



Lord, It's All About You: Life As It Revolves Around the SON

Philippians 1:21-30

“For me, to live is Christ...”

Philippians 1:21a (CSB)

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This year's theme, “Lord, it's all about You,” challenges us to live daily with an awareness and conviction that all we are and do should revolve around and reflect the Son of God. Personal, pointed and powerful, this is the driving passion, defining perspective and daring proclamation of the Christ-centered life. It yields the kind of audacious witness of which our world is in desperate need. Such a distilled resolution guides and governs the disciple's actions and reactions as the world turns on its axis of self-centeredness.

We live in a very pivotal, painful and perilous time. As in many countries around the world, within our nation, many individuals, families and communities are facing hardship and uncertainty. The Church of Jesus Christ has an opportunity, in the midst of this darkness, to shine the light of hope, help and healing before those who are afraid, anxious and angry. For, we have witnessed in our God One Who is all-powerful and Who is ever-present with and for His people. He keeps proving Himself to be more than enough, no matter how dire or daunting our circumstances.

Recently, we celebrated the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Many celebrate him solely for the civil rights impact he made. However, that impact was an outgrowth of his primary assignment as a disciple of Christ and as preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The light of his life had global relevance and reach. Despite the effort to silence him, his voice is still heard decades later. Similarly, the effort was made to silence Paul. But, “For me, to live is Christ,” still reverberates centuries later. Again, forces tried to silence Jesus, but today, His message and ministry still offer transformation to and through ordinary people like you and me.

Let's consider three important messages this theme communicates when lived out through us. First, it declares the **PRIMACY OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES**. Primacy means “highest in rank.” Therefore, though many important relationships, resources and recognitions fill our lives, none ranks above Christ. Neither our wealth, work, power, position, achievements, nor accomplishments should surpass the important place that Christ holds in our lives.

It also speaks to the Primacy of His **WILL** for our lives. In Philippians 4:23, Paul expresses his preference to be in heaven with Christ. However, he is surrendered to God's will that he remain. Dr. King, in his final speech, said that he'd like to live a long life (on earth), but he was yielded to God's

will. The life that says, “Lord, it’s all about You,” essentially says, like Jesus, “not My will, but Yours be done.”

Furthermore, nothing is more important than the Primacy of His **WORK in** our lives. Once Jesus Christ comes into our lives, He begins a new work in us. Even though we are unfinished now, we are confident that He will carry it on to completion (v. 6). As the songwriter penned, “When God gets through with me, I will come forth as pure gold.”

Thirdly, it expresses the Primacy of God’s **WORD over** our lives. There are many people who speak over our lives. No word, however, should carry greater importance or influence than the Word of God. In verse 16, Paul writes that there’s a Word over my life. “...I am appointed for the defense of the gospel” (see Acts 9). Beloved, when God has spoken a clear Word to you, you will never find contentment until you say, “Yes,” to His will, His Word, and His way!

“Lord it’s all about You,” conveys another message, the **PROMOTION OF CHRIST WITH MY LIFE**. This means that my life has one overarching purpose – to promote Jesus in all that I do. We Promote Christ through our Partnership. The early church was known for its partnership (Acts 2), despite the many languages, cultures and nationalities represented. It pooled its resources such that every need was met within the congregation and community. Today, we, too, are diverse. Consequently, we must be intentional in demonstrating our unity in Christ through our partnership in Christ (vv. 3, 4). While they sold property and gave 100% of their proceeds to the Lord, we encourage that each member commit to the Lord’s tithe, 10%. The tithe promises an overabundant return from God (Mal. 3:10). Imagine if every congregation received an overabundance of resources. Then there would be no lack in the congregations or community. While needs are being satisfied, God is being glorified, and our faith is being fortified.

We Promote Christ through our Perseverance. The decision to live for Christ invites trouble. Our ability to persevere through such trouble is one of the ways we promote Christ. As our assurance outshines and overshadows our anxiety, others are inspired to “Hold Fast to Dreams” while holding “to God’s Unchanging Hand.” Dr. King’s imprisonment did not silence or slow the movement. Rather, it fanned it. Likewise, pressure on the “For-me,-to-live-is-Christ” Church only squeezes out this compelling message: “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round!” For, “if God be for us, who can be against us.” (Rom. 8:31)

Lastly, our theme speaks to the **PERSONIFICATION OF CHRIST THROUGH OUR LIVES**. What the world needs is to see Jesus in us. One of the great impediments for the advancement of the Gospel is that too many people who claim to be Christians live lives that are in absolute contradiction to what He represents. They don’t know how to forgive like He forgave. They don’t know how to speak peace like He spoke peace. He lived a righteous life (v. 11). When you are shacking up on Monday and in the choir on Sunday, that sends a different message to the world. When you claim to be drunk in the Spirit on Sunday, but drunk with Budweiser on Monday, it’s a contradiction of what we claim about our walk with Christ. No, we need to live a life with the aid of the Holy Spirit that lines up with and personifies the Christ that we claim to serve.

People need to see the Personification of His Life in us. Jesus Christ has a resurrected life. All of us go through valleys, sickness, hardship and loss. The world needs to see that we handle it differently, not

because we don't hurt, but because we have a Healer; not because we don't need, but because we have a Supplier. The world needs to see the hope that is ours in the resurrected life of our Savior.

There is also the Personification of His Loyalty. As Jesus was loyal to His Father, we must prove loyal to Him. Notice, the text says "...live your life worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (v. 27). We should be loyal to the new creature we are in Christ. We must be determined and disciplined not to return to our old ways. Strive to be loyal to the change and the Change Agent in me.

Finally, we are to manifest the Personification of His Love (vv. 8, 9). What the world needs now is Love. The world doesn't need brotherly love. It won't last. It breaks down after a while. That kind of love is unsteady. Love based on ethnicity doesn't last either. The love of Christ is a love unlike any love you can find in this world. It binds us together with a cord that cannot be broken. So we need to personify Love, because that's what Jesus did. He personified light, liberty and love, so much so that Paul says that the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Faith is critical, and it has brought us through. But love is supreme. God is love (1 John 4:8), so it's our job to personify God by demonstrating His love. We must demonstrate love to the hopeless, love to the homeless, love to the destitute, the offender, the one who is asking for forgiveness, the one *not* asking for forgiveness, the abuser, the adulterer – because Jesus offered love to the thief on the cross, to the woman caught in adultery, to the woman begging scraps under the table. Jesus lived a life of love. And we must, too. For when we live lives of love, then surely we are living lives that reflect Christ. Surely, then, we are living lives that are all about Him.