

You are the Christ

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[0 : 00] Before we move into the prize giving, packaging up this section, not just for the children, but for all of us, for all of us as grown-ups as well, because Jesus speaks through His word and challenges us, I hope, in a fresh way, even when we look at it simply.

Because if we think about ourselves and we think about our lives, we remember that much of us as human beings is about routine. We're amazingly, amazingly routine people. We are habitual people. We have habits.

Now, maybe before the service, I could have put bits of paper on 90% of the seats to say that that's where you'd be sitting. Because, you know, you sit in the same seats. We sit in the same places. We do the same things.

That's what we're like as people. We are habit-forming. And for us so much of the time, it's same old, same old. We do the same things and we engage in the same practices. Even people who think they're real rebels are habitually rebellious.

I always used to think it was quite funny that punk rockers who reckoned they were tremendously rebellious all dressed the same and all looked the same in many ways because there was this sense in which they conformed to a rebellious image and looked the same as everyone else who thought like them. And that's very much what we're like in our lives.

[1 : 33] We are habitual people. We are people who have lots of routine and lots of habits. It's not necessarily a bad thing. But as people who are born with sinful human natures, we are also people who develop many bad habits and live habitually against God. Maybe not deliberately, maybe not overtly.

But we are those without Christ who can't change these deep-seated habits that belong to our nature. Yes, we can change ourselves on the outside. Yes, we can conform. We can develop. We can improve.

We can make ourselves more healthy by lots of changes to our routine and to our habits. But ultimately, in our lives, in our very being, in our soul or in our self, we can't change what we are. You know, they say a leopard can't change its spots. I'm not quite sure where that phrase comes from. But it's true of us as well. We can't change what we are in our very selves. We are habitually, we are routinely people by nature without Jesus who are against Him and live and routine is against Him.

And we are helpless spiritually, shall we say, to change our routine. We can't change our hearts so that we love Him. We can't change our lives so that we can worship Him without Christ and without what Christ is doing.

[3 : 11] And that's what Christ is beginning to educate His own disciples about very clearly here. And He says something very radical. He says, unless you're willing to lose your life or drop your habits, for me, you will, whoever, sorry, I'll read it from the beginning, if whoever wants to save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world? Yet lose or forfeit his very self. And there's certain things you see that we need to lose. We need to get rid of certain habits, certain rituals, a way of living that we need to drop if we are to know Christ Jesus and if we are to know eternal life.

And Jesus is making that clear here. At the very core of our being, there's something that we need to lose. He says, unless we lose our very life, we can't live spiritually. What does He mean by that? Unless we lose our life. What does it mean? Well, surely what He means is that, and we find that throughout His teaching, that we need to lose the love of being number one in our own life.

He wants us to give or to engage in the ultimate self-denial, which is that we no longer say that I am in control, but we are willing to hand over the control of our hearts and of our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and to follow Him.

[4 : 54] That's what He means by losing our life. That we are losing what we are as being independent, being separate from God.

Saying that we don't need God. Saying that we'll live without God. Saying that we don't need Christ in our hearts. Saying that our sins aren't a problem. And we lose that number one self-centeredness.

That's what He means by losing our life. Losing that control of our lives. And we hand that over to Christ's Lordship and say, Lord, You are my Savior. You are my God.

I trust in You. You forgive my sins and You give me life. So we lose that love of being number one. I think also He says we need to lose our love of sin. Loving the things that Jesus hates and learning to hate the things, rather than hating the things that Jesus loves. And we turn that on its head. We need grace to do that. We need Christ to do that.

But He is asking us to lose being in control of our lives without reference to God. He is asking us to lose our love of the wrong things. You know, speaking to the children about that.

[6 : 11] That, you know, Jesus came to die for our sins. So we lose the love of these things that He hates. And we need Him to help us to do that.

We also lose the need to live by the standards of the world around us. Pressure to do everything that everyone else tells us to do. To think in the way everyone else tells us to think. To go the way of Godless thinking. And He says, You've got to lose it.

You've got to lose that way of living. You've got to lose that mentality which says that God isn't there. And that God doesn't care. And that God isn't involved. Lose it.

And I think the other thing that He makes very clear here is that we have to lose the shame of being a Christian. It's easy to be a Christian in here. We all love each other here.

But very often Jesus knows that there's a shame attached to being a Christian. He will be particularly today. And He says, You know, if you are ashamed of me when the Father comes and is glowing, then I tell you the truth that I will be ashamed of you.

[7 : 17] And you know, that's something we need to lose. We need to lose the shame of being a Christian. Are you embarrassed about your faith? Are you embarrassed about being a Christian? Are you embarrassed to confess Him? Are you ashamed that you belong to Him?

Do you feel like an intellectual fraud or someone who hasn't thought through things properly? Or do you feel embarrassed and it belongs to a kind of annoying childhood memory of your life that you want to get rid of?

Are you ashamed of Jesus Christ? Does the company you keep make you ashamed of Jesus Christ? Well, He says, We need to lose it. We can't have it always.

We can't be ashamed of belonging to Jesus Christ. And so He says this tremendously powerful and deep truth that unless we are willing to lose our life, and these are some of the things that we need to lose for Christ's sake, then we will never save it.

And that's the strange paradox, isn't it, of the Gospel. And it's not by our efforts. It's not by trying harder. It's not by being more religious.

[8 : 33] It's not like, you know, going on a diet and being self-disciplined and just setting your face to it yourself. And I'll try all these things and lose these things for Christ's sake. It is impossible.

Last week we talked about the impossibility of grace. What He demands of us is impossible unless we come to Him. And He loves us. And He is promising to heal our brokenness and to sustain us and to love us in this life and forgive the not and the mess and the corruption and the confusion that's in our hearts and to set us free.

So that as we lose the grip of sin in our hearts and lose the self-control of the love that we have, that He gifts us eternal life and He gifts us His company and His companionship and His friendship. Unparalleled lessons for us in our lives. So it's an important question for us today for the children and for the grown-ups that Jesus says something very significant. If you want to save your life without Christ and do your own thing, you'll lose it.

But if we're willing to lose our life in the terms of the Gospel, in terms of our love for sin and grabbing hold of everything in our own strength, then He will save us and He will redeem us and He will buy us back and He will heal our broken hearts and He will never leave us or forsake us.

[10 : 15] And He's proved that by knowing the abandonment of His own Father on the cross, dying on the cross for our sins. Important lessons for us to consider today and important to consider what we're clinging onto that maybe is keeping us from Christ. And He might be saying today to us, LOSE IT! Let go of it!

And put your trust in Me, in Jesus Christ and in His ways. And I hope that we can do that.