

A CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Last week Kenny Gray started his message by speaking about what we are like as Christians. Some people are all holy and Christ-like on Sundays, but as for the rest of the week, they are a different person.

One thing that is very evident when looking at Christians who have a genuine relationship with Jesus, is that when you look at their lives, they are consistent. They live for Jesus, whether it's in their home, their business, their entertainment time, or even at church, they are the same. Their lives rotate around Jesus Christ and it's clear. Other people expect Jesus to rotate around them, fitting into their schedules, their habits, their preferences and so-on – that's not Christ-centered living!

Today we will ask, and start to answer the question, "What does a Christ-centered life look like?"

MESSAGE

WHAT DOES A CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE LOOK LIKE?

An article by "Got Questions.Org" defines it this way:

Christ-centered life is one that is focused upon a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord. At the core of every human decision is a motivation. Some people are motivated by the quest for pleasure or money. Some center their entire lives on a goal, a job, or even their families. These things are not wrong in themselves; however, **that which we center our lives on can become our god.**

The human heart was designed for worship - if it does not worship God, it will worship something else. If we are not Christ-centered, we will be centered on something else.

- Worship is measured by the amount of time, money, and emotional energy expended on something.
- Our gods can be identified by the level of passionate commitment they evoke in us.
- Sometimes, we can even begin to resemble them. We talk about them, think about them, dream about them, and scheme to spend more time with them.
- People who know us best usually know where our deepest passions lie because worship is hard to hide.
- Of course what we say is also a dead give-away about where our heart is: **Luke 6:45**(NLT) states: A good person produces good things from the

treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

My first challenge to you this morning is this:

- ***If worship is measured by the amount of time, money, and emotional energy expended on something, where is ours being spent?***
- ***What are we talking about, thinking about and making time for?***
- ***Is our relationship with Jesus getting that much attention?***

To be Christ-centered means to center our lives on Him and to become more and more like Him. It means to talk about Him, think about Him, dream about Him, and scheme to spend more time with Him. To choose to obey His commands out of love and honour for our Lord, not from fear of being caught in sin. **This is what a Christ-centered life looks like!**

TO BE CHRIST-CENTERED COMES AT A COST!

It's easy to say, "I want to know Christ", but what happens when the rubber hits the road?

Philippians 3:8-10A(ESV) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. 10 that I may know Him

- Paul was willing to lose everything to know Jesus.
- He counted everything else as rubbish.
- He left the law, which represented his own righteousness, and chose the righteousness that comes by faith.

I see the current day equivalent of self-righteousness as serving the Lord on our own terms:

- This is where we serve the Lord in a manner that suits us.
- This is where we conveniently ignore the parts of scripture that don't suit us.
- Give an example of Jesus habit of attending synagogue "as was His custom". Jesus was busy – it cost Him to go to the Synagogue!
- Give an example of Him feeding the 5000. It cost the little boy!

In **Matthew 19** we read of the rich young ruler, he came to Jesus and said, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Jesus answered him by saying, "if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.", and the young ruler replied, "I have kept all of these". You see, he was treating the commandments as rules and tick-boxes, good deeds that would earn him righteousness, but his heart didn't belong to God – He would do what God said, but only up to a point!

Matthew 19:21-22 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- ***What are we willing to sacrifice? Our time, our money, our preferences?***
- ***Are we willing to obey God, no matter what?***
- ***Have we already been saying "NO" to the Lord?***

We need to make a choice – are we willing to go even as far as to give up everything? No matter what the cost, let us place Jesus back at the center of our lives today.

TO BE CHRIST-CENTERED IS TO BE CHRIST-LIKE!

The greatest desire of Christ-centered believers is to please Him and grow to be more like Him. Their lives echo Paul's words in Philippians 3 "that I may know Him!"

John said - **John 3:30**(NLT) He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

Paul said - **1 Corinthians 11:1**(NLT) And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

What was Jesus like?

- He was full of love and compassion for people.
- He was kind.
- He cared so much that He gave His all.

Isaiah 42:2-3 (NLT) He will not shout or raise his voice in public. 3 He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.

That's just a small extract on what Jesus was like.

Here's an example of someone most of us knew. Without us necessarily recognising it, he had a Christ-like nature and his life was Christ-centered.

I speak about Morne Smit, the young man who passed away last month. My family and I got to know Morne really well over the 5 years that we had with him. As we reflected on his life, we found the evidence of his Christ-like nature. Here's something that Josh wrote to me about Morne's impact on his life:

"Last night I was home with the family, I was being distracted trying to get photos of Morne together for a slide show. While I was there we began talking about the great example that Morne was. We then stumbled across his journal. In his journal he speaks about the things he struggled with, the people he loved, the things he was praying for. The journal reflected how he longed to go deeper with God. He was always asking questions, always ready to learn, always loving and making people feel welcome. I didn't recognize it then, but now I know he was living out the in-living Christ.

The more I reflect on his life the more I realize I want to become more like Morne, because Morne was becoming more like Christ."

Morne, like Jesus, was kind. I don't know of any time when he was nasty or ugly. He encouraged everyone and was everyone's friend. He would rather be the butt of a joke and make everyone laugh, than stand up for his own rights and feelings".

- ***Are we Christ-like?***
- ***Are we quiet when someone offends us or do we loudly stand up for our own rights?***
- ***Do we forgive like Jesus did?***
- ***Do we give like Jesus did? (Speak about the Good Shepherd ministry).***

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

Philippians 1:21 (NKJV) For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. We all understand the second half of this verse – to die is gain, because for the believer, it means eternity in God's presence. What about the first half, "to live is Christ"? It speaks about placing Jesus in the center of our very existence.

- To live is Christ is to live for Christ.
- To live is Christ is to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.
- To live is Christ means He becomes our top priority and focus.
- To live is Christ is to follow His example and imitate Him.
- To live is Christ means nothing is too much for the Kingdom!

Let us re-focus our lives – it can't be "to live is to cycle", or "to live is to help my family", or "to live is to work".

Let us make, "to live is Christ" our life motto.

CONCLUSION

Philippians 3:17-19(NLT) Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. 18 For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

- Let's make sure that the evidence of our lives does not make us enemies of the cross! ***What does our conduct look like?***
- Let's choose to start living Christ-centered lives where He is our chief motivation in everything we do.
- In everything we do let us ask: "***Would I do what I am doing now if Jesus were with me?***".

Let us chose to make Jesus Christ the centre of our lives today. As we seek Him first, He will be with us and bless every area of our lives. So many things are important to us... our families, our employment, our sports and hobbies, our entertainment and so on. Today we are challenged with one question: "Is Jesus most important?"

If need be, let's ask the Lord to help us by His Holy Spirit, to make Jesus the center of our lives.