


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2023.10.15



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

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 Reflection or Discussion

- Pastor Doug paraphrased J.I. Packer's famous quote from his book, **Knowing God**, saying,
"We are pygmy Christians because we have a pygmy Christ."
But how can a person know if he has a "pygmy Christ"? How can **you** evaluate your view of Christ?

(Have you ever read Packer's classic book, **Knowing God**—now in its fiftieth year of publication?)

Pastor Doug said: "The clearer our vision of Christ, the more convinced we become that he is worthy of our trust, our love, our obedience, and our worship." How has your vision of Christ become clearer lately?

- What examples do you know of Jesus portrayed in the media or popular culture as "Jesus the...
...psychologist? ...the moralist?
...philosopher? ...philanthropist?
...socialist? (or, ...capitalist?) ...BFF?

In what ways are these ideas accurate? false? incomplete? dangerous?

- Read Colossians 1:15-18. What phrases describe Jesus? Which stands out to you the most? How do these phrases compare to the media portrayals listed in the previous question?
- Think of one area of spiritual immaturity that you have observed in yourself—be it impatience, selfishness, judgmentalism, worry, etc. In what way might a clearer vision of Christ help move you toward greater spiritual maturity? What truth about Christ is most relevant to growth in this area?
- Think of those you have opportunity to influence: your children; co-workers; friends, neighbors. How have you fulfilled your primary role—pointing them to Christ?

For what lesser goals—such as "getting them to be nicer", "protecting yourself from getting hurt", "avoiding conflict", etc.—are you tempted to settle?

- How faithful are you at reading your Bible so that you can gain a clearer vision of Jesus?

Sermon Summary

Today’s message is the third in a series that I have entitled, “Lopsided Christianity.” In the first message we talked about Christ’s call to freedom—freedom from guilt, condemnation, bondage to our own self-centeredness, and the fear of death. Jesus Christ is the great liberator. In Part Two we talked about Christ’s Call to Balance. We have a tendency to hold onto one particular spiritual truth but to reject the equally Biblical truth that complements it. Today we look at “Christ’s Call to Maturity” (Colossians 1:28).

First, what is Christian maturity? It is a maturity that is “in Christ.” A Christian is not just someone who goes to church or who has been baptized or who reads the Bible. A Christian is “in Christ”, as a grape vine is united with its branches, or as our organs and limbs are united with the body. To be “in Christ” is to be organically united to Christ. Therefore a mature Christian is someone who has a grown-up relationship with Christ. A relationship in which we trust him, love him, worship him and obey him.

Second, how do Christians become mature? Well, if Christian maturity is “maturity in relation to Christ”, then the clearer our vision of Christ, the more convinced we become that he is worthy of our trust, our love, our obedience, and our worship. To paraphrase J.I. Packer, “We are pygmy Christians because we have a pygmy Christ.” Many of us believe in a caricature of the authentic Jesus. Jesus the psychologist. Jesus the philosopher. Jesus the socialist. Jesus the capitalist. Jesus the moralist. Jesus the philanthropist, and we can go on and on. If we want to grow into maturity in Christ, we need to see Jesus as he really is (Colossians 1:15–18).

The authentic Jesus is Lord of the Universe and Lord of the Church. We need to do away with our petty, puny, pygmy Jesuses. It is no wonder that we are so spiritually immature and that our commitment to and worship of him is so paltry and inadequate. Knowledge of Scripture is knowledge of Christ. Both the Old and New Testaments show us the real Jesus (John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27).

Type	Antitype	Scripture
Melchizakek	Christ’s perpetual priesthood	Hebrews 7:3, 15-17
Aaron	Christ’s priestly ministry	Hebrews 5:4-5
Passover Feast/Sacrificial System	Christ our sacrifice	1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9:19-28
Feast of First-Fruits	Christ’s resurrection and pledge of ours	1 Corinthians 15:20-23
Tabernacle Curtain	Christ, the believer’s access to God	Hebrews 8:5; 9:23-24
Sabbath	The Christian’s spiritual rest	Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 4:3, 9-11

So, finally, who can grow into Christian maturity? Paul points out that Christian maturity is for everyone (v. 28). There was a heresy in Colossae at the time of Paul called “Gnosticism”. Gnosticism taught that there were two classes of Christians. (1) common, everyday Christians who are united with Christ by faith, and (2) elite, super-Christians who had access into the deeper mysteries of the faith. The first class of Christian was destined to forever live on a lower spiritual plane than the second class who possessed this secret gnosis or knowledge. Paul was horrified by this Christian elitism that had divided the Colossian church into two groups—the in-the-know “spiritual heavyweights” and the out-of-touch, “spiritual lightweights” and he set himself resolutely against this heresy. Paul says that he admonishes “everyone” and teaches “everyone,” in order that he present “everyone” as mature Christians. Christian maturity is for everyone, not just some subset of the church. God wants each one of us to have a mature, grown up relationship with Christ. All of us can attain it.

How then do we respond to this call to Christian maturity? On the one hand we should be like the Colossian Christians, learning from Paul that we might grow into Christian maturity. But many of you assume various leadership roles here at TCC— you lead a community group or help give leadership to some ministry, and so on the other hand, we should imitate the Apostle Paul in his pastoral responsibilities. We too can labor to present those whom God has placed under our spiritual care mature in Christ. We long to see them love Christ, trust Christ, obey Christ and worship Christ just as we do (v. 29).

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Monday read *Ephesians 3:14-19*

Here Paul is praying for his dear Christian friends. In his prayer, what was of critical importance to him? Is this the critical thing you pray for yourself and for others?

Tuesday read *1 John 3:1-10*

Make a list of all John says is true of believers. Make another list of all he says is true of unbelievers. What is so amazing about being a child of God?

Wednesday read *Colossians 1:1-14*

Paul pours out his longings for the Colossian church. What are they?

Do you long for these for yourself? For those around you?

What do these verses point out that God has done for you?

Thursday read *Colossians 1:15-23*

List all the truths about Jesus in these verses. What was true of you before you became a believer in Christ? What has God done for you through Jesus?

Friday read *Colossians 1:24-29*

What is Paul's driving desire? How have you benefited from Paul's drive?

How could others benefit if you grow more mature as a believer?

Saturday read *1 Peter 2:19-23*

What do you observe about the personality and character of Jesus in this passage?

Christ didn't stand up for himself—is this an example of a “pygmy Christ”? Explain.

Is this the sort of example we Christians like to follow?

Does this make us “pygmy Christians”? Why or why not?