

One Thing: The Christ-Centered Heart

I. The Lord of Our Lives

Romans 10:9 ...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

1. When we accept Jesus as Lord (kyrios), we are confessing that He is “He to whom a person or things belong, about which He has the power of deciding.” We confess that Jesus, the One who died for us in love, is Genesis 1. He is the One who made us for Himself and He has the right to decide who we are. Our confession is “I belong to Jesus.”

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

2. Because of this, we are now a people of a singular focus: giving God what He wants.
Philippians 3:12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*
3. That makes the question of what God wants central to our lives, and the answer is very simply He wants us.
Psalms 45:10 *Listen, O daughter; Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; 11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him*
4. Intimacy with God is at the very center of who we were created to be, from Eden to eternity.
5. It is God's expressed desire for us in the Great High Priestly Prayer of Jesus.
John 17:24 *“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me... 26 ...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*
6. It is God's expressed priority for us in the first and greatest commandment.
Matthew 22:37 *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment.”*

II. The Source of Our Identity

Ephesians 3:14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory... 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge...*

1. Lordship is deeply connected with the ability to name and give identity. God named Adam, Adam named the animals. Jesus in His Lordship gives Peter a new identity.
Matthew 16:15 *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

2. To all those who believe in His Lordship, He extends the same offer of a new identity. We are called in Christ not to a list of activities, but to an identity that pervades all that we are and do. **John 1:12** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

3. While Scripture uses a whole spectrum of descriptions to give us a picture of what that identity is, it is always centered around two realities: intimacy and friendship. **John 15:9** *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love... 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

4. These two realities are captured once and for all in our final identity – we are a Bride being made ready. **Revelation 19:6** *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.* **Ephesians 5:25** *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

5. The most important thing we have in this life is what carries over to eternity, and eternity for us is about a Man to whom we will be joined forever.

6. This identity highlights to us the importance of a journey we are otherwise prone to neglect – the inward journey of our hearts in growing in love and friendship with our Beloved. **Proverbs 4:23** *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

7. It is an identity we carry everywhere, charged by time alone with our Beloved, but an unchanging identity that goes wherever we go.

III. The Fuel of Our Hearts

Psalm 27:4 *One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

1. Beholding and inquiring is what overflows into a life of worship and prayer which in turn overflows into witness and service. God knows that the more we see, the more we will love. **John 17:26** *And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

2. In all of our doing, there is one thing needed – to hear Him. **Luke 10:39** *...Mary... sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving... 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”*

3. This is an intentional posturing of our hearts, and an ongoing reality throughout our day. Paul saw everything, even his sufferings, as an opportunity to know Christ.

***Philippians 3:8** Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ... 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...*

IV. The Object of Our Gaze

***John 17:26** And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

1. Jesus stands as the great answer to our heart's search – our means of entry into beholding God.
***John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*
2. He, alongside all of Scripture, testifies that God longs to make Himself known.
***Hebrews 1:1** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...*
3. His life provides our entry into that knowledge in a way that is tangible and real to our hearts – when God walked the earth.
***John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*
4. What causes our hearts to grow in love is not in the obtaining of spiritual truths pointed to by Jesus, but in encountering our Lord in real flesh and blood as He was and is.
***Luke 24:32** And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"*
5. When our hearts can make the connection between the eternal Jesus of Genesis 1 and Revelation 5, and the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Jesus who dwells in us, truth becomes near at hand.
***John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*
***John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*
6. We are empowered by Christ in us to behold God with us in the gospels. We are able, through Christ, to not only behold, but inquire – the One who wrote the Scriptures and the One who fills the gospel pages dwells in us.
7. Having seen Jesus, we have seen timeless truth about the Uncreated God.
***John 14:9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*
8. Having encountered truth about God, it is real and near to us personally because He dwells in us.