

## The Mission of Christ

In our consideration of Christ, we have examined the fact that He is the God/Man. Both of those have great significance to us that makes Jesus the One Who we must reverence because He is God and also the One Who knows and understands us in our weakness. Although everything leads us to glorify God, if we just jump to worshiping Him we might miss something very important..

To some, it seems that the highest spiritual goal is *Sola Deo Gloria*, to God alone be glory. This is a very true doctrinal statement, but it becomes trite when people use it as a slogan and then don't bother to think about it after that. I got a new job today, praise God! I lost a job today, praise God! We had a beautiful day, praise God! A blazing inferno went through half the state and burned my house and homes of thousands of people, praise God! It is easier to praise God in the good times, but in the hard times we actually *still* can say "praise God."

Psa 34:1-4 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Job 2:9-10 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

It is easier to say "Praise God" in the easy times, but we might not be so complacent to just leave it with that in the hard times. Before the hard times hit and we are *then* pushed to ask what God's purpose is, we can discover what Christ's focus was in His mission which then affects our purpose in Him.

## 1. Wrong-headed mission focus -

Every organization should be careful to create a mission statement. A charity institution, education institution, a government institution, and others each have a unique purpose that guides them. If they emphasize the wrong mission it will distract and divert them from their purpose. As church movements go, they can become focused on the wrong mission. Sometimes this happens accidentally, other times it happens intentionally.

One of the things that can get a church sidetracked is an emphasis where the church becomes more focused on entertainment. This often happens gradually and accidentally. When we put our *priority* on worship and build on that we run the risk of building an exaggerated *caricature* of worship. There are plenty of video clips where you can see people break out in their best dance moves as they "worship" to a really rockin' band with the church lit up like a really happening night club. I hope to help people understand God's *will* and not just have a mystical experience.

In the late 1800s, Walter Rauschenbusch was a prime proponent of another wrong headed purpose for church. He exaggerated the aspect of Christian charity and mercy to create what has been labeled the *Social Gospel*. Rauschenbusch did not understand Jesus' death as an act of substitutionary atonement where Jesus became the personal sacrifice for each of us and our sins. He believed that Jesus died "to substitute love for selfishness as the basis of human society." He was more concerned with poverty, inequality, and exploitation. His views were very much in line with the goals of communism.

These are important concerns, but when you prioritize them at the expense of the Gospel you will miss the true focus of Christ's mission. There are missionaries whose mission is to help dig wells, farm better, build schools, but, as good as those things are to do, this is not the mission of the church.

There is another movement today that seeks to "Redeem the Culture." While it is true that our Christian attitude will affect the culture, it is only *sinners* that can be redeemed, not the culture. Some of them are known as Reconstructionists who want to make Christ's Millennial kingdom now. Other aspects of their theology are sound, but redeeming the culture and setting up a religious government is not the focus of Christ. We can especially see this in Judas Iscariot who had a different mission than Christ. He was more concerned about a Messiah who was a political leader than a savior.

We can see Simon, a former sorcerer who got saved, almost jumped into the wrong mission early on in the church.

Acts 8:18-24 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. **[His wrong understanding of the mission was to have power as if it was a program to be bought.]**

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the

bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

## 2. Christ's mission focus -

We don't have to look far at all to determine what Christ's mission focus is. It is not like we have to look all over the Bible to figure it out. Christ gives it to us plainly.

Luke 19:2-10 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that *way*.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

John 3:16 is pretty all encompassing about what the will of God is in Christ:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He loved the whole world. He gave the only One Who could take care of every man's need. The offer encompassed whosoever, no one would be left out if they didn't want to be. It encompassed all of eternity.

1John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

1Tim 2:3,4 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

When Jesus gave the great commission, He further clarified His mission focus.

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Now, I said previously that you don't have to go all over the Bible to determine what Christ's mission focus is. But, if you *did* do that, you *would* discover it. From the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to the tree on which Christ was hung, God's focus is on redemption. From the first book where sin was introduced to the last book where sin was conquered, God's focus is on redemption. The entire Bible contains the

history of redemption from the start to the finish. Not every bit of history that exists is chronicled in the Bible, only those events that reveal the history of redemption. The need for a Savior to redeem us is presented in every book of the Bible. When Job was suffering, his eyes were on the redemption.

Job 19:23-27 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

### 3. Our mission focus -

Our mission focus, then, is to preach the Gospel.

If we educate people about theology, it is so they can effectively tell people about the Gospel. If we have a dinner, you can be sure the Gospel will be preached there if a visitor attends. If we have a kid's day, the Gospel will be preached. If we are having a work day, it's so we can have a place where the Gospel can be preached. If we have a missionary come in, his mission has to be to preach the Gospel. If we teach you to pray, it's so that you can be blessed to preach the Gospel. If we want to bring Glory to God, it will be by preaching the Gospel. When we take communion, it is a testimony to the lost about the Gospel message in the communion as well as a time we challenge the saved to make sure their life is on track so they can preach the Gospel. When we help others grow in the faith, it is so they can preach the Gospel.

A fire chief gathers his team after a fire and asks each man what their job is.

The first firefighter says, "I drive the truck." The second says, "I hook the hoses to the hydrant." Another says, "I maintain the equipment." The next one says, "I document and record the events." After hearing their answers, the fire chief responds, "Your *job* is to put out the *fire*." Our jobs are to put out the fires of Hell.

1Cor 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

Some people come to church for comfort. This is only half-right. We need comfort so we can be strengthened to preach the Gospel. Some come for a Bible education so they can know theology. This is good only if it strengthens them to preach the Gospel. Some come hit and miss, but that works against the mission of the church to preach the Gospel. Some people look at faith as a mind over matter issue to get things by some kind of positive affirmation. If our faith does not lead us to rescue people from the clutches of Hell then it is misguided. Because we are in Christ we should have the same mission He has and not be distracted from it.

Churches across the millennia have preached the same message, but now it's your turn to receive it if you haven't done so yet. You might like the singing, the dinners, the prayers...but if you miss the message that Christ wants to save you from your sins then you have missed the very heart of the Gospel. If you are saved, my invitation is to join the mission, become a team member of the church with the mission of seeing others saved as you have been.

What is your mission statement? You want to glorify God...how? Is your mission statement to reach others for Christ? How will your mission statement direct your decisions?

Psa 34:1-4, Job 2:9-10

1. Wrong-headed mission focus - Acts

8:18-24

2. Christ's mission focus - Luke 19:2-10, John 3:16, 1John 2:2, 1Tim 2:3,4, Matt 28:18-20, Job 19:23-27
3. Our mission focus - 1Cor 9:16