

## *Christ, the Goal of Ministry*

You would think that Christ would be the focus of Christian ministry, but often He is not – even among evangelical Christians.

Alternate foci:

Westboro Baptist Church: anti-homosexual  
UCC: anti-right-wing  
RC Jr's church: pro-homeschooling  
anti-abortion  
worship issues: baptism, head coverings, Charismatic gifts  
theological issues: predestination, eschatology  
(the deity of Christ, virgin birth, inerrancy of scripture are issues that *do* have Christ as their central concern – these must not be neglected)  
biggest issue for most Christians today: worship style

Even groups that do try to keep Christ as their focus can stray, often unconsciously.  
Evangelical groups can become so focused on our goals that we lose sight of Christ.

Campus Crusade: winning the world for Christ  
RUF goals:

Growth in Grace  
Fellowship and Service  
Missions and Evangelism  
Biblical worldview

Here at this camp we can become so focused on doing ministry that we neglect Jesus.

Christ is the goal of ministry: knowing, loving, exalting Christ

He must be our constant preoccupation.

Five key aspects of Christ to dwell on

Christ *lived* for us.

- At least in the west we tend to think that we are saved by the death of Christ. We view His life as an example of godliness and the necessary prelude to His death.
- Christ's life was not simply the necessary prelude to His death.
- Mt. 4:23 – He ushered in the Kingdom by His ministry.
- We are counted righteous because He is righteous. (Phil 3:9)  
His righteous acts are counted as ours.
- Christ now lives *in* us. (Gal 2:20)  
*The life and ministry of Christ in the world continues. Christ is increasingly expressing Himself through your life. Christ began our salvation by living for us.*
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation is the life of Christ.

Christ *died* for us.

- Eph. 1:7 – His death was the penalty for our sin, and thus redeemed us from the curse
- Now we, who were formerly enemies of God, are reconciled to Him by Christ's death. (Rom. 5:8-11)
- Formerly we were terrified by God; now we are loved by Him.
- Although we tend to focus on the death of Christ to the exclusion of His other works for us, nevertheless we can never fully appreciate the significance of His death to pay for our sins. The

Lord's Supper is vital in our growing appreciation of Christ's death for us.

- The of salvation is the death of Christ.

Christ *rose* for us.

- 1 Cor. 15:17-22 – His resurrection secures our resurrection  
Resurrection is essential. A bodyless soul is not human. Without the resurrection we would be trapped in an eternal cosmic limbo – free from sin, but imprisoned in an eternal holding area.
- Thus we no longer fear death (1 Cor. 15:51-58)  
Death is still painful, but the pain is alleviated by the hope of greater joy beyond the grave. Mature Christians through the ages have not sought death, but have welcomed it when it came. Your final act of worship in this life is to leave well – a "good death".
- The hope of salvation is the resurrection of Christ.

Christ *ascended* for us.

- Heb. 7:25-8:2; 10:11-14 – Jesus prays for us and rules for us.  
He is the eternal priest. The Father will not deny His Son's requests. God *does* answer Jesus' prayers for your growth in Christ.  
He is the eternal king. Jesus has all authority. He ensures that only good happens to you. He directs the course of history to bless His people and to build His Kingdom.
- Thus we no longer fear sin.  
Sin no longer has power over us. (Rom. 6:17-18, 22)
- Thus we no longer fear our enemies.  
*All* authority belongs to Jesus. Our enemies are controlled by Jesus. Not even terrorists can hurt us without the permission of Jesus – and He only allows things to happen which are for our ultimate good.
- The confidence of our salvation is the present ministry of Christ.

Christ *came* to us.

- John 14:18 – The Holy Spirit is Christ living with us (vv. 16-18)
- Previously we were orphans, but now we have a heavenly Father who lives with us (v. 23)
- Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension would have been useless without Pentecost.  
The significance of Pentecost is not the gifts of the Spirit. It is the Spirit Himself. When the Spirit came, Christ came. He is the great gift. We have other gifts because we have Christ. The giver is far more important than the gifts.
- Christ lives with us forever (Mt. 28:20)
- We will live with Christ forever (Rev. 21:3-4)
- The comfort of our salvation is the presence of Christ.

The more you know Christ, the more you seek to know Him.

The more you know Christ, the more you serve His people.

The more you know Christ, the more you tell others about Him.

The more you know Christ, the more you think like Christ.

The key to accomplishing RUF goals, or any success in ministry, is not better plans, better execution, better funding, or better people. The key is Christ, and Christ alone!

2 Cor. 2:14-15 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

The answer to the problems in the church and the world is not better entertainment, or better schools, or better government, or better families, or better ethics, or better theology. The answer is Christ! These specific problems need attention, but as we preach Christ and love Christ, these problems will start to improve. In RUF as we focus on Christ, service and evangelism and a biblical worldview will increase naturally.

Let's begin this week by making Jesus the focus of our week and the center of all we do.