

LIVING WITH JESUS AT THE CENTRE

A FAMILY DEVOTION

(19 April 2020)

Call your family together for a Family Devotion. (The time you would have gone to church) Set 60-90 minutes aside for Praise and Worship, Word Reading and Study and Prayer. Encourage the involvement of every family member. The outline below will assist you. **Marius Gradwell**

Summary:

The desire of God's heart is that in everything Jesus Christ might have the preeminence.

Text:

Colossians 1:15-20 ESV *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (16) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (17) And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (18) And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. (19) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, (20) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

Introduction:

- Paul declares that everything finds its meaning and significance in Christ. Christ must be at the centre of all things in our individual lives, our families and in the church.
- Michael Eaton: *"Why should we be so interested in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ? The entire secret of the Christian life is to be looking at Jesus."*
- A. W. Tozer: *"The present position of Christ in gospel churches may be likened to that of a king in a limited constitutional monarchy. The king (sometimes depersonalised by the term "the Crown") is, in such a country, no more than a traditional rallying point, a pleasant symbol of unity and loyalty much like a flag or a national anthem. He is lauded, feted, and supported, but his real authority is small. Nominally he is head overall, but in every crisis someone else makes the decisions."*
- CCA Mission Statement: *We are a diverse people **united in Christ**; deployed everywhere advancing God's Kingdom by living the way Jesus showed us to live and influencing others to do the same.*
- CCA first two Values Statements:
 - God Centered - *Everything we do must glorify God reflecting our total dependence on Him. Acts 17:28 For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.*
 - Christ Like - *Our goal is to become like Jesus and reflect Him through the Church, His body. Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*

1. Jesus is more than just **central**; Jesus is also **supreme**!

We read in Revelation 5:6-12: *Then I saw a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne ... and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb ... and they sang a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals ... Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise.'*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's (*Christ the Center*): "It is the *nature* of Christ to be the center." I totally agree. But then I must rush to add: It is the *nature* of Christ to be *supreme* over all for which he also is central.

Let's go *beyond* seeing Jesus merely as the center of our lives because he is so much more! We must daily recognise and fully respond to the Lord Jesus Christ as *supreme*—over our lives, our church, the creation, and all that there is—ordering every step of our walk *with* him to be *in* him accordingly, and then invite others to do the same!

Not only is he the One everything is wrapped around, he also is the One who wraps everything up into his person, gathering us into his purposes, his passions, and his potency.

2. The Core: Living with Jesus at the Centre

The word core, by definition, means that which is central, innermost, and the most essential part of anything.

- In exercise, it is the muscle group in your abdomen.
- In science, it is the nucleus of an atom.
- In geology, it is the mass which is under the surface of the earth composed of Iron and Nickel.
- In values, it is the fundamental beliefs to which you hold.

Here is my question for you this morning:

- When it comes to your spiritual life, what's your core? What is the central, innermost, and most essential part of your soul-life? What is the defining centre around which the rest of your life orbits?
- Think creatively about how Jesus could and should transform every area of your life. How does Jesus-centeredness relate to private and corporate worship, Bible reading, ministry, giving, raising kids, marriage and your job? How does Christ-centeredness relate to TV-watching, internet surfing, Facebook postings, I-pod listening, parties, dating relationships and how I spend my money?

3. Living Jesus-centred as a primary battleground

Jesus-centred living is a real battle that disciples of Jesus face. In Colossians, Paul calls the followers of Jesus to live in the light of the existing centrality of Jesus. The Bible is Jesus-centred. Heaven is Jesus-centred. God made it that way, and we must constantly guard our hearts and our lives from moving from Jesus-centeredness.

The real battle is to live in the light of the centrality of Jesus – to let the priority of Christ take over. The challenge is to live out Colossians 3:17 – "17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Knowing that Jesus is the core is one thing; the real challenge is living in such a way that every area of life is transformed by the centrality of Jesus. Or, to be sure that every orbit of our lives revolves around Christ.

My prayer: "Dear God, help me to understand more fully the eternal significance of the centrality of Jesus and determine how to live by this Jesus-centred core".

4. Four words that will help mould our understanding of what a Jesus-centred life looks like

a. Source

A Jesus-centered life begins with realising that the source of everything we are is the Lord. He created us, he owns us, he gifted us with talents, he authors our story, and every blessing that we receive comes from him.

James 1:17 CEV *Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He is always the same and never makes dark shadows by changing.*

Additionally, Christ is the source for our righteousness. In Him we have everything we need for godly living.

2 Peter 1:3 CEV *We have everything we need to live a life that pleases God. It was all given to us by God's own power, when we learned that he had invited us to share in his wonderful goodness.*

b. Motive

A Jesus-centered life means that a Person (Jesus) is the motivation for everything we think, say and do. Many leave little room for Jesus in their Christianity.

Is your Christianity intimate and personal? Do you want to *know* Christ? Do you want to be part of *his* work? Do you want to *please* him? Do you want to incarnate *his* character? A Jesus-centered life is deeply intimate and motivated by relationship with Jesus.

Philippians 3:10-11 TPT *And I continually long to know the wonders of Jesus more fully and to experience the overflowing power of his resurrection working in me. I will be one with him in his sufferings and I will be one with him in his death. (11) Only then will I be able to experience complete oneness with him in his resurrection from the realm of death.*

c. Goal

A Jesus-centered life has one ultimate goal: **that Jesus gets the glory!** It's not wrong to pursue personal goals, but the glory of Christ is the orienting compass that gives direction to all others.

Because we want Christ to be known, honoured, worshipped and obeyed, we submit every other attainable goal to him. Our decisions are no longer controlled by selfish desires, but by new desires we get from his love.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

d. Hope

A Jesus-centered life finally puts all trust and hope in the Lord. We have hope in the here and now, because Christ has promised his presence and grace until we go home. We also know that this life is not all there is, and that an eternity is coming.

Revelation 21:1-4 ESV *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (2) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

Conclusion

Ask yourself: **is my life Jesus-centered? Is Jesus my source for life? Is he the motivation for everything I do? Is his glory my goal? Is he my hope, both for today and for eternity?**

A lot competes for center stage in our hearts.

Our Savior patiently walks with us and fights for us as we progress to make him the main focus of our life!