

3. How can someone study the Scriptures diligently, yet miss the heart of Scripture?
4. What happens when we study the Scripture diligently, yet miss Christ?



360 DISCUSSION 02.12.17

CHRIST THE CENTER

SELECTED PASSAGES



Several years ago, I attended a seminary graduation. One of the young men walking across the stage that afternoon was like a son to me. I had begun to meet with him to read Scripture and pray shortly after he came to know Christ. As he grew, I assigned him a handful of middle school students to mentor. In time, he became our middle school pastor, then our student pastor.

During the course of our time together, he stumbled in a major way. Our church showed him a lot of grace. We helped him recover and eventually restored him to ministry. We finally handed him off to Dallas Seminary, where he went on to graduate at the top of his class. It was a proud day for him. It was a proud day for me.

Chuck Swindoll, was President of the Seminary at the time. He also delivered the commencement address. As he closed his address, he read a letter written by a former student. The letter read,

“When I first came to Dallas seminary I was in love with Jesus, when I left Dallas four years later, I was in love with the text of Scripture.”

Dr. Swindoll carefully folded the letter, bowed his head, took off his glasses, wiped back a tear, looked up at the audience, and said, “Ladies and Gentlemen, that is a monumental failure on our part.”

While the Scripture is important, it is never an end in and of itself. It is a means to an end and that end is CHRIST.

CHRIST AS THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Read the following passages and take note of how they describe Christ, the Church, and the Christian life.

EPHESIANS 2:4-7 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

EPHESIANS 4:10-15 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

GALATIANS 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

COLOSSIANS 1:25-29 I have become a servant [of the gospel] by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness —²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

COLOSSIANS 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. Take the time to highlight every reference to Christ in the above passages.
2. How is Christ described in these passages?
3. How is the church described in these passages?
4. How is the Christian life described in these passages?
5. How is maturity in the Christian life described in these passages?
6. What is the most important truth you learned about Christ in these passages?
7. What happens when we minimize the importance of Christ in the church? ...the christian life?

CHRIST AS THE HEART OF THE BIBLICAL STORY

LUKE 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

JOHN 5:39-40 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

1. According to these passages what is the “Story of the Bible” all about?
2. In what ways is the whole Bible, the message of Christ?