

Jesus at the Centre



It has perhaps become a bit of a cliché to say that Church is to be God-centered or Jesus-centered. Unless we have Jesus at the centre can we actually say that we are a Church at all? The difficulty though is in knowing what being Jesus-centered actually looks like. Here are a few thoughts.

Jesus is Lord

It is easy to say Jesus is Lord and King but does the way we live as individuals and a corporate body actually reflect it? Are we doing the things that Jesus would have us do or are we doing instead what seems good to us? Are our Churches led by Jesus or by the demands of the institutional set-up or even the state or perhaps our own desires? The focus of Jesus' teaching was the Kingdom of God, what things are like when God is in charge and reigning unopposed. Do people see something of that Kingdom when they look at the Church? Do people see something of the Kingdom when they look at my individual life?

God is the first priority in our lives

If something or someone is said to be the centre of our lives, I think it follows that whatever that something or someone is, it, he or she takes first priority. I'm not convinced that in my life, God is always first priority. Am I living for God? I'd like to think so but I fear that the choices I make for my life do not always match His.

Living by Law?

Some Churches have made the mistake of communicating the faith as a set of moral rules drawn from Old Testament Law and aspects of Jesus' teaching; and the Church usually adds a few rules of its own for good measure. Can rules though help us to make God the Lord of our lives? They can help us with certain things, for example about how to relate with other people but they can't always give insights into how to handle specific situations within those relationships. In addition, we can know the rules but often do not seem to have the ability to abide by them.

Relationship with God is the key

Jesus didn't really teach about rules but instead about relationship, one built on faith or trust in God's actual presence with us. Jesus made it possible for us to have an on-going dialogue with God and through the Holy Spirit empowers us to live according to His direction.

We read the Bible not to learn rules but to spend time with God, to get to know Him rather than just get to know about Him. Similarly prayer is not just about dutifully bringing needs before God in the hope that they have some effect. Instead it is about involving the real presence of God in the things that are on our hearts, listening to His lead so that perhaps we can even be an answer to our own prayers.

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