

To Live Is Christ

For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.
Philippians 1:21

Introduction:

1. We see Bible characters like Mary Magdalene, Paul, Mary, Peter, John, and others who loved Jesus Christ greatly.
2. Recent sermons like “What Is Your Life?” “Many Are Called,” “Drawing Nigh to God,” and “Death” raise desire.
3. But this sermon is to be, by the grace of God, the “how to” of drawing nigh to God and living totally for Christ.
4. Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ (John 17:3; I John 5:20), as the apostles emphasized (I Cor 2:2; II Cor 5:14-15; Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; 4:13; Phil 1:20-21; 3:8-11; Col 2:2-3,6-12; 3:1-4; II Pet 3:18; I John 1:1-4).
5. Why do you think He created and saved us? To practice Bible economics? To condemn baby sprinklers?
6. We define living for Christ as (a) living to know Him more perfectly and (2) living to please Him more perfectly. By the first we become closer in fellowship and by the second we serve Him and represent Him better before the world.
7. You will be bored with this sermon if (a) you are a child of hell or (b) you are a child of God living carnally in sin.
8. I am not chasing some abstract, metaphysical extreme this morning, though blinded hearts may easily think so.
9. But I fear the level of carnal Christianity has so blinded and hardened us to miss the importance here (Matt 24:12).
10. I greatly fear carnal Christianity – mental contentment with doctrine, assemblies a form, and 6 and ½ days for self.
11. True love of Jesus Christ and service to Him is the test of spiritual Christianity (I Cor 12:3; John 16:14; I Jn 4:2-3).
12. We want Christ-centric lives, where Jesus Christ is always and only the center of all we do in thought, word, deed.
13. Why were disciples first called “Christians” at Antioch (Acts 11:26)? Because Christ was the Center of their lives.
14. If it were to become a crime to be a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Barely or easily?

1. SEEK JESUS CHRIST.

- A. Consider Greeks coming to worship who were not content with apostles (John 12:20-22).
- B. Consider Mary who would not let life’s details distract her attention (Luke 10:38-42).
- C. Consider Paul’s sacrificial and insatiable desire to know Jesus Christ (Phil 3:8-10).
- D. We do not need a religion as much as we need a relationship. What do you seek today?
- E. More than doctrine for theology or Proverbs for wisdom, we must desire the Son of God.
- F. Is He your portion forever above all persons and things on earth (Psalm 16:5; 73:25-26)?
- G. What is He to you? Is He offensive and boring or precious indeed (I Pet 2:4-8; Ps 43:4)?
- H. The Gadarene begged to be with Jesus contrary to all his neighbors (Luke 8:37-39).
- I. Would you prefer to see David kill Goliath or Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount? Daniel in the lions’ den or Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)?
- J. Are the crucifixion passages some of your very favorites in all the Bible? If no, why not?
- K. Could you . . . would you . . . anoint the feet of Jesus with costly ointment (Luk 7:37-38)?
- L. From the inside out, we must sacrifice all desires and cultivate the desire to know Him.
- M. It is easy to be a “Christian” and be ignorant of my topic. Are you spiritually minded?
- N. Jesus stands at the door and knocks seeking fellowship with any man (Revelation 3:20).
- O. He asks us to seek Him and promises His Presence (Psalm 27:8; Jeremiah 29:13).
- P. Whatever you do in word or deed must be done in the name of Jesus Christ (Col 3:17,24).
- Q. How do we measure the love of anything? Time, speech, passion, money, loyalty, etc.
- R. We sing, “I gave My Life for thee, what hast thou done for me?” Are they mere words?

2. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

- A. Rather than praying mainly for things (no matter how noble), pray to know Jesus Christ.
- B. When was the last time you prayed for the Holy Ghost to fill and teach you (Luk 11:13)?
- C. Read the emphasis on prayer Paul gave after our spiritual armor against Satan (Ep 6:18).
- D. David, Daniel, and apostles prayed thrice daily (Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10; Ac 2:15; 3:1; 10:9).
- E. Praying before meals is good but does not count. It has no spiritual pursuit of Christ.
- F. If Jesus prayed intimately and personally to God, how much more do we need this grace?
- G. When did you last pant and groan after God without a dire emergency (Psalm 42:1-11)?
- H. Prayer is the most intimate and personal fellowship with God and Christ. Do you love it?

3. CONFESS YOUR SINS

- A. You cannot find Him, know Him, or please Him with existing sin (Ps 66:18; Is 59:1-2).
- B. But He will graciously forgive proper confession (I John 1:9; Job 33:27-28; Prov 28:13).
- C. We do not allow any displeasure or offence to stand when we truly love someone.
- D. This must be a part of effectual prayer, and we must satisfy this before moving further.
- E. Do you daily confess your sins? Do you do it specifically? Or do you do it in general?
- F. It was your sins that nailed Him to the cross. Do you grieve over your sins accordingly?
- G. Since He died for your sins, you should join brother Peter in dying to sins (I Peter 2:24).

4. READ SCRIPTURE

- A. He has exalted His Word highly for us to exalt highly also (Ps 138:2; Nehemiah 8:1-12).
- B. Job valued it more important than necessary food. How about you (Job 23:12; Luk 4:4)?
- C. David describes great delight in the Word of God (Ps 19:10; 119:72,103; 127; Jer 15:16).
- D. Jesus memorized Scripture, and we should for the same purpose (Lu 4:4,8,12; Ps 119:11).
- E. Pray before you read to bless and thank God for His Word and to seek His enlightenment.
- F. What do you seek in the Scriptures? We should chiefly seek Christ (Jn 5:39; Lu 24:37).
- G. Forget reading it just to complete a chart, finish a religious chore, or confirm a doctrine.
- H. Since you have it so available, do you crave it, read it, and enjoy it as you should.
- I. We sing, "Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord." Do you understand and mean it?
- J. Love letters are preserved, prized, and reread with great pleasure. What of the Bible?
- K. Do you love the gospel record of His life, His words, His miracles, His works, His death?

5. MEDITATION

- A. Meditation is sober and thoughtful thinking about God and His perfections (Ps 143:5).
- B. Are you too busy or too carnal to think and mediate upon God in bed (Ps 4:4; 63:5-6)?
- C. He wants us to acquaint ourselves with Him, and He will send goodness (Job 22:21).
- D. When you love something, it is almost impossible to get that thing out of your mind.

6. SELF-EXAMINATION

- A. We ask for His help to draw closer to Him by sober self-examination (Psalm 139:23-24).
- B. Since He died for our sins, He cannot approve us remembering Him in sin (I Cor 11:28).
- C. Haggai told Israel to "consider their ways" and measure their judgment (Haggai 1:5-11).
- D. There is a sermon tape and outline entitled "Examine Yourselves" to fill out this point.

7. SING FROM YOUR HEART

- A. Sing from the inside with joy in your heart and worship in your thoughts (I Cor 14:15).
- B. Jesus sang, so you are being like Him when you sing to God (Matthew 26:30; Heb 2:12).
- C. A life filled with the Holy Spirit will automatically want to sing praise to God (Eph 5:18).
- D. If you are happy with spiritual joy, then you should sing psalms or other songs (Jas 5:13).
- E. The music of your choice should be music glorifying Jesus Christ, as it will be in heaven.
- F. David, a man after God's own heart, invented instruments and wrote poetry for Him.

8. EXALT ASSEMBLIES

- A. God is seen in the sanctuary by the means He has chosen (Psalm 63:2; 73:16-28).
- B. And Jesus Christ is there in a glorious appearance for fellowship (Revelation 1:9-20).
- C. There are three things in the church of Jesus Christ that testify of Him (I John 5:6-9).
- D. Do you greatly delight in beholding His beauty in our assemblies (Psalm 27:4; 26:8)?
- E. Do you love to hear His praise sung by other blood-bought saints (Eph 5:18; Col 3:16)?
- F. Do you prepare as reverent saints seeking to worship Christ (Gen 35:1-5; Ex 19:9-15)?
- G. The church is the temple and house and body of Jesus Christ (I Tim 3:15; Ep 1:23; 2:22).

9. **PERFECT YOUR MARRIAGE**
 - A. Jesus commands it with the wholesome words of His doctrine (Colossians 3:18-19).
 - B. The relationship of marriage in many ways shadows Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-33).
 - C. A godly marriage is only in the Lord (I Cor 7:39) and involves a brother and sister (9:5).
 - D. It will hinder your spiritual life and fellowship with Christ without it (I Cor 7:5; I Pe 3:7).
 - E. Our marriages must not hinder knowing Christ (I Pet 3:7) or showing Christ (I Pet 2:12).
 - F. Is marriage to you the joint companionship of seeking Jesus Christ with another person?
 - G. The most intimate marriage is found not in the Kama Sutra but in the love of Jesus Christ.
 - H. Frequent prayer will build more intimacy and pleasure and peace than frequent sex.
 - I. We must strive to keep marriage subordinate to our love of Jesus Christ (I Cor 7:29-33).

10. **TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN**
 - A. What greater gift do you have to give your children than the knowledge of Jesus Christ?
 - B. It is His commandment for Himself, so we should be happy to do it for Him (Eph 6:4).
 - C. Our children are not our own, so we should be faithful in training them (Psalm 127:3).
 - D. We love the story of Hannah, but how close are you to her example (I Samuel 1:19-28)?
 - E. Do you have a Christ-centered family? Or do you have a “form of godliness” family?
 - F. Hypocrites and carnal Christians will have hypocrites and carnal Christians, but for grace.
 - G. Child training creates adults following that training. It is a promise. Train love of Christ.

11. **LOVE THE BRETHREN**
 - A. Sacrificial acts of service done to others are truly done to Him (Matthew 25:40,45).
 - B. We assure our hearts before Him and show love to Him by loving others (I Jn 3:14-19).
 - C. We show our unity and affinity with Jesus Christ by our love of one another (Jn 13:35).
 - D. An ultimate way of serving Him is to love one another as He defines it (I Cor 13:4-7).
 - E. We should not offer our worship to Him with any outstanding problems (Matt 5:23-24).

12. **MORTIFY THE FLESH**
 - A. We are to mortify – or put to death – those wicked lusts of our flesh (Colossians 3:5-11).
 - B. Our true unity in spirit with Christ strongly denies bodily sins (I Corinthians 6:12-20).
 - C. Since Christ has died for our sins, we are now dead with Him practically (Rom 6:1-11).
 - D. Do you esteem Christ’s crucifixion? Then be crucified with Him (Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).
 - E. Do you love Christ enough to give an eye or a hand for His righteousness (Matt 5:29-30).
 - F. We must put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not even make fleshly provision (Rom 13:14).
 - G. We must choose and learn to hate the world and ungodly lusts and pride (I John 2:15-17).

13. **KEEP CHRIST’S COMMANDMENTS**
 - A. Your whole duty in light of Christ’s soon judgment is fear and obedience (Ecc 12:13-14).
 - B. If you repent of sin and keep His commandments, He will say, “Here I am” (Isaiah 58:9).
 - C. He promises to manifest Himself and dwell with us, if we will obey Him (Jn 14:21-24).
 - D. If we keep His commandments, we act like Him and prove our love of Him (I Jn 2:3-6).
 - E. If we love Him, keeping His commandments will be our pleasure and joy (John 14:15).
 - F. We should want to display our love of Him by good works before the world (Matt 5:16).

14. **SET AFFECTION ABOVE**
 - A. Love is a choice. It is not an accident, a force, a feeling, a fate, or other external thing.
 - B. The motive for love has already been given in infinite and incomprehensible measure.
 - C. We are commanded to set our affection in heaven where Christ sits (Colossians 3:1-4).
 - D. We set our affection above by trashing the things of earth without a thought (Phil 3:8).
 - E. Where are your treasures? We are to live for Christ by investing in heaven (Mat 6:19-21).

15. BE CONTENTED
 - A. If we were like Paul in trashing all things of this life, we would only be content in Christ.
 - B. If Jesus Christ is your Portion, then you should greatly desire nothing else (Heb 13:5).
 - C. Godliness with contentment is great gain of our Lord's wholesome words (I Tim 6:3-6).
 - D. Boredom, discontentment, and covetousness are signs of a saint ignoring their Saviour.

16. BEAR SPIRITUAL FRUIT
 - A. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Gal 4:6), we should bear the Spirit's fruit.
 - B. How important is it to you to be known for the various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit?
 - C. Walking as Jesus Christ would walk is to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
 - D. If we do not bear such fruit, we show little appreciation for His death (II Peter 1:5-8).
 - E. We please God by serving Jesus Christ with such fruit in His kingdom (Rom 14:16-18).

17. DELIGHT IN THE LORD
 - A. To know Christ is to be like Him and delight in God and His perfections (Ps 37:4; 40:8).
 - B. We should taste and see that the Lord is good, which requires conscience effort (Ps 34:8).
 - C. Since Jesus Christ delights in certain things, we should delight in them also (Jer 9:23-24).

18. VALUE INVISIBLE THINGS
 - A. As Moses before us, we should value the reproach of the invisible Christ (Heb 11:24-27).
 - B. We should esteem the weight of eternal glory we cannot see very highly (II Cor 4:17-18).
 - C. Do you have the sense of Jesus Christ to rejoice with joy unspeakable (I Peter 1:8)?

19. REJECT TWO MASTERS
 - A. It is impossible for you to serve and love Christ and the world both (Matt 6:24; Jas 4:4).
 - B. Jesus taught for us to live successfully with a single eye to God (Matthew 6:22-23).
 - C. If we seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, then He will give the rest (Matt 6:33).

20. BE A STRANGER HERE
 - A. We are strangers and pilgrims in the earth as Abraham's family before us (Heb 11:13).
 - B. Our conversation is in heaven, while we wait for Jesus Christ to come for us (Phil 3:20).
 - C. Do you consciously consider yourself waiting for His return (I Thes 1:9-10; Tit 2:12-14)?

21. SERVE AND GIVE
 - A. Jesus gave His Life serving others and calls us to do the same (Matt 20:25-28; 10:40-42).
 - B. Paul was a servant of the Corinthians by choice under Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:5).
 - C. Giving is a way to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ and His great giving (II Cor 8:7-9).
 - D. If Peter loved Jesus more than the others, He could show it by service (John 21:15-17).
 - E. New saints converted by the Holy Ghost are filled with giving (Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37).

22. SHARING WITH OTHERS
 - A. When a girl receives her ring, her greatest joy is to show it off to others. What about you?
 - B. When a boy gets a new car, his greatest joy is to show it off to others. What about you?
 - C. If we are living for Jesus Christ, we will want to talk about Him (Mark 1:44-45).
 - D. See what Andrew (John 1:40-41) and Philip (John 1:43-46) did about knowing Jesus.
 - E. What did the woman of Samaria do after meeting Jesus at Jacob's well (John 4:28-29)?

23. PRIORITIZE BY HIM
 - A. Paul warns us to not let our earthly obligations distract us excessively (I Cor 7:29-35).
 - B. Going back to our first point, we must make the great choice to seek Christ above all else.

C. Scripture is filled with priorities by the words “better” and “rather” (Prov 15:17; 22:1).

24. EXPECT AND ACCEPT PERSECUTION

A. Jesus brought a sword rather than peace. Can you endure it for Him (Matthew 10:32-39).

B. He has promised all who live godly lives in Him will be persecuted (II Timothy 3:12).

C. He will test our love and faith by asking us to exchange valuable relationships for Him.

25. REJECT FEAR AND WORRY

A. If you are living for Christ, then there is nothing to worry about (Phil 4:6-7; I Pet 5:7).

B. No perverting of justice or judgment in a nation should worry you (Eccl 5:8; I Tim 6:15).

C. With the Lord Jesus Christ at your side, what enemy will you fear (Hebrews 13:5-6)?

D. Jesus Christ is the Lord Jehovah, and perfect peace awaits those trusting Him (Is 26:3-4).

E. Any fear of man or circumstances indicates a lack of confidence in Jesus (Matt 8:23-27).

Conclusion:

1. Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ.” I ask you, “For to you to live is what?” I exhort you to live for Jesus Christ.
2. This outline was created to give you a few simple reminders as to the steps to seek Jesus Christ more in your life.
3. There is no higher aspiration or greater goal for your life than to walk more closely with Jesus Christ (Matt 8:23-27).
4. Can you say with David that He is your portion forever and superior to any in earth or heaven (Psalm 73:25-26)?