

INTRODUCTION

One of the most fun weeks of my life is always Vacation Bible School. I enjoyed it as a kid, and I really enjoy it as a pastor. It gives me an opportunity to get face-to-face and knee-to-knee with some of these precious children and get to know them and for them to get to know me. I was in a lot of the rooms this week playing my guitar and singing and talking to them. It's fun to kind of walk down the halls and hear all the kids say, “Hey, Brother David! Hey, Brother David! I've seen you on television” But the Lord has a way of humbling us, because Thursday I went into a 4-year-olds room and the teacher hadn't told them who the special guest was and I walked in and she said, “Boys and girls, he's here our special guest is here for today. One little boy rolled his eyes and said, “Oh, no! I thought it was going to be a Power Ranger!” The Lord really has a way of humbling us and I am thankful for that.

Today I want to talk to you about “How to Recognize a Real Christian.” I have a \$20 bill here in my hand and the interesting thing about a \$20 is of all the denominations of currency, counterfeiters have imitated the \$20 bill more than any other bill. I heard a story about a \$20 bill that got into circulation, and it did a lot of good things. In fact, it was even given in a church offering plate it continued in circulation and bought groceries for a hungry family it paid part of a utility bill for a family it continued in circulation and even bought shoes for a little boy who didn't have shoes. Finally, in its circulation it came into the hands of a banker and the banker looked at that \$20 bill had done a lot of good things, and he declared it to be counterfeit and it was burned and destroyed even though it had done a lot of good things.

That's a parable of a lot of people today based on what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day [Judgement Day], ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracle?’” Then Jesus said, “I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Just as there are some counterfeit bills in circulation and they do a lot of good there are a lot of people who claim today to be Christians who carry the name of Christian who even call out, “Lord, Lord!” but Jesus said on that day they are going to be declared to be counterfeit—and it won't be just a few—he said there are going to be many! I'm told when a bank teller is receiving training on how to recognize a counterfeit bill; they aren't shown counterfeit bills; instead they are shown a genuine \$20 bill and told, “Learn to recognize the real thing. Become so familiar with the details of the real thing that when a fake comes along, you'll spot it immediately.” So today I'm going to ask you, “Can you recognize a real Christian when one comes along? If you know what a real Christian looks like and acts like then when a fake one a counterfeit one comes along, you'll recognize him.

In Ephesians 4:31, Paul is going to give some characteristics of someone who is not a Christian and then he is going to give some characteristics of someone who is. Since verse 17, Paul has been saying, “I insist that as a Christian you do not live as a lost person.” Then he says, “You need to put off (like an old garment) that old sinful way of living and you put on the Jesus nature.” In verse 31 he says, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” Those are six rotten eggs that have been hatched out of the devil's nest. He says those characteristics should not be present in the life of a Christian. In verse

32 he says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” There really should be no break in the text here, there is not in the Greek text. “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.”

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FALSE (COUNTERFEIT) CHRISTIAN

1. Bitterness

There are two things I want to talk to you about this morning. First are all the six characteristics of a false Christian, a counterfeit, a fake, a false Christian. Number one, there will be bitterness present in the life of someone who is a counterfeit Christian. Paul says, “Get rid of all bitterness!” Bitterness is settled hostility. It is holding a grudge against someone or some group of people because of what they have done to you. They have mistreated you they have hurt you they have wronged you, so you have this settled hostility against them.

The Oklahoma City bombing made all of us aware there are groups of people in America who are very bitter. In fact, this week in the *Dallas Morning News* in an article written by Steve Blow. He interviewed one of these paramilitary leaders and asked him, “How did you come to this place?” He said, “A number of years ago the IRS did not allow a deduction on my tax return. I refused to pay it. They said I had to pay it and after all the interest and the penalties what started out to be a \$200 fine has become a fine of over \$2,500. I’m angry at our nation. I’m bitter.” I think there are more people around like that than we know. People are bitter at ex-spouses because they were “done dirty” in the divorce. There are people who are bitter toward their parents because their parents did terrible things to them when they were children. There are people who are bitter toward former business partners because of what that business partner did to them. There are people who are bitter toward family members and neighbors. The Bible says, “As a Christian you should get rid of this bitterness.” Hebrews 12:15 says, “do not let a bitter root grow up to cause trouble and defile many.” Bitterness is like the root of a plant. You can see the leaves, but you can’t see the root and you never see bitterness in a person. It is something hidden below the surface like a root, but oh the miserable rotten fruit of the roots of bitterness! Christians should not have bitterness.

2. Rage

The second characteristic is rage. He said get rid of all bitterness and rage. We talked about this last week. Rage is an uncontrollable temper. Some people are rageaholics. If you have a problem with rage, you need to confess it before God and ask him to help you. Sometimes when you explode in anger and you think you are hurting other people you are actually hurting yourself.

When I was growing up in south Alabama every year in Opp, Alabama, they had a rattlesnake rodeo, believe it or not. They went out into the woods and poured gasoline down these snake holes, which made rattlesnakes come up. They caught them and took them to town and put them in this big pit. I’ve been to see that once. Believe me, I didn’t want go back because it is sort of a gruesome sight to see a pit filled with two or three hundred writhing rattlesnakes. I mean they sold rattlesnake burgers and had rattlesnake races. They even elected a Miss Rattlesnake USA

(wouldn't you like that on your resume?). When I went to this rattlesnake rodeo, I learned something about a rattlesnake I didn't know: If you put a rattlesnake in a corner and you provoke it, it will lash out and try to bite you, but if it is unsuccessful in biting its antagonist, it will literally bite itself. That's a good description of rage. You strike out against others, but what you end up doing is hurting yourself. So the Bible says to get rid of this rage.

3. Anger

Number three is anger. This is a seething rage a below the surface that has not yet reached the flashpoint. We live in a culture of angry people. Several years ago Candid Camera hid a camera in a diner and had one of their actors sitting at the counter reading a newspaper and drinking a cup of coffee. They waited until somebody came in and sat down next to the actor and ordered burgers and fries. Then here was the plot. The actor sitting there reading the newspaper would reach over and eat the french fries off the stranger's plate just to see what his reaction would be to having his fries stolen. You would think people would say, “Hey, stop that!” But nine out of ten Americans didn't say a word. They were angry—you could tell by the way they glared at that guy like “What are you doing?! Those are MY french fries.” I think that is probably characteristic of our culture. There are a lot of angry people. Why is it that an employee goes into his business after being fired and he never expressed any anger before, but he pulls out a gun and starts shooting people? There is this repressed anger that is so dangerous out there. The Bible says to get rid of it.

5. Brawling

Number four is an interesting word we haven't talked about yet. It's called “brawling.” We are not talking about wrestling here. This is really picking a verbal fight. Have you ever known somebody who really liked to do that? They liked to argue and are always taking the opposite role. They are so antagonistic they always want to pick a fight verbally. They are a verbal bully. Even Christians argue sometimes. In fact, husbands just think they won the argument with their wife, but it's not over yet. I just wanted to tell you that. But this is talking about a person who is constantly trying to pick a fight always wanting to be argumentative. The Bible says that is not a characteristic of a real Christian.

5. Slander

Number five is slander. He says, “Get rid of all slander” in verse 31. Slander is speaking evil to another or speaking evil about another person. Slander is actually a crime, but we do it all the time. Sometimes we slander our family members. Parents should never ever say something like this to their child. “You are a stupid kid.” Husbands and wives should never say, “I wish I had never married you.” That's slander. Words ought to be positive and used to build people up. Instead when we slander, we use words to hurt people. Raindrops can be very beneficial, because it refreshes the earth, but sometimes rain can be in the form of hail. I read in the newspaper as you did a couple of weeks ago out there in Fort Worth they had “softball-sized hail.” That's pretty scary, isn't it? We're talking about busting car windows, breaking through roofs, and ruining crops and damaging trees.

By the way as a sidebar, I thought about that softball-sized hail. The book of Revelation says during the time of the Tribulation there is going to be hail the size of a millstone (two thousand pounds). Softball-sized hail is scary. Millstone-sized hail is absolutely *terrifying*! I’m glad I’m not going to be here during the Tribulation, aren’t you born-again Christians? Hail is the same thing as raindrops but the difference is it is cold and hard and it damages. The words you speak can either be raindrops or they can be hail. When they are cold and hard they are like hailstones that destroy, but when they are kind and liquid they are like raindrops they give nourishment. The Bible says slander should not be a part of the lifestyle of a Christian.

6. Malice

Number six is the word malice. It’s a word we seldom use. Malice is a desire to hurt someone, a desire to cause pain. I want you to look at that list of six, I think they are all sequential. In other words, I think one builds upon the other. It all starts with a root of bitterness, which produces rage and anger, which leads to brawling, which leads to slander, which leads to malice a desire in your heart to cause pain and misfortune to someone. Can you think of any group of people you are bitter toward, that you wish misfortune would come their way? You may not want to pull the trigger, but you wish somebody else would. Malice is a desire to hurt somebody, whether you carry it out or not. In Matthew 5:21 Jesus said, “You’ve heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.’” In other words, they are guilty. He said if you call somebody empty-headed, you’ll be in danger of judgment, but if you call your brother a fool you are in danger of hell fire! That’s malice or desire to hurt someone.

Look at those six things. That should not characterize the life of a Christian. Instead those are the marks the characteristics of someone who is a false counterfeit Christian. Some of you are scratching your head and saying, “That scares me, because there are some times I have some feelings of bitterness and there are some times I do lose my temper. There are some times I argue and there are some times to be honest with you I have some hard feelings for somebody. Can I do that as a Christian?” A Christian may occasionally fall into some of these sins. You are not sinless, but as a Christian you will sin less but if your lifestyle is characterized by these things we have talked about even if you claim to be a Christian even if your name is on the membership roll of a church even if you have been baptized walked down an aisle you could be like a counterfeit \$20 bill not knowing Jesus. So those are some of the characteristics of a false Christian.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL (GENUINE) CHRISTIAN

1. Kindness

Just like bank tellers learn to recognize the real thing, when you know what the real thing looks like, you won’t have any problem spotting a phony. There are four characteristics of a genuine, faithful Christian. Number one is kindness it says in verse 32, “be kind one to another.” How kind are you? One of the ways you can tell how kind you are is by what you say and how you say things. What if for every kind word you have ever spoken you were paid \$10, but for every unkind word you have ever spoken you had to pay \$5? Would you be wealthy or would you be

poor? I know some Christians who if they were paid \$10 for every kind word they had ever said, and had to pay \$5 for every unkind thing they had ever said I know some Christians who would be extremely wealthy because their life is characterized by kindness but you and I both know some who claim to be Christians but they would be in bankruptcy I mean they would be a million dollars in the red. Kindness is not something a Christian does; kindness is something a Christian is. I want to reiterate that when you become a Christian you have a new nature. 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone.” That means bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, selfishness, sin, malice, and slander are passed away. Behold all things have become new kindness.

I heard about a preacher who was speaking at a women’s college and he was talking about this, about being kind. He said, “May God give all of us kind hearts. May God give all of us gentle hearts.” Then, he said, “May God give all of us sweet hearts,” and all those women said, “Amen!” Do you know where we need to have kindness? Kindness starts at home. When we are talking about kindness, it’s something you ought to practice in your marriage. Remember when you used to date your wife? How kind and polite and courteous you were to her? You opened the door for her to get in the car. Now you drive off before she even gets in the car. You need to re-institute some kindness. Remember when you were dating your wife and you were sitting there having a soda pop or something and your foot accidentally hit hers under the table you said, “Oh sweetheart. Did I injure your precious, petite little toe there?” Nowadays you kick her under the table and say, “Get your number nines out of the way, why don’t you!” We need to substitute a little kindness for the way we have been acting.

Be kind towards your family, toward your children. I’m aware it’s an ordeal for any family to try to get together and come to church on a Sunday morning, and that’s where we need to practice a little kindness. First of all, you’re always running late. You never leave in time to get here on time so you are running late you are driving as fast as you can the husband turns to the wife and says, “Did you get my Bible? I don’t have my Bible.” She says, “I’m not the keeper of your Bible. Get your own Bible next time.” The kid in the back seat says, “Momma, I forgot my offering envelope.” She turns around and says, “You forgot your offering envelope. That’s the third time in three weeks you have forgotten your offering envelope.” Then she turns to her son back there and she says, “I can’t believe it. You’ve got on one brown sock and one green sock. You ought to know better than that! After all you’re a sophomore at Baylor University.” They are fighting with each other going face-to-face fighting about that. By the time you get to church you are so steamed up you need a good dose of Christianity. You get out of the car there in the parking lot and see some of your friends walking up with their Bibles in their hands, and you say, “Good morning. Praise God! Isn’t it a great day to worship the Lord?” Where we need to practice kindness is in our homes, in our marriages, in our families. That’s where it starts. You will never be kind to others until you are really kind to those at home. The Bible says kindness will be the characteristic of a Christian. Look what verse 32 says. It says, “Be kind one to another.” It is not a suggestion it is a command it is imperative.

Several weeks ago there was a nationwide movement called “Random Acts of Kindness Week.” That’s not even promoted by Christians—it’s just people who are more humanistic. I think it is probably a good idea. In fact, that week I did some random acts of kindness. I’m not going to tell you what they were, I don’t want to lose my reward for it. Some of you did the same thing. But

during that week I thought, "For Christians it should not be 'random acts of kindness week' it should be 'constant acts of kindness all throughout the year.'" Kindness is this thing that once you show it and demonstrate it, it will always come back to you. That's like the fellow from Australia who got a new boomerang, but he never got to use it because he couldn't throw the old one away. That's the way kindness is. When you give kindness to somebody else, it will always return to you. Let's try practicing a little kindness. What would happen to our homes? What would happen to our churches? What would happen to our neighborhoods if suddenly every person who claimed to be a Christian started being kind?

2. Compassion

Number two there is also compassion. The Bible says in verse 32 "Be kind and compassionate." When I first memorized this verse it was in the King James Version and it said, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted." That's a good translation of compassion. Compassion is feeling another's pain. My definition of kindness is treating people with grace. Compassion is feeling another's pain. Abraham Lincoln said, "I pity the man who cannot feel the sting of the whip on another man's back." That's what compassion is. It's feeling somebody else's pain. The opposite of compassion is hardheartedness, where you don't care about someone else's pain. The problem in America today is we have become so skeptical and afraid, we have isolated ourselves with a shell of hardness. We don't feel other people's pain.

In John 11, Jesus was at the tomb of Lazarus and although he knew Lazarus (who had been dead for four days) was going to rise up and walk in just a matter of minutes, the scripture says Jesus wept. Why did he cry if he knew he was going to come back to life? Because Martha and Mary were crying and when Jesus saw their pain, it moved his heart. The problem with us in America today is we don't allow ourselves to be moved and compassionate.

Some time ago Leonard Ravenhill wrote a very insightful article entitled, "Who Weeps Anymore?" He asks some pretty strong questions in there about why it is Americans don't cry anymore. He says, "Oh, we may weep at the fictitious death of a fictitious character in a movie or a novel but we don't cry because our real neighbor is lost and dying and going to a real hell. Something's wrong! A mother can weep when her daughter gets married in the church, but she cannot weep because the same daughter has never been saved in the church. Something's wrong! We can weep when our little pet dog gets run over in the street in front of our house, but we cannot weep because those same neighbors across that same street have never heard about Jesus. Something's wrong!" I'll tell you what's wrong. We have become so hardened collectively that it is as if we have set the spiritual and emotional thermostat in our hearts at such a level that when we get to a point where we almost feel somebody else's pain, the air conditioning kicks in and we say, "Nope. Don't want to cry. Don't want to be a baby. Don't want to be emotional." You know who is the worst at that? Men. The macho image is "real men don't cry!" You never show your emotions. I'm here to tell you, men Jesus was a real man! He wept at the tomb of Lazarus and even when he stood over Jerusalem looking down on Jerusalem he sobbed tears his body was wracked with crying and sobbing. I want to say to you guys real men do weep! Real men are tender hearted. Daddies don't you dare tell your son "Son, grow up! Don't cry." Don't you dare tell them that! You tell them. "Hey, son, it's ok to cry because real men do cry." Tender hearted compassion.

3. Forgiveness

Number three I really think that this is probably the key characteristic. number three. It is forgiveness. Because the Bible says in verse 32 “be kind and compassionate to one another.” It says, “forgiving each other.” Forgiveness does not want to seek revenge. People misunderstand forgiveness. They say, “Somebody has sinned against me. Somebody has done me dirty and I can’t forget what they did to me.” Outside of brain surgery, or brain damage or hypnosis, you will probably never forget. That little wrinkle in your brain will always be there. But, to forgive them means you no longer try to hurt them or seek revenge and you can put it on the back shelf of your mind so it no longer affects you. That’s what forgiveness is.

Some time ago somebody asked me, “Do you remember what so-and-so did to you?” I said, “No, I don’t even remember that.” “You’ve forgotten it?” I said, “Yes, I distinctly remember deciding to forget it.” You can decide to forget those wrongs people did against you. Forget it, and drive on go on with your life, leave it behind and forgive that person. There’s great, great power in forgiveness, in release. Just this past week I had the opportunity to practice what I preach. A pastor in another town wrote a very scathing article about Green Acres Baptist Church (believe it or not from a denomination that thinks all Baptists and all other denominations are dying and going to hell) but he really picked on our church. I don’t know why, maybe because we are a large church. He criticized a lot of things. For instance, he said our Saturday night worship is wrong because we are teaching “Sabbath” worship and things like that. He went on and on about how we are just not believing the Bible or teaching or preaching the Bible. I read that and it made me angry. I thought about all the scriptures I could quote to him and cite to him to show him how wrong he was but then suddenly the Holy Spirit said, “No, you don’t need to do any of that.” So, I just wrote him a very short, simple, but sincere letter. I said, “Dear Pastor, In regards to the things that you wrote about Green Acres Baptist Church, I forgive you, my brother. Sincerely...” and I signed it! When I did that, any kind of anger or resentment I felt was gone. Some of you have not yet discovered the joy and the release of forgiveness and you say, “Doesn’t somebody have to come to you and beg you to forgive them before you forgive them?” Absolutely not! You can forgive them they don’t even have to accept your forgiveness. You just say, “I forgive you.” And you have done your part and you are free. As a Christian it is impossible for you to hold a spirit of unforgiveness toward another person. About that I am absolutely certain!

In Matthew 18, Peter comes to Jesus and Peter feels pretty good about himself because he says, “Lord, how many times should I forgive somebody? Up to seven times? That’s was an extraordinary amount for the Jews, who taught an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Peter felt good about it. Jesus said, “No, not seven times. Seven times seventy!” Four hundred and ninety times. Seven is the perfect number for the Jew. Four hundred and ninety was the perfection of perfection multiplied, which means an unlimited number. Jesus said there was a man who owed his boss 10 million dollars. His boss said, “Pay me.” The man said, “I don’t have it.” The boss said, “I’m going to throw you into prison.” The man said, “Please, boss. Don’t do that!” So the boss said, “Okay. I’m going to show you mercy. Your \$10 million debt is forgiven.” And the guy goes out and he feels like every one of us feels who have been forgiven by God and who has been saved. The greatest debt we could never repay has been forgiven. He

meets another guy who owes him \$10, so he says, “You pay me that \$10!” The guy says, “I’m sorry. I can’t pay you.” And Jesus said the man started choking him, saying, “I’m throwing you in prison, because you owe me ten dollars.” The boss hears about it and calls this guy back in and says, “Let me get this straight. I forgave you a \$10 million debt, but you go out and throw a guy in jail because he owes you ten dollars? Forget it! You still owe me the \$10 million!” Then if you read the last verse of Matthew, 18 Jesus said, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

What does that mean? You are saying “I’m a Christian. I claim to be a Christian, but I haven’t forgiven this person. Does this mean I am going to die and go to hell I am going to lose my salvation I thought you guys teach you can’t lose your salvation.” We do teach that. I do believe that. It means if you continually refuse, refuse, refuse to forgive someone, it is a clear indication you are a counterfeit Christian. It is totally opposite and impossible it is contrary to the nature of a Christian to hold unforgiveness. It just won’t even be possible. You had better forgive that person or you need to ask Jesus to come into your heart and change you, because those are the strong words Jesus said about forgiveness.

4. Love

The final characteristic, number four, is love. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul says, “You need to imitate God.” In what area? He loves you so you ought to be willing to love other people. What is true love? Love is giving yourself up for another, because that’s what Jesus did for us. Jesus said, “By this all men shall know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.” Love is probably the most misunderstood word in our language. We always think of romantic love and sometimes that’s not even genuine. You heard about the guy who claimed to love a woman and he said, “I even worship the very ground that your father discovered oil on.” That’s the wrong motivation for love. Sometimes we have the wrong motivation for love. You do not love in order to earn access into heaven. You love because you are saved. 1 John, chapter 4, makes it very clear that if you claim to love God, but you do not love your brother, the Bible says you’re a liar! Let me tell you what’s going to win this world to Jesus Christ outside the windows and doors of this building: When we demonstrate kindness, compassion, forgiveness and when we demonstrate love.

CONCLUSION

I have been reading the biography of Henry Moorehouse, an English preacher. He tells a story about what happened in Wales just after the turn of the century. He was preaching in a little Welsh mining town and God was blessing him, people were being saved, and this meeting was the talk of the community. There was a man in town with a reputation for being a vile sinner, and a drunkard. One evening, the men were talking down at the pub about Henry. Ike Miller, (who was also a braggart) said, “I’m going to go to that church tonight and if Henry Moorehouse has enough guts to preach, I’m going to whip him and then I’m going to run him out of town!” The word spread and so some of the leaders of that church said, “Listen, Henry. We know this Ike Miller, he is a wild man and he’ll do exactly what he said. You have already had good services. Let’s close down the meeting and you go on to the next town.” Henry said, “Absolutely not! I’m either going to preach in your church tonight or I’m going to preach out in the street in front of

your church.”

So they held the meeting. Of course the place was packed. People wanted to see what would happen. First of all, there was no Ike Miller, but just before Henry Moorehouse got up to preach, Ike came strutting down the center aisle of the church with a big whip rolled up in his hand and he sat on the front pew and crossed his arms as if to say, “Okay. You do your business then I’ll do mine.” That night Henry Moorehouse preached on John 3:16. “For God so LOVED the world...” and he emphasized how much God loves everybody how he loved the worst sinner and he preached on the love of God. When he finished preaching, Ike Miller stood up. The women gasped, men were poised to jump in and break up a fight—but instead, he turned on his heel and walked out the back door. He walked through the streets of that little Welsh mining town and his drinking buddies in the pub said, “Hey, Ike. Come on in.” But he didn’t hear them. He kept walking until he came to the outskirts of town where a little broken-down fence around a little dilapidated house stood. He swung that gate open and walked up to the front door, pulled it open and stepped in. His wife was terrified, because she had been the victim of him coming in many nights drunk and beating her and the children. She backed the children behind her skirt into a corner. Ike looked at his wife and said, “Don’t be afraid, wife. God has given you a new husband tonight.” He said, “Let’s pray.” and they got on their knees in that little house. Ike Miller didn’t even know how to pray he said, “Dear God,” then he didn’t know what to say. He said, “Dear Jesus,” and he didn’t know what to say. “Dear Lord,” no words came. Finally Ike remembered a prayer his mother taught him as a child. He said, “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look down upon this little child, Forgive me my simplicity and allow me to come to thee. Amen.” By his own testimony, Ike Miller became a Christian that night, and he became one of the most faithful, vibrant, strong Christians in that part of Wales. Later, they said to Henry Moorehouse “Henry why in the world did you preach on the love of God that night? Because if there was ever a man who needed to hear a sermon on hell on the wrath of God and the judgement of God it was Ike Miller. Why did you preach on the love of God? Henry smiled and said, “The love of God can break even the hardest heart.”

That is so true. When we show the love of God out here in this community, even the hardest heart will notice. So take a look at your life. Is there bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, or malice or is there kindness compassion forgiveness and love?

OUTLINE

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FALSE (COUNTERFEIT) CHRISTIAN

1. Bitterness
2. Rage
3. Anger
4. Brawling
5. Slander
6. Malice

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL (GENUINE) CHRISTIAN

1. Kindness
2. Compassion
3. Forgiveness
4. Love



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes