESSAGE.
- A. A part of the power of the church is in this very point; its message is not a human product. GA 1:1, 12.
- B. It was conceived in the mind of God and is reliable.
- C. While other religions may have some truth. The church has ONLY trust unmixed with the doctrines of men.
1. This gave the church power in the days of the apostles.
  2. It gave it power during the Restoration.
  3. It has the same power today.
  4. Let us not forget that!
- III. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE (“STRANGE”) IN THAT IT ENABLES A PERSON TO SEE HIMSELF AS HE IS.
- A. The Gospel is the “mirror” for the soul. JA 1:23, 25.

- B. No man can know himself until he has seen his picture in the Gospel. 1 TH 1:5; 2 PE 3:11.
- C. Christianity makes a person realize how far short he is of the divine goal and never leaves one satisfied.
- D. A Christian never feels that he has "arrived." PH 3:13-14.
- IV. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE ("STRANGE") IN ITS IDEALS AND VALUES.
  - A. Things that others count as gain i.e. the purpose of life, are readily counted as loss for the knowledge of the Christ. PH 3:10.
  - B. Birth, wealth, fame, social importance dwindle into nothing before the standard of the cross.
  - C. The whole world is counted as nothing when compared with the Christ.
- V. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE ("STRANGE") IN THAT IT ATTACHES SUPREME IMPORTANCE TO EVERY SOUL.
  - A. It is guided not by worldly standards and customs, but like its Lord; sees in the vilest soul, something precious.
  - B. It believes that Christ died for all, HE 2:9, therefore everyone may be a possible inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.
- VI. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE ("STRANGE") IN ITS CONDUCT.
  - A. Christians love their enemies. LK 6:27. "Love" - ἀγαπάω – verb.
    - 1. Anyone can love the ones that love them, even sinners do this. LK 6:32.
    - 2. Are we distinctive ("strange")?
    - 3. Do we do like sinners; love only those that love us?
  - B. Christians do good to those that hate them and mistreat them. LK 6:27.
    - 1. Even sinners do good to the one who treats them good. LK 6:33.
    - 2. Are we distinctive ("strange")?
    - 3. How do we treat those who mistreat us?
    - 4. When have you done good to the one who mistreated you?
  - C. Jesus said that love was a mark of His disciples. JN 13:35. The question is: Am I His disciple?
  - D. Paul said to the Corinthians that he loved them more even if they loved him less. 2 CO 12:15. Is this our practice?
  - E. Christians are humble and not seeking exaltation. They are interested in the work, not the position. Cf. 1 TI 3:1.
    - 1. His interest is in serving, not an office.
    - 2. The disciples of the Christ were not ready for the work, Jesus had for them to do.
    - 3. They were thinking about place, not service, until the Christ washed their feet. JN 13.
- VII. THE CHURCH IS DISTINCTIVE ("STRANGE") IN THAT IT FINDS JOY IN SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE.
  - A. Peter and John suffered. Acts 5:41. Are we distinctive? Do we rejoice or murmur?
  - B. CO 1:24. Are we distinctive?
  - C. 2 CO 12:10. Does this not sound strange to many even who are in the church?
    - 1. If so, this is only because we have not realized that Christianity is distinctive ("strange").
    - 2. This may well be the reason we are without any more influence and appeal.

## CONCLUSION

- A. Acts 4:13. They had caught this distinctiveness and the people saw it.
- B. The Christ was distinctive!