

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Christ-Centered” from the “Core Values” sermon series

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- As we begin this new series on “Core Values”, we start with the Book of Colossians 3:1-17. In this section, Paul explains what Christians should be doing as they live a “new life” in Christ.
- In vv. 1-2, we read that since we “...have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven...” In other words, do not dwell on this life but instead focus on “the things of heaven” and on Christ.
- In vv. 3-4, Paul explains why we should focus on the things of heaven: (1) Christ is our new source of life and will sustain us; (2) our life is hidden in Christ, and with the advent of His Second Coming, we will “share in all His glory.”
- In vv. 5-11, Paul teaches us to “put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you.” These include things like sexual immorality, impurity, lust and evil desires, and greed. Failure to do so brings forth “the anger (or wrath) of God” and were a part of our previous life of sinful desire and behavior.
- In vv. 12-17, Paul offers a way to help us live as God’s people:
 - (1) through a compassionate and forgiving attitude in life (vv. 12-13)
 - (2) by love being in our guide in all things (v. 14)
 - (3) letting the peace of Christ rule over our hearts and showing gratitude (v. 15)
 - (4) Living by God’s Word and the message of Christ (v. 16); and (5) live as a representative of Jesus Christ.
- The NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible explains (regarding v. 14): “Although many ancient thinkers, especially among Jewish teachers, regarded love as an important virtue, Christians were the only movement where it was the chief virtue (following Jesus’ teaching, MK 12:30-31). Many thinkers urged unity, i.e., harmony with one another; in Greek this may refer to the believers.”

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- This is the start of a new series called “Core Values”, studying the essential beliefs, and highest priorities, that have a way of driving our behavior and ethical practice. They are the “guard rails” that keep us centered and focused on our primary mission and vision.
- BUMC Core Values: (1) Christ-centered; (2) Ministry of all believers; (3) Teachable; (4) Risk-takers; (5) Centrality of Grace/Primacy of Scripture.
- Let’s take the first core value: we are a *Christ-centered* people. According to today’s Scripture, it does not begin with conduct but with *mindset* (Col. 3:1-2).
- In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), it’s not primarily about behavior but about motive. What we think in our heart is what we are. A Christ-centered person is a Christ- *minded* person! This is why spiritual formation, worship and Bible studies/groups are so important (See Romans 12:2).
- Core values come out of *core-thinking*. Today’s reading presents to us two distinct mindsets: (1) Earthly or the “vices” (3:5, 8); and (2) Spiritual or the *core values*.
 - 3 Practices for Crossing the Difference Divide by Jim Henderson and Jim Hancock: (1) Be unusually interested in *others*; (2) Stay in the room with *difference*; (3) Stop comparing your *best* to others’ *worst*.
- If we can learn to *think* like Jesus, we can learn to *live* like Jesus and *love* like Jesus. This is living our Core Values!
- “Christians are the most united body on the face of the earth-if only we knew it. Ironically, the people who are most united at the center are most divided at the circumference.” – *E. Stanley Jones*
 - When we allow the “circumference” to become the “center”, all the usual distinctions begin to surface. “Everyone who belongs to Christ, belongs to everyone who belongs in Christ.” -*E. Stanley Jones*
- God does not have a preferred denomination! The expressions of faith may be varied and diverse but centered in one reality...Jesus is *LORD!*
- John Wesley constantly searched for the core that held all Christians together. He preached a sermon in 1750 and stated within it, “Love me not in word only but in deed and truth so far as in conscience you can...join with me in the work of God.”
- Christ is our center and love is the ligament that holds the bones together.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- In what ways can we allow Christ to dwell within us and shape us into what we should be?
- In verse 3 we read “...your real life is hidden with Christ in God.” What does this mean?
- Think of ways that you can commit yourself to living in a new nature given by Christ. How can you rid yourself of evil practices and immorality?
- Read verse 10. How can we “learn to know our Creator and become like Him”?
- What changes would you make in your life in order to honor Christ?
- What is the significance of the two mindsets (earthly and spiritual)?
- How can we become more *Christ-minded* in our everyday lives?

