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*Session 3:*

**CHRIST-CENTERED IN FOCUS  
& RELENTLESS IN MISSION**

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# A Theology of Christ-centeredness

*Who is Jesus? The importance of that question cannot be understated –everything hinges on it.*

Matthew 16:13-17 (ESV)

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

*“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”*

*- CS Lewis, Mere Christianity*

We believe that Jesus is who He says He is. He is the Christ. He is the eternal Son of God. He is the one whom the prophets spoke of, and He is the only name in Heaven or on earth by which we are saved. That is who Jesus is, but what did He do and why was it necessary? That is what we are going to be talking about next.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 8:3-4 (ESV)

3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

*To be Christ-centered in focus means that the ambition of everything we do is aimed at valuing Jesus, His work, and His glory above everything else.*

Colossians 1:15-22 (ESV)

15 He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And 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, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

*According to this passage, who created everything? What do you think it means that “all things were created through him and for him?”*

*What would you say is the definitive reason that everything exists? What do you think was God's purpose for creating the universe and everything in it?*

*“Sometimes people say that they cannot believe that, if there is a God, he would take interest in such a tiny speck of reality called humanity on Planet Earth. The universe, they say, is so vast, it makes man utterly insignificant. Why would God have bothered to create such a microscopic speck called the earth and humanity and then get involved with us? Beneath this question is a fundamental failure to see what the universe is about. It is about the greatness of God, not the significance of man. God made man small and the universe big to say something about him self. And he says it for us to learn and enjoy—namely, that he is infinitely great and powerful and wise and beautiful. The more the Hubble Telescope sends back to us about the unfathomable depths of space, the more we should stand in awe of God. The disproportion between us and the universe is a parable about the disproportion between us and God. And it is an understatement. But the point is not to nullify us but to glorify him.”*

*- John Piper, Don't Waste Your Life*



# A Theology of Mission

## Activity

Get into groups of 2 or 3. Read each of the passages and from the text, answer these questions.

*Why did Jesus come to die? What was his mission?*

<p><b>1 PETER 3:18</b></p> <p>“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”</p>	<p><i>Example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To bring us to God</li><li>• To put to death our flesh</li><li>• To make us alive in the spirit</li></ul>
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<p><b>JOHN 3:16</b></p> <p>“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”</p>	
<p><b>EPHESIANS 2:13</b></p> <p>“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”</p>	
<p><b>COLOSSIANS 1:22</b></p> <p>“He has now reconciled [you] in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.”</p>	
<p><b>GALATIANS 1:4</b></p> <p>“[He] gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”</p>	
<p><b>TITUS 2:14</b></p> <p>[He] gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.</p>	

<p><b>HEBREWS 2:14-15</b></p> <p>Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.</p>	
<p><b>2 CORINTHIANS 5:15</b></p> <p>He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.</p>	
<p><b>ROMANS 5:9</b></p> <p>We have now been justified by his blood.</p>	
<p><b>1 PETER 2:24</b></p> <p>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.</p>	
<p><b>2 CORINTHIANS 5:21</b></p> <p>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.</p>	
<p><b>ROMANS 5:10</b></p> <p>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.</p>	

<p><b>LUKE 19:10</b></p> <p>For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.</p>	
<p><b>ACTS 20:28</b></p> <p>Care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.</p>	
<p><b>1 PETER 1:18-19</b></p> <p>You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.</p>	
<p><b>MARK 10:45</b></p> <p>The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.</p>	
<p><b>REVELATION 5:9</b></p> <p>Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.</p>	

*Are there any reoccurring themes you see among these verses?*

Many Christians know that Jesus has secured eternal life for His people, but what else do you see from these verses that the perfect life, death, and resurrection has accomplished for us?

In your own words, why did Jesus come to die? What was His mission?

*The mission we are aimed at is boldly and joyfully declaring the good news of the Gospel to everyone. Jesus is our highest goal and prize, it is not simply what He did –but who He is. The Gospel is good news not because we got eternal life out of it. The Gospel is good news because we get Jesus. An eternal life without Jesus would be hell.*

God gets glory. We get joy. We serve a God who does not make us choose between obeying Him and being truly happy.

At the blazing center of the universe is the glory of God.

- > Why did God make everything, including us? **For His own glory.**
- > Why did Jesus come to die? **For His own glory.**
- > Why does Jesus command us to love and obey Him? **For His own glory.**
- > Why does Jesus save sinners? **For His own glory.**
- > Why does The Parish exist? **To show his glory.**

*The ultimate aim of the gospel is not for sinners to be saved.  
It's for God to get glory by sinners being saved.*



# HOW THIS IS LIVED OUT AT THE PARISH CHURCH

## **BAPTISM**

As believers are immersed beneath the waters, they proclaim that the old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as believers are raised up out of the waters, they are proclaiming that the new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. They are proclaiming that they now belong to Jesus.

## **COMMUNION**

When we break the bread together, we are reminded that Jesus' body was broken for us. When we drink from the cup, we are reminded of the precious shed blood of our Savior for us. This memorial practice keeps our hearts and minds centered as a people on the finished work of Christ!

## **LOCAL MISSION**

In addition to Missional Communities and our Sunday Gatherings, we collectively seek to make disciples by demonstrating God's new kingdom realities through mercy and justice. We do this by providing our partners with city renewal opportunities to serve the poor, the orphan, the oppressed, and the widows.

## **CHURCH PLANTING**

Jesus' mission for us was to plant the Gospel in a city and to plant churches of Gospel-formed people. The Parish seeks to leverage our resources to provide meaningful support to called and qualified people planting churches throughout our city.

## **GLOBAL MISSION**

In addition to making disciples in Denton and the surrounding areas, The Parish is committed to making disciples among every nation. Jesus said that we would be His witnesses throughout the entire earth, and by God's grace, The Parish thrives to send our people to the nations!

## TITHING & MISSION

Mission is not a separate category of our budget reserved for people who are moving overseas. Mission is the task we are all called to do, and each partner at The Parish is called to demonstrate and declare the gospel wherever they are. Every dollar we have is spent with the goal of furthering that mission.



# Partnership Agreements

Because we are Christ-centered in focus and relentless in mission, partners at The Parish agree to:

### **1. Announce and celebrate Christ's salvation by being baptized as a regenerate, confessing believer**

Many people at The Parish come from a number of different church backgrounds. As a New Testament church, we believe that baptism is a joyful step of obedience that people should consciously take after they profess faith in Jesus.

While we honor and respect other traditions within Christianity, we believe and teach that only those who profess faith in Christ are candidates for baptism. If you decide to partner with The Parish but have not been baptized as a regenerate, confessing believer, we want you to talk with one of the pastors to discuss what it might look like for you to get baptized.

### **2. Remember Christ's work by regularly taking Communion corporately at The Parish**

About once every two months, all faith-professing people are invited to remember Jesus and His atoning work together at our Sunday gatherings.

### **3. Grow in biblical generosity, starting with a tithe (10%) of one's annual income, prioritizing The Parish general offering for kingdom work**

We are not saying that this is a commitment for a Christian, but rather it is what we are asking of partners. We all give our money to what we value and treasure. One of the ways we test our hearts is by giving generously. All money comes from God's provision, so our question should never be, "How much do I give?" but rather, "How much do I dare keep?" The New Testament example is to give everything and keep nothing for our own selfish desires.

If you don't believe in the mission of this church enough to give to it, then it probably isn't the mission God is calling you to. We call our partners "partners" precisely because they are called to spend themselves on the mission this church has been called to. And spending yourself includes spending a portion of your income. As a partner, you're saying that you trust us with your time, your children, a portion of your money, and your role in the local church.

### **4. Proactively declare and demonstrate the gospel to non-believers**

Look all around you. People are dying, desperate, hopeless for good news. We believe the only one who will satisfy their souls is Jesus. To proactively declare the gospel means to simply open your mouth and share how important, how essential, and how supreme Jesus is. To proactively demonstrate the gospel means simply to serve and love, and to keep serving and loving even when it's inconvenient or people don't reciprocate. After all, this is what Jesus does for us.

The Parish wants to take the name and Spirit of Christ into this city as well as to the nations, and that will only happen when we reach out in our spheres of influence and spend time declaring and demonstrating the gospel to those around us.

### **5. Support and pray for people sent out by The Parish to mission locally, church planting, and mission globally.**

Not only are we committed to sending workers into the harvest, we are committed to care for the people we send. By God's grace, The Parish is actively engaged in mission in our city, in our county, and all around the world. When partners support, advocate, and pray alongside our goers, they are directly participating with the mission of reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Partners get to experience the joy of seeing God rescue people from the grips of death and sin in the farthest corners of the earth. All partners at The Parish are asked to engage in the mission with us by supporting, advocating, and/or praying for those sent out by The Parish.

**NOTES:**

**QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE FINAL SESSION:**