

C.H.U.R.C.H. *It's Who We Are...* Christ-Centered (To Know Him & To Make Him Known) **Philippians 3:3-15**

All the Easter decorations are still up... because living in response to Jesus Christ's resurrection is just as important today as it was last Sunday!

Jesus is alive... Jesus is on mission... The Church is called to "seek Him first" ... We, His followers, are called to represent His Kingdom & reign in this world...

How are we doing with keeping the risen Christ central in all of our living?

The church is not a building, or service time, it is the people of God gathered together... worshipping & serving Him... living out of, & sharing, His gospel!

The Apostle Paul gave everything he had to the work of Christ & the Church! His words... his hands... his time... his life... He was Christ-centered!

He counted everything in this world as "rubbish" in comparison to knowing Christ Jesus as Lord... & making Him known thru the work of the Church.

This was Paul's heartbeat, not because he was a pastor or missionary... but because Jesus was His Savior, Lord, & King... & the Church is Christ's bride!

I wonder what difference it would make for us to think, & live, a little more like the Apostle Paul... to adjust our lives to the mission of Christ & His Church?

- For Paul, it was not about making a name for himself... He had many reasons for earthly boasting, but he was no longer self-focused! **Vs. 4-6**
- For Paul, it was not about selfish gain... He was willing to lose everything for the sake of Christ! **Vs. 7 "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss..."**
- For Paul it was not about pursuing what would make life easy... He actually did suffer the loss of all things... & he counted those things as rubbish... **Vs. 8**
- For Paul it was not about being justified under the law... He tried it & discovered that it was impossible, & it gained him nothing! **Vs. 9**
- For Paul, it was not about checking a religious box... **Vs. 12 "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect..." "Brothers, I do not**

consider that I have made it my own... Paul was seeking something more!

If we are in "the Church" for any of these reasons we will never be satisfied... we will never choose to stay... we will never give ourselves fully to it's mission!

- For Paul, knowing Christ & being known by Him was everything to him!
Vs. 10 "That I may know Him..."
- For Paul, the surpassing worth of Christ was his greatest desire...
Vs. 8 "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord."
- For Paul, experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection was his aim...
Vs. 10 "That I may know Him and the power of his resurrection..."
- For Paul, sharing in the sufferings of Christ, for an eternal cause, was his joy... "*sharing His sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible attain the resurrection from the dead.*" **Vs. 10-11**
- For Paul, the upward call of God was found in Christ Jesus, and is central to the life and pursuit of the Church! **Vs. 14 - "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus!"**

Why are we here? What are we pursuing? What will it cost us? What do we gain? Is it worth it? For Paul it cost him everything... & yet he gained so much more! For Paul Christ was paramount! Is he the same for us?

We must not let Easter come & go & be unmoved/unchanged by it! Christ is either our everything, or we have made idols out of the things of this world!

"Everything" song by Tim Hughes...

The "Church" is only truly the Church, when Christ is at the center of everything we pursue, everything we offer, and everything we represent!

Is Christ at the center of your everything? To know Him & be known by Him... to live in response to His resurrection... to reflect Him in all of life... to proclaim Him & His gospel to the world...

What needs to change to about you/me/us for us to be more Christ-Centered?

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