

CITY CHURCH-EASTSIDE WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE

February 14, 2010

The Lexington Hotel
Chicago, IL.



Series: A New Allegiance Union with Christ

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”...

“The key to meaningful purpose in life is developing a thoughtful personal vision statement!” or so the personal management gurus tell us. Nothing against life coaching or management tools, but the reality is that you can have a robust vision for life and still feel empty. It’s not enough to simply have a vision for life, but this vision must correlate to the larger purposes for which we are made. Freedom, joy, meaning, and purpose, the book of Colossians would argue, are found only when our vision for life is centrally located in Christ.

Just as L.A. shapes the entertainment industry and New York the banking industry, whatever we make central in our heart will shape our whole life. In

all of life we know this to be true, the center of a thing shapes the thing itself. And in this passage in particular, Paul says the purpose of our lives is to know Christ so that we’re not shaped in ways that misalign us with reality. We know from experience that so many “mysteries” in life leave us feeling disappointed and empty (The Geraldo/ Capone example picture above as a comical example). Yet, this passage reveals to us that the mystery of Christ transforms us and fills us with great spiritual treasures. The benefits of Christ sound great in theory, but the reality comes at a cost. The price we pay is giving up our lordship to embrace his. Many regard Jesus in high esteem as a great teacher or activist, but to do so requires one to believe that Jesus was either a liar or lunatic and if that’s true why hold him in esteem? This is because Jesus claim to be so much more, namely

God himself. If this is true Jesus is the lord of lords and calls us to align our life with his person and will. It is in this way that we begin to experience our full purpose in life. Christian or not, we struggle to live in this alignment because of competing narratives, something Paul describes in the Colossian context as “fine sounding arguments.” The question that Paul places before us then is what competing narratives do we embrace and how do they shape us? The narratives of wealth, control, and sexual freedom for example promise us liberation and meaning but fail to deliver. In so many ways such narratives look like the real thing, but when compared to Christ they are deemed fraudulent. The narrative of Christ promises to re-shape us as we give ourselves wholly to Him and in the end the reward is great. We receive the great treasures of glory, hope, and freedom.

Sermon Application

The questions and thoughts below can be used for further reflection this week. Seek to use a journal or discuss with a friend. Most of all use this to consider how the gospel of Christ can be transforming. Enjoy!

Application Questions: Colossians 1:24-2:5

1. Our society has many “competing narratives” that shape our life. Describe the substance and contours of these narratives. How do they shape us personally?
2. Consider an example in your own life where you trusted in one of our cultures “great mysteries” only to be left disappointed or empty. What did this experience reveal to you?
3. C.S. Lewis famously stated that Christ must be one of three things; liar, lunatic, or lord. Discuss each of these options and why Jesus can’t be merely a good teacher or guru.
4. In our broader culture it is widely believed that autonomy leads to freedom. Discuss the truthfulness of this notion. How does alignment with Christ lead to freedom?
5. Discuss how the following competing narratives affect our life. Describe the promises these narratives make and the reality of what they deliver:
 - The quest for wealth.
 - The desire for control over chaos.
 - The pursuit of a liberated sexuality.
6. It is inevitable that we will be shaped by various narratives in the course of life. Share with your group or trusted friend how the narrative of Christ has been shaping you lately. What has been painful and what has been joyous?

Christ the Mystery

One of the great treasures we have in Christ is the practice of meditative listening. The sermon this week pointed out the thousands of messages that we see and hear every week that attempt to shape us in some fashion. We are encouraged to buy that certain vehicle or utilize the only realtor in town that is truly moving houses in our current market. We hear so much from so many narratives, but often we hear very little from God himself! With this in mind spending some time in meditative listening promises to prove powerfully shaping such that we receive the treasures of Christ versus giving someone else our treasure! This week take a 15-30 minute block of time and find a quiet place. Use the Scripture text and/or our offertory song from this week as a launch point. After reading these texts a few times ask God to speak to you. As you sit and listen you’ll find a rich reward. At the end of your time record what you heard and learned. Check it against God’s word and with trusted followers of Christ. Blessings!

Christ the Mystery by Troy Bronsink

Christ the mystery
Rich and glorious
Religious and irreligious
Christ the mystery

Christ the mystery
Dwelling in you and me
As we share in God’s glory
Christ the Mystery

Christ the mystery
Weaving everything
into loves tapestry
Christ the mystery

Christ the mystery
Set your mind to rest
Let go of fine arguments
Let your minds just rest, in
Christ the mystery

“An infinite God can give all of Himself to each of His children. He does not distribute Himself that each may have a part, but to each one He gives all of Himself as fully as if there were no others.”

A.W. Tozer

