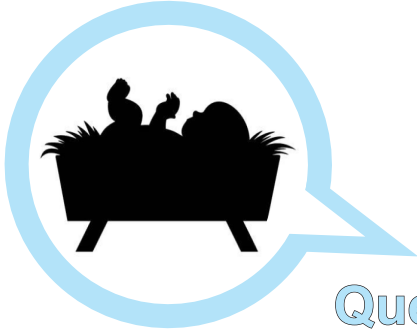


The Christmas Child

Part 4: What Does He Want From Me?

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2019.12.22



Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Discussion & Application

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for *all* his people. But transformation *does not* happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. I Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “**Talking Points, Walking Points**” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “*Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time*”, are perfect for private reflection.

- Tell us about when Jesus became "more than just a baby in a manger" in your thinking.
- Read Colossians 1:13-14. How did being "in the domain of darkness" manifest in your life?
- Tell us about when God rescued you. How did you know you were "in the kingdom of his Son"?
- Which have you been more fruitful at in the past: witnessing to non-believers or building-up believers in their faith? **Why** do you think that is?
- What motivates you more—compassion for others or obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Read Colossians 1:18. Do you think that Christ occupies "first place in everything" for you? Why or why not? If not, what is his chief rival for your affections?

What would your calendar and your checkbook say has "first place" in your life?

What changes do you need to make?

Application-Challenge

- Give Christ **first** place in everything. It's his **rightful** place—and he **will** occupy it. Give it to him **willingly, joyfully**.
- **Test** yourself—**are you** giving Christ first place?
 - Do you share your faith?
 - Do you help other believers grow?
 - Do you suffer for your identification with Christ?



Sermon Summary Key Passage: Colossians 1:18

Many of us grew up in families which brought out nativity scenes at Christmastime. They feature angels, shepherds, wisemen, animals, Mary, Joseph, and, of course, the baby Jesus. We always view the nativity scene from ground level, from our point-of-view. Instead, during this series we've been asking how this scene looks from above, from heaven's point-of-view. Paul's letter to the church of Colossae gives us that perspective. That first Christmas day, virtually nobody grasped that that defenseless little baby—placed in a feeding trough rather than a proper cradle—was there to rescue and redeem us from our sins (1:13-14). Heaven's perspective is that we all need rescue from Satan's dark domain. We need to be redeemed—literally “bought out of the slave market” of sin. God sent that baby to die in our place, thus purchasing forgiveness of our sins. Christ...made peace through the blood of His cross (1:20). Love is the only explanation for why God gave us the gift of freedom and forgiveness at the cost of his own Son's life (John 3:16). God did this for us while we still were his enemies (Romans 5:10). Have you bought any gifts this year for your avowed enemies? Anyone done that? I didn't think so. But that's what God did. And, “Who is the Christmas Child?” We see a little baby in a manger. Heaven saw something else: God himself, Jesus, the third person of the Trinity, entering his own creation. Co-equal with the Father and the Spirit (1:15-17). Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation. Through him God created everything... He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

Today, we're asking, “What does he want from us?” Colossians 1:18 is an “umbrella” statement: Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he will come to have first place in everything. Jesus was—is—Lord of all! He is head of the church. Your body does what your head tells it to do—doesn't it? Well, the church is Jesus' body, and Jesus is our head. Who calls the shots in your life? If it's not Jesus, then you're a two-headed monster—because Jesus is our rightful head. Christ is our head; he is supreme over us. Christ's supremacy is for a purpose: so that he will come to have first place in everything. Jesus gets first place in everything. Forever. Christ's supremacy changed Paul in three concrete ways:

[1] Paul shared the gospel with the lost. Colossians 1:25-27 says: “God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming the gospel...God wants you to know the mysterious and glorious riches that he has for you. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.” God has “glorious riches” for us. Christ himself takes up residence in us, and that guarantees us that we'll share in his glory.

[2] Paul helped believers grow in their faith. Colossians 1:28-29 says: “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.” We proclaim him. At the most basic level, this means that we proclaim Jesus as the only Savior of the world, but that's just the starting point, for “In Christ lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (2:3). That baby in the manger—we all underestimate him! Unbelievers scoff at him. But heaven's perspective on Jesus is that “all treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are wrapped up in a full understanding of who Christ really is. Our message is Christ himself. In order to help people grow and mature, we proclaim Christ. We “admonish”—which means to “warn”—we warn everyone. We warn them about thinking that Jesus is anything less than the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Never think that you need more than Jesus. “Every man” who is taught Christ ends up “complete”.

[3] Paul suffered to accomplish the above. (v. 24) Paul “labored and strived” to get this message out. He expended himself. Paul labored in God's mighty power. The Christian life is not passive—we labor—but it is supernatural through and through. Paul suffered to share the gospel with the lost and to help believers grow in their faith (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Paul not only suffered in order to spread Christianity, he also suffered because of his identification with Christ. He was persecuted everywhere he went. So will we, if we give Christ first place (2 Timothy 3:12). This world is a battleground between God's kingdom and Satan's; there is no neutrality.

When we realize and bow to Christ's supremacy, we give Christ first place. Does Christ have first place in your life? Or, is he just one priority among many for you? If you're a believer, Jesus is your head, he is the weightiest, he is supreme. Give him his rightful place in your life.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.
Throughout this week, let's learn more about that Christmas Child...

Monday— Study Colossians 1:13-14

Tuesday— Study Colossians 1:15-17

Wednesday— Study Colossians 1:18 & 2:2-3

Thursday— Study Colossians 1:25-27

Friday— Study Colossians 1:28-29

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshiping your risen Lord with your church family (January 5, 2020),*** study 1 Timothy 4:7-10.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]