

30 June 2024

Colossians 1:9-23 & Revelation 2:1-7

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
Intro:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yesterday I had the absolute privilege to baptise my father.</li> <li>• He has been a believer for many years, but now in his old age, the Spirit of God has brought him to the understanding that this <b>step of obedience</b> is important.</li> <li>• What a glorious celebration to enter into a <b>covenant with Yahweh</b>.</li> <li>• And the best part of that is <b>we are adopted into the family of God</b>.</li> <li>• Just like Jesus when we are baptised and come up out of that water our Heavenly Father says to us: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matt 3:16-17)</li> <li>• This just reminded me again of the fact that <b>we are who God says we are</b>.</li> <li>• You are <u>not who other people say you are</u>,</li> <li>• You are <u>not even who you say you are!</u></li> <li>• <b>Only the one who created you has the right and the authority to say who you are!</b></li> <li>• And I want to remind you of what <u>Jesus says about you...</u></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>past</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>behaviours</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>failures</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>struggles</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>feelings</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by your <b>circumstances</b></li> <li>• you are not defined by the here today gone tomorrow false ideologies and water-down philosophies of <b>our current culture</b></li> <li>• <b>you are who God says you are!</b></li> <li>• it doesn't matter <u>what others say</u> about you</li> <li>• it doesn't even matter <u>what you have chosen to say</u> about yourself</li> <li>• there's <b>only one</b> who has the authority to say who you truly are...</li> <li>• the one <b>who gave life</b> to you</li> <li>• others aren't qualified!</li> <li>• your <b>circumstances</b> aren't powerful enough to Define you</li> <li>• your <b>story</b> may have hurt you, but it does not shape the totality of who you are</li> <li>• <b>YOU ARE WHO GOD SAYS YOU ARE...</b></li> <li>• and he says you are a <b>chosen race</b></li> <li>• you are a <b>royal priesthood</b></li> <li>• you are <b>redeemed, chosen, adopted</b> and <b>qualified</b>.</li> <li>• you are <u>not a mistake</u></li> <li>• you are <u>not an afterthought</u></li> <li>• you are <u>not a liability</u></li> <li>• you are a <b>temple of the Holy Spirit</b> of God</li> <li>• the value God has placed on you in Christ means <b>you are enough!</b></li> <li>• <b>GOD LOVES YOU!</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Why is it important to know what God says about us?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>He made you in His image</u> both <b>physically</b> and in your <b>personality</b> the strengths and the weaknesses all of it <u>is an expression of the creative genius of almighty God</u></li> <li>• when you <b>surrender your whole self fully and completely to Him</b>, He <u>takes up residence</u> in you he <u>makes you His dwelling place</u>, so you become <u>a temple of almighty God</u>.</li> <li>• <b>You are everything you need to be in Christ Jesus.</b></li> <li>• That is who you are!!!</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is Christianity?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• because <u>how we live our lives</u> is in <b>direct correlation</b> to <u>what we believe</u> about ourselves.</li> <li>• We need to <b>allow Jesus to reset our beliefs</b> so that we can live according to what He says about us.</li> <li>• We were <b>called into the Kingdom</b> and <b>given a new identity</b> and <b>purpose</b>.</li> <li>• However, over time we sometimes lose sight of what it is all about...</li> <li>• Of what it means to be a Christian?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines it as:  <b>Christianity</b> is a major <u>religion</u> stemming from the life, teachings, and death of <u>Jesus of Nazareth</u> (the Christ, or the Anointed One of God) in the 1st century CE. It has become the largest of the world's religions and, <u>geographically, the most widely diffused of all faiths</u>. It has a <u>constituency of more than two billion believers</u>.</li> <li>• When it comes to Christianity there are so many viewpoints that one struggles to pinpoint what it is all about.</li> <li>• Some of us have been Christians for a long time and are actively involved in church.</li> <li>• Over the years we have learned a great deal and attended many conferences and retreats.</li> <li>• We have read many books.</li> <li>• However, we seem to have lost touch with what it is all about.</li> <li>• So let us dig a little deeper:</li> </ul>
<p><b>Christians on Christianity:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Billy Graham</b>            "Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion – it is a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ."</li> <li>• <b>C. S. Lewis</b>            "The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us."</li> <li>• <b>A.W. Tozer</b>            "If I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. The old cross slew men, the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it."</li> <li>• <b>J.C. Ryle</b></li> </ul>

"There is a common, worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think they have enough – a cheap Christianity which **offends** nobody and requires no **sacrifice** – which **costs** nothing and is **worth** nothing."

### Why is the Gospel Offensive?

- What is the Christian confession? = Jesus is LORD!
- the Bible teaches us that no one can say *that* except by the Holy Spirit.
- This does not refer to physically saying the words, but to the spiritual act of bowing the knee to Jesus Christ.
- WHY?
- Because to be able to understand what that means and live accordingly is a spiritual thing.
- That is why the teaching of non-lordship Salvation is so detrimental
- It is the idea that you can say I believe in Jesus without bowing the knee to him as Lord!
- No Christians had ever come up with that idea before.
- The reason that **Christians died** in droves under **Roman persecution** is because they didn't believe what is taught so often today in many so-called Christian churches.
- Because it's a **radical claim**
- it is offensive to the world system
- and it is certainly offensive to the secular world around us...
- You will be mocked if you not only **believe that Jesus is LORD**,
- but live according to the idea that a backwards Galilean itinerant preacher in the first century who never wrote a book, who didn't even travel to Rome the great city of his day or Athens the great philosophical Center...
- that He **is actually the creator of this entire universe**
- and by **His power holds** all of that vast universe together
- You've got to be kidding!
- That **is offensive** to any thinking person.
- The **Cross** to them that are perishing is foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18)
- from the perspective of the wisdom of the world this is ridiculous
- how can you ask anyone to believe this?
- AND all these programs and movements the church has come up with to try to make the gospel acceptable to people only result in something other than the Gospel.
- because for the gospel to be the gospel it must be offensive
- it has to be that **stone which crushes and breaks** before there can be healing and regeneration
- The very message which to those who are perishing is foolishness is those who are being saved the very power of God!
- Jesus has not chosen to use the Elite of the world BUT the **foolish and weak**
- so that he might demonstrate the foolishness of the things that are.
- That was the whole point!
- You see God chooses in his Mercy to raise them to spiritual life...
- to open their understandings that they might see His glory
  - as Creator
  - as Saviour
  - as the way, and the truth, and the life

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• but you see that takes a spiritual activity in the heart and the mind</li> <li>• and if we no longer trust the <b>tools</b> that have been <b>given to the church</b> in the <u>gospel</u> and the <u>Spirit of God</u></li> <li>• then we are always going to be looking for something else to try to basically trick people into a <b>non-offensive counterfeit Gospel</b>.</li> <li>• The gospel is offensive to anyone who has not bowed the knee to Jesus Christ</li> <li>• and it needs to remain that way to be the gospel!</li> <li>• And this is what we have been called to present to the world!</li> <li>• Now the question is how do we do that?</li> </ul>
<b>Sacrifice:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sacrifice is <u>putting me, myself and I on the altar</u> and <b>living in LOVE</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Love God</b> with all your <u>heart</u> and with all your <u>soul</u> and with all your <u>mind</u> and with all your <u>strength</u> and your <b>neighbour as yourself!</b></li> <li>• The measure of the <b>love of Jesus</b> is just amazing... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ He loves us within our <b>brokenness</b></li> <li>○ He has grace for us within our <b>ignorance</b></li> <li>○ He has mercy for us despite our <b>disobedience</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• He is the <b>perfect example of Love</b></li> <li>• and he <u>calls us to love</u> the same way...</li> <li>• It comes down to <b>a life of total surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord</b> in every area of our lives.</li> <li>• The fruit of <i>this</i> is <b>love</b> for each other</li> <li>• The fruit of <i>this</i> is <b>body</b> of Christ</li> <li>• The fruit of <i>this</i> is <b>light</b> of the world</li> <li>• The fruit of <i>this</i> is the building of the <b>Kingdom</b> of God.</li> </ul>
<b>Cost:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christianity is about the <b>glorification of the beloved Son of God</b>.</li> <li>• About <b>submitting to Him and following Him</b>, even if it costs you your life.</li> <li>• <b>It is in that place that we find salvation, empowerment, and the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.</b></li> <li>• Christianity is about <b>Christ</b> not about <u>you and me</u> or our <u>church denomination</u> or our <u>outreach initiatives</u> or anything else we do.</li> <li>• <b>Because all that will be meaningless without HIM!!</b></li> </ul>
<b>Worth:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even though Corinth is not specifically mentioned among the seven congregations in Revelations, many Theologians believe that God selected these seven congregations to give <b>timeless instruction</b> for His people <b>throughout the centuries</b>.</li> <li>• Because this instruction is both <b>historical and prophetic</b>.</li> <li>• John was told to write about "the things which <i>are</i>, and the things which <i>will take place after this</i>" (verse 19)</li> <li>• Here we see the example of the church in Ephesus.</li> <li>• This Church was <b>healthy and vibrant</b> when Paul first wrote to them.</li> <li>• It is now <b>30 years later</b>, and Paul has passed away and probably many of their original leaders who knew him.</li> <li>• <b>Jesus dictates</b> a letter to them, acknowledges their wonderful works, and sees their effort, BUT he is clear... <b>they missed it!</b></li> </ul>

- **They have missed what it is about...**
- They have made it about their worship and the experiences they have in their Services.
- They have made it about manifestations and appearing anointed.
- **Jesus says repent** or I will come to you and take the lampstand from your midst - the lampstand symbolises God's presence with them.
- If we do not hear this, we will gather as a church but will not be a **church of God** anymore.
- I think often we do not mean for this to happen; **we just lose focus and forget what it is all about** and **who our Lord Jesus is...**
- That He is the BELOVED OF GOD and that **everything centres around Him**.
- Jesus is the **focus of God the Father** and the reason for everything.
- Jesus is the **reason for creation**.
- In terms of Salvation, he is the **lamb**, the **high priest**, and the **way** to God.

Pricilla Shirer:

- He is the **first** and the **last**
- The **beginning** and the **end**
- He is the **keeper of creation** and the **creator of all**
- He is the **architect of the universe**
- He is the **manager of all time**
- He always **was...** always **is...** and always **will be...**
  - Unmoved
  - Unchanged
  - Undefeated
  - And never undone
- He was **bruised** but brought **healing**
- He was **pierced** but **eased pain**
- He was **persecuted** but brought **freedom**
- He was **dead** and **brings life**
- He has **risen** to bring **power**
- And he **reigns** to bring **peace**
- The **world** cannot **understand** Him
- **Armies** can't **defeat** Him
- **Schools** can't **explain** Him
- **leaders** can't **ignore** Him
- **Herod** couldn't **kill** Him
- **Nero** couldn't **crush** Him
- The **New Age** cannot **replace** Him
- And **Oprah** cannot **explain Him away**
- Remind yourself that:
  - He is **light**
  - He is **love**
  - He is **longevity**
  - He is the **Lord**
- He is
  - Goodness
  - Kindness and
  - faithfulness

- He is **God**
- He is
  - **Holy**
  - **Righteous**
  - **Powerful**
  - **Pure**
- His **ways** are **right**
- His **word** is **eternal**
- His **will** is **unchanging**
- And His **mind** is **on us**
- He is
  - Our **saviour**
  - Our **guide**
  - Our **peace**
  - Our **joy**
  - Our **Comfort**
  - Our **Lord**
- And He **rules our lives**
- **I serve Him because:**
  - His **bond** is **love**
  - His **yolk** is **easy**
  - His **burden** is **light**
  - And His **goal** for us is **abundant life**
- **I follow him because:**
  - He is the **wisdom** of the **wise**
  - The **Power** of the **powerful**
  - The **ancient of days**
  - The **ruler** of **rulers**
  - The **leader** of all **leaders**
  - His **goal** is a **relationship** with us
- He will...
  - never **leave** us nor **forsake** us
  - Never **Mislead** us
  - Never **forget** us
  - Never **overlook** us
- And **never cancel your appointment** in His appointment book
- When we **fall**, He will **lift us up**
- When we **fail**, He will forgive us
- When we are **weak**, He is **strong**
- When we are **lost**, He is **our way**
- When we are **afraid**, He is our **courage**
- When we **stumble**, He will **steady us**
- When we are **hurt**, He is going to **heal** us
- When we are **broken**, He will **mend** us
- When we are **blind**, He will **lead** us
- When we are **hungry**, He will **feed** us
- When we face **trials**, He is **with us**
- When we face **prosecution**, He **shields** us

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we face <b>problems</b>, He will <b>comfort</b> us</li> <li>• When we are <b>lost</b>, He will <b>provide</b> for us</li> <li>• And when we face <b>death</b>, He will <b>carry us all home</b> to meet Him</li> <li>• He is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>everything</b> for <b>everybody</b>,</li> <li>○ <b>everywhere</b></li> <li>○ <b>Every time</b></li> <li>○ In <b>every way</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• He is our <b>God</b> and that is who we belong to!!</li> <li>• He is what it is all about!!!</li> </ul>
<b>Moment of quiet reflection:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So, if this message has spoken to you today come again to the feet of Jesus and bow the knee to Him as your Lord and Savior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Surrender ALL</li> <li>○ Live in His LOVE</li> <li>○ Lean into your difficult circumstances</li> <li>○ be an overcomer in Christ</li> <li>○ Glorify our Lord Jesus through your actions and words</li> <li>○ Adopt a sacrificial lifestyle</li> <li>○ Be an ambassador for the Kingdom</li> <li>○ Become eager to learn more and be more like Jesus</li> <li>○ Read your Bible</li> <li>○ Pray continuedly</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Prayer</b>	