Calvary Part 3: Christ In The Center

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday April 12th, 2020

Text: Philippians 1-4

### Intro

1. *Mt. 27:38; Mk. 15:27; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18:* The gospels record there were three crosses at Calvary (Golgotha).
2. *I Cor. 2:2; Acts 8:35:* Teaching the gospel focuses on the cross of Christ (center in teaching).
3. Acts 10:39-43: Jesus was no mere man that death would be the end to His story! He rose from the dead as it was foretold (I Cor. 15:3-4: “According to the Scriptures”) and the heart that believes on Him and obeys the gospel will be saved from sins! (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 10:48)
4. Jn. 3:13-15; 12:32: As Israel was to look to the serpent to be healed, so are we to look to Jesus!
5. As Christ’s cross was center *(Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18),* so is Christ to be the center of our lives!

#### Christ Is The ***Purpose*** Of My Life

* 1. Phil. 1:21-24:
		1. “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
		2. Paul’s indifference towards death raises the question of what life and death really mean – The believer has nothing to fear in death, realizing it is but a beginning!
	2. Paul said “to live is Christ” – He is our purpose for living!
		1. Regardless of how others felt, to live was Christ.
		2. With many, life is: money, power, worldly pleasures, & flattery (vanity).
		3. He did not say, “Christ is life,” but said, “Living is Christ, dying is gain.”
		4. While alive, he would live for Christ.
	3. For saints, Christ is in the center of our lives!
		1. Gal. 2:20: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”
		2. “I have been crucified with Christ” – I live to die for Christ, as He died to make me live!
	4. What about death?
		1. Simply means more of Christ (“To die is gain”) – II Cor. 5:6-8
		2. Phil. 3:8: Paul spoke of gaining Christ. Possessions meant nothing next to Christ!
		3. Heb. 2:9, 14-15: Death should hold no terrors for the believer.
		4. Phil. 4:11-13: He longed to be with Christ, but was also satisfied with life below – For he had all strength in Christ.
	5. As saints, Christ ought to be the ***purpose*** of your life!

#### Christ Is The ***Pattern*** Of My Life

* 1. Phil. 2:5-8:
		1. Christ is the pattern for humility and obedience – “Have this attitude…”
	2. Paul uses the human form of Christ to teach a lesson on humility:
		1. John says the Word became flesh. *(Jn. 1:14)*
		2. Jesus did not consider His state of “equality of God” a thing to hold on to at any cost, meaning He gave up the glory of Heaven to redeem us!
		3. Heb. 4:14-16: As He possessed the real attributes of Deity, so He also took up the real attributes of a bondservant.
	3. Heb. 5:8-9: Jesus obediently followed the will of the Father unto death.
		1. He cried aloud when He felt alone on the cross. *(Mt. 27:46)*
		2. His body on the cross was accursed. *(Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13-14)*
		3. I Cor. 1:20-25: The Jews stumbled at the cross, the Greek thought it foolishness, but to the believer it is power unto salvation!
	4. We need to obediently follow Christ in all things: doctrine, practice, conduct and speech!
	5. Christ’s life is the ***perfect pattern*** (example) for my life! (I Pet. 2:21-25)

#### Christ Is The ***Prize*** Of My Life

* 1. Phil. 3:12-14:
		1. Paul says he “presses on” toward the prize (has not obtained it yet).
	2. Many people do not understand the word “perfection.”
		1. The word “perfect”:
			1. Perfect: *Gr. teleios (Str. 5046)* – “Complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); completeness: -- of full age, man, perfect.”
			2. It means to mature, and is applied to the character of a person as well as physical attributes of growth.
	3. Paul says he is not yet complete (or mature) but continues to press ahead that he might attain the prize of Christ!
		1. The verb literally means, “I pursue” or “I follow after.”
		2. Paul was in the pursuit of Christ.
		3. Christ had changed him from a persecutor to an apostle. *(Acts 22:3-5)*
	4. Paul’s goal is still ahead – he pictured it as a chase!
		1. He does not forget his former career, but he does not allow his immediate past to lull him into a sense of false security.
		2. He had no time to look back.
		3. He could not count on former achievements to carry him through life to Christ – but had to continue pressing on!
		4. I Cor. 9:24: The prize belongs to those who run!
	5. Paul was thinking of the ***crown of righteousness*** *(II Tim. 4:8)* – ***Are you?***

#### Christ Is The ***Power*** Of My Life

* 1. Phil. 4:12-13:
		1. Despite life’s circumstances, Paul’s strength resides in Christ.
	2. Paul uses the word “strengthens” to describe Christ’s relationship to him.
		1. I Tim. 1:12: He recognized that his strength comes from Christ!
		2. II Tim. 4:17: God strengthened him to endure so that the Gentiles would hear the gospel. He was even rescued from the mouth of the lions!
		3. Eph. 6:10: The armor of God is to give strength to all Christians!
		4. This strength of God is accessible to all who yield themselves to Christ!
	3. Paul learned to do without his way and find joy in God’s way.
		1. Men can kill him, but they cannot deprive him of the love & power of Christ in his life. *(Mt. 10:28; Rom. 8:35-39)*
	4. Paul’s life was victorious because he let the word of Christ dwell within him and ***rule in his life!***

## Conclusion

1. Paul says our lives are enhanced and enriched by the grace of Christ when we submit to His will and live for Him!
	1. Christ is the ***purpose*** of my life
	2. Christ is the ***pattern*** of my life
	3. Christ is the ***prize*** of my life
	4. Christ is the ***power*** of my life
2. Christ was center at Calvary *(Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18),* is center in preaching *(Acts 8:35; I Cor. 2:2)* and should be the center of our lives *(Gal. 2:20)!*
3. Jesus was crucified at Calvary but the tomb was empty the 3rd day for He had risen (Luke 24:5-7) – ***There is hope in the Empty Tomb!***
4. Jesus rose from the dead and proclaimed light to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 26:23).
5. To share in that glory, to share in Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, we must be baptized, putting to death the old self of sin (Rom. 6:6), being buried with Him and raising from the water to walk in newness of life! (Romans 6:3-4)
6. Have you made Jesus Christ the center of your life?
7. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
8. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!