

## The Christ-Centered Life (Christ-expressed—Part 2)

The Christ-Centered life is a cooperative union - we are to be employed daily in trusting Jesus Christ the Lord, choosing Him and His option for each contingency. In other words, grace is not "unemployment income." God is not working instead of us, but in and through our active cooperation - our response to His initiative. It is "by grace... through faith..." that we walk (put into motion) His good works.

Deciding is a spiritual action. It is an active and living surrender to the Life within us. It calls for dependent receiving (I Cor 4:7) and personal embodying. We are called to be living demonstrations of our new reality in Christ, to bring into actual experience what is already ours in actual possession. If believing and receiving is about "possessing our possessions", then embodying is about expressing these very possessions.

The nature of union is to bring forth Life (II Cor 4:10). The husband and wife join in a loving union and bring forth a child. The vine and the branch join together in an organic union and bring forth fruit. The Christ centered life becomes a Christ expressed life through a oneness of wills - "I am willing for You to be the Willer" (Jo 7:17). As willing expressers we are drawn into the intent and activity of God - and He lives His character through us. His Life is made manifest through us.

His is a life of personal touch (I Jo 1:1). Think incarnation! The Christ expressed Life is nothing if it is not personal. Through personal touch we mediate the sacred (I Pet 1:16). The Life of Christ comes to life in us and reaches out to others. His is a life of servant love (Mk 10:45). God loves to give Himself away. The life we freely received is not to be put on parade or used for personal success. It is to be poured out, emptied - it pays the price so others may be blessed (Phil 2:7; Heb 12:2). His is a life of shared community (I Cor 12:13). To be brought into Christ is to be brought into a community of shared Life. We share life with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We share life with all in fellowship with Him. There is no "church-less Christ." No giftedness for self interested reasons - but for the "common good" (I Cor 12:7). His is also a life of holy witness (Acts 1:8). He reveals God "for" the world "to" the world! As His Body, we are instruments of redemption - interceding, meeting needs, filling in gaps - to any and all along the way.

This is our calling, our vocation, our role in God's kingdom - a Christ expressed life for any occasion. This is "working out our salvation"... anytime, anywhere, any place He chooses!

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 GREETINGS 

With tears in his eyes but with a smile on his face, a pastor I'd been meeting with for about three months said, "If there's anyway to thank you and the people who make this possible, could you pass my gratitude on to them? I feel like I can finally breathe again, that there is a God working in all this in ways I'm not sure I would have ever seen by myself."

So I am - I'm passing his gratefulness on to you! After a forced termination to make way for a "more contemporary" minister, a brother in his late fifties (with a wife and son at home) was simply dismissed by the powers that be. I know - there are two (if not three or four) sides to every story. Our role and opportunity with terminated ministers, frustrated ministers, overloaded ministers, succeeding-to-the-point-of-misery ministers, ministers in restoration... is to get God's story. The story of an always loving, ever sovereign, powerfully redemptive God - and, then, a passion for what is possible when He is with us.

Again, thank you. You are the nameless friends in Mark 2 who carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus. This brother is learning to get up, take up his "pallet", and by faith, walk in step with Jesus. He and I appreciate all you do to make that possible.

<b>February</b>	
5,19,26	CCF
9-13	Moab/Monticello, UT (859-393-4104)
14	Alachua Study
28	Ocala Study
<b>March</b>	
3-5	OIC Florida Retreat (386-418-0913)
25-29	Tyler, TX (903-561-9995)
<b>April</b>	
25-29	Baton Rouge, LA (225-769-8844)
<b>May</b>	
5-7	Waymart, PA (607-239-5006)

 2017 Florida Retreat 

**Tradition or Truth?**

March 3 - 5, 2017 - Alachua, Florida

**\$50 deposit Due February 5th, 2017**

- \$295 Couple - (meals and room)
- \$250 Single - 1 to room (meals and room)
- \$165 Single - 2 to room (meals and room)
- \$70 conference and meals (no room)

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