

Make Jesus Everything

by Sam Caldwell

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making Jesus everything in our lives, highlighting the exclusivity of Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. It delves into the temptation to seek other paths or truths, the offense of Christ's exclusive claim, and the sweetness of fully surrendering to Jesus. The speaker encourages the congregation to meditate on Jesus in every aspect of life and to counsel others to prioritize Jesus as the ultimate source of salvation, truth, and life.

Scripture: John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, John 10:9, Acts 4:12, Colossians 3:4, John 6:35, John 15:5, Philippians 1:21, Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Exclusivity of Christ", "Surrendering to Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

We've started a new series last week and it's called The Lifeblood of the Church. What do I mean by lifeblood? I mean the necessary components, the stuff that we can't do without, the thing that we need or else we'll die, the lifeblood of the church. And I want to talk about eight things that we have to focus on.

Last week, can anyone remind me what we talked about last week? Yell it out if you remember. Amen. Cherish this fellowship.

That was exhorting us just to get to love each other, start to get to know each other, start to work together. That's 101 in this church. We have to love each other.

We have to become an intimate fellowship. And here's the second thing I want us to focus on. Make Jesus everything.

Make Jesus everything. I was struggling with what to call this today. There's been almost a fad in the last 20 years to talk about Christ-centered churches or Christ-exalting churches or gospel-centered churches.

And I think all of those titles are wonderful, right? We want our church to be gospel-centered, amen? We want our church to be Christ-centered, amen? But I think what we're going to find in the text before us today is we want to go even further than that. We want Christ not just to be at our center, but we want him to be everything. We want him to be the fire in our midst.

We want him to be the walls around us. We want him to be the one who guides us forward. We want him to be the one who comforts us with apples and the one who his right hand is under our neck.

He's everything to us. He's coming at us from all angles, isn't he? So the title of this sermon is Make Jesus Everything. And really, this could be the first sermon in the series, couldn't it? This is vital to our church, that Christ is everything.

Let's read John chapter 14, verses 1 through 6. Watch out, you may be changed through these words. They are some of the most beautiful words in the Bible. They should be written with gold on our hearts.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

But where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know. And the way, ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest. And how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, Lord, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Amen. Lord, we love you. And we ask you to speak, Lord.

I ask you that no one hears my words today. Lord, I ask you that we hear the words of our sweet Savior, Jesus. And Lord, we need you.

Oh, we need you. Every hour we need you, Lord. We need you right now.

We need you to come and illuminate this text, Lord, and cause it to come alive in our lives. Lord, I ask you to visit every heart in this room right now with your Holy Spirit, and convict us, and comfort us, and love us, Lord. And challenge us, and change us.

In your mighty name we pray. Amen. Dr. Fourteen, verse six, is often used as a proof text to show people that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life.

And that's absolutely true. And we should share verse six with people all the time. But I pray that none of you have just gotten used to verse six.

That you say, oh yeah, I use it as a proof text when I'm evangelizing. And I say, he's the way, and the truth, and the life. And I throw it out there.

I pray that we all right now have an encounter with this text. That this text changes our lives. And that we don't only use it as a proof text, but we use it as a life text.

As something that teaches us how to make Jesus absolutely everything in our lives. I want to talk about three things today. Here are your three points.

One, the tempting, tempting question. Two, the offensive, offensive answer. And third, the sweet, sweet answer.

Did you all get that? We're going to look at Thomas's question in verse five. It's the tempting, tempting question. It tempts all of us.

And then we're going to talk about how offensive Christ's answer is. And then finally, how sweet Christ's answer is in verse six. So let's dive in.

Amen. Everybody have your Bibles open. Let's look at the words of Christ here.

Let's hear what he says to our hearts. First, the tempting, tempting question. Look at Thomas's question in verse five.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest. He's saying, Lord, we don't know where you're going. And then he says, and how can we know the way? I spent the whole week wondering about this question right here.

And I want you to wonder about it with me. Why does Thomas ask that? After Christ has said these first four verses, such beautiful verses. Why does Thomas come in and say, Lord, I don't know what you're talking about.

Lord, I don't know where you're going. And how in the world can we know how to get there? Will you study this with me? Will you ask this question with me? Why does Thomas break in right there and ask that? Notice a few things with me. First, in verses one through four, Christ gives some of the most comforting and beautiful verses that have ever been uttered in the history of mankind.

What does he say? Verse one, let not your heart be troubled. You know, Amy Carmichael was a missionary to India in the early 1900s. She came from Ireland, went to India.

And as she did her work in India, she got horrible pains all over her body. She was almost crippled by pain. But she would continue to do her missionary work throughout the day.

And as she got to the end of the day, she could not move at all. And she couldn't sleep at all. She was so in pain.

She would have the young women she was working with come and read John 14 to her on repeat until she could fall asleep. And there are testimonies of these young Indian women who say that they would have to read it 15, 20, 25 times to her. And she's just getting comfort from this passage.

This is the most comforting part of scripture. He says, don't let your heart be troubled. Anybody who's watched the news in the last few days, hear Jesus right here.

Don't let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Him. And then he says, verse 2, in my father's house are many mansions.

He's saying, there's heaven open for you. And there are many rooms there, many wide, expansive, beautiful rooms where you're going to go and live someday. And he says, if it were not so, I would have told you.

Right? He's saying, I'm faithful. I'm not a liar. If it weren't so, I would have told you about it.

And he says, I go and prepare a place for you. And then look at verse 3. He says, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. So if you need comfort, if you say, am I going to get to heaven? Well, if you trust in Jesus, what will he do? He's going to come again, and he's going to receive us unto himself.

Right? He's going to get the whole job done, isn't he? But let me ask you this. In verse 5, was Thomas comforted by these words? No. Somehow, they didn't have any effect on Thomas.

But what does he break in and say in verse 5? Lord, we don't know where you're going. Lord, how can we know the way? Do you hear almost an exasperation in Thomas's voice? He's like, well, I don't get it. I'm frustrated.

How could I know the way? Notice one more thing about this. Jesus has actually already answered Thomas's questions. Study this with me.

Look at verse 5. What's the first thing Thomas asks? Lord, we know not where you are going. But what did he say in verse 2? I'm going to my father's house. There are many mansions, and I'm going to prepare a place for you.

So, right? He answered Thomas's question already. What's Thomas's second question? And how can we know the way? Look at verse 3. Christ said, I will come again and receive you to myself. He's basically said, I'm going to take care of this.

I'm coming back. I'm getting you up there to heaven. So Christ has already answered Thomas's questions.

What in the world is going on with Thomas? Why does he ask this? Is he hard of hearing? I think the heart behind Thomas's question is this. He doesn't believe that Jesus's words are enough. You all know Thomas is usually called Doubting Thomas.

Because later in John's gospel, he doubts, right? But what is he doing right here? He's heard clearly. They're beautiful words. They're comforting words.

And he says, no, Lord, there must be something more. I need to hear a little more. Thomas is committing the sin here of denying the sufficiency of Jesus.

Denying the sufficiency of Jesus. And I want to tell you all that we are all susceptible to this sin. Would you search your heart with me right now? Has that ever been the case with you? You know what the Bible says.

It even says something so beautiful. It says, the Lord is my shepherd. And then you say, but I need to take the matter into my own hands.

You know, like, that's nice, theoretically, Lord. Thanks a lot. But I need to make it a little more practical.

You know, that's the sin of what's called pragmatism. You can call pragmatism the Thomas temptation. When we say, okay, I've got the Bible.

It's real nice. I've heard it. But I need a self-help book on the side too.

Or okay, the Bible tells us what to do as a church, right? But we need like a church growth strategy thing that gives us 18,000 steps. And then, you know, now I'm not saying that reading another book is sinful, right? Sometimes we need a book that puts together the truths of the Bible beautifully. But I just want to mark this in each one of your hearts, the Thomas temptation.

Have you ever been tempted to say, yeah, I've read it. I've heard some things in the Bible. But Lord, it's not quite enough.

I need something else. That's the tempting, tempting question. How does Jesus reply? In verse 6, his reply to Thomas is amazing.

He says, Thomas, not only am I enough, not only did I already answer your question, but I am everything. I have everything. Look how he answers in verse 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, the life.

No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. You can put all that together and say, okay, Lord, so I lay it down. It sounds like you're everything.

You're the way, the truth, and the life, no? Our second point, the offensive, offensive answer. I want everyone in this room to know just how offensive Christ's words are here. You say, offensive, what do you mean? You all know that there is an offense of the gospel.

There are some words that Jesus speaks that pierce to the heart. And what Christ is saying in this verse right here is, you're either going with me, or you're going down another path. And I'm going to make it so clear to you in just a few words.

Isn't it amazing how he can do that? It's incredible. There was a Canadian evangelist named Keith McLeod, and it was said of him that he was a pretty normal pastor. He loved the Bible.

He knew the Bible very well. He read it over and over again, but his ministry was pretty normal. But when revival hit in Saskatchewan, Canada, this man, Keith McLeod, the Lord empowered him in such a mighty way.

And it was said in his sermons that it would be like Keith McLeod was chopping down every single tree, and leaving only one tree in the room, the tree of Jesus Christ. He was just chopping and chopping and chopping and chopping to make sure no one was trusting in anything other than that beautiful cedar in the middle of the room, our Lord Jesus. That's what I think Jesus does right here.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way. Everybody circle or note that word, the. That might be the most offensive word in the whole Bible.

Paul Washer says, if you could just take the word V out of this verse right here, there would be no more offense and we'd get along with everybody. And this church would be full with a thousand people, but none of them would believe in Jesus. But we would have, we wouldn't offend the world anymore.

You know why? Because it would read like this. I am a way and a truth and a life. But you can also have Zen Buddhism or Islam or Catholicism or yoga next to me if you want.

But does he say that? Does he say, I am a way? No, he says, I am the way, the truth, the life. Let's just study these for a moment. Follow with me the way.

But many, many religions in this world add something. They say, no, Lord, you are a way. And we, we, we respect you, Jesus.

You are a way. But the Roman Catholic Church, for example, says there is also a mediatrix. Her name is Mary.

And you know what mediatrix means? It means female mediator. And this is written in the Catholic catechism. You can go read it.

Read the section on Mary. And it says Mary is the mediatrix, which means she is another mediator between God and man. What does the Bible say to that? There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.

One mediator. There is no mediatrix. And you might say, well, then, Sam, are you saying that Catholicism is a lesser form of Christianity? No, I'm saying it's not Christianity at all.

You can't add anything to the Lord Jesus Christ. What about Islam? We see radical Islam fighting, fighting in the Middle East right now. What does Islam say? They say Jesus is a prophet.

He's the Messiah, they even say. But you know what they say next? He's not God. And you need the Quran and you need Allah, too.

What should we say to that? No, Christ is the way, the one and only. What else could we add that would make him into only a way? We could say, well, Lord, I need some of my works to help me get up into heaven. Lord, I need some sacraments, too, to help me get up into heaven.

Lord, I'm going to add some Freemasonry or something. And he says, no, you're not. I am the way.

Or we could add strategies, church growth programs, something like that. And our Lord says to us, no, I am the way. Do not add anything.

What about the second word? I am the way, the truth. How many people, how many of you have become Christians? And someone in your family looks at you and says, I'm so glad for you. I'm so glad that you found your truth.

Does that happen to anybody here? That's wonderful. I'm glad it works for you. What ought we to say to them? Sorry, mom and dad and brother and sister, I haven't found my truth.

I found the truth. If you try to add the Book of Mormon, you make it into a truth. If you try to add the Quran, you make it into a truth.

If you try to add what the Pope says and what the magisterium and what Catholic tradition says, you turn Jesus Christ into but one truth among many. Oh, but we all should be careful too. If we try to add our traditions, if we say, well, we're Baptist, so we have the Baptist truth.

Christ says, no, no, no. I am the truth. Or we say we're Protestants.

Or if we say, well, I've figured out eschatology, the end time stuff, better than anyone else in this room. And if you don't believe that, Christ says, no, I am the truth. Me, me.

Everybody, whenever you're assessing truth, I would ask you to use this simple test. In all assessments of truth, can you say as your answer, basically, at the end of the day, Jesus? Can you say that? Do you all see what I'm saying? If you're trying to figure out the end times, and many people are right now, you're trying to figure out all of Bible prophecy. When you get done with that study, can you say, well, basically, the answer is Jesus? If you're trying to figure out if a Christian should celebrate Halloween in a few weeks, when you get done with your calculations, can you say at the end, basically, my answer is Jesus? You know, I love those bracelets.

We need to bring them back and say, what would Jesus do? We need to ask that question. We need to make our approach to life so very simple. Would Jesus celebrate demons? Would he celebrate things on Halloween? Would he promote that sort of thing? Look at his life.

What would Jesus do? No, he cast out demons. He's the truth. I ask you to use that as your test.

Whatever you're trying to figure out, the millennium, the end times, the news, our answer has to be Jesus. Everything, when we look around this world, there are those who are devoted to Jesus, and there are those who are rejecting Jesus, and that's why everything is going as it is every day. He's the truth.

Let's look at this last word here. He is the life. What would turn him into only a life? If we say, I serve Jesus plus self-help, I serve Jesus plus getting some relief from a secular therapist, or from drugs, or from worldly ways of dealing with death, or depression, or anxiety.

But he says, no, I am the life. I am the one and only source of life. I am the life.

Amen? Right now, I just want to invite anyone in this room who has never believed this, I want to invite you to believe this truth. This truth is called the exclusivity of Jesus. It's the idea that only Jesus can get you to heaven.

Only Jesus can give you truth. Only Jesus can give you life. I'm not going to invite you up to the front of the room, but I invite you in your heart right now.

Believe this truth. Believe this. And you know what you'll find? If you truly believe this, you're on your way to heaven.

You're a Christian. This is the most distinctive Christian truth. Do you know that most people in this world do not believe? Verse 6 right here.

Most people in this world do not believe this verse. Talk to people on the street about Jesus, and they're going to say, that's great for you. He is a way, and I've got my way, and let's all get along.

We are here to preach the world a very offensive message. He's the one and only way, the one and only truth, the one and only life. Amen? Amen.

And here's my final point. The sweet, sweet answer. What Christ says in verse 6 is not only offensive, it's also incredibly sweet.

If you have accepted this truth, if you believe that he's the way, the truth, the life, a sweetness will come into your heart. Your whole life will be transformed. There was a man named A.B. Simpson who actually, there's still a church remaining on Washington Avenue that was founded by him.

And he would preach in Old Orchard Beach, and he'd hold up a big picture of Africa. He was an amazing man. And to all those people on Old Orchard Beach, he would say, we have to go there.

We have to go there. We have to bring the gospel there. That was his preaching.

Very simple. A.B. Simpson, he wrote this song. Let me just read it to you.

Listen to how much your life will be simplified and sweetened if you believe this. He says, once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord. Once it was the feeling, now it is his word.

Once his gift I wanted, now the giver own. Once I sought for healing, now himself alone. In this verse, Christ cuts down all the other trees and he says, just look at me.

Simplify your life. I am the way. I am the truth.

I am the life. Those are his names. We can meditate on those as we go throughout life all the time.

And I want to exhort you all to do this. It's fall right now, isn't it? Beautiful weather, crisp, beautiful. This is my favorite time for taking walks with Kiara and Shiloh.

It's just so beautiful out. Don't miss it. Go look at those fall colors.

But when you go for a walk, I'd ask you to do this. Meditate on how Jesus is everything. Look at this verse and take it with you into the woods.

Take it with you for a little hike through the park down the street. He's the way. Okay, so I'm walking on a trail through the woods.

Christ is the way. Christ is the trail. There are ups and downs in the trail.

Okay, that's Jesus. He takes me down into a valley. He brings me back up.

There are signposts along the trail. That's Christ because he directs me in the way. He is the way.

Oh, here comes a little ladder or some rungs that I have to step up. That's Jesus because he is Jacob's ladder, right? He's the only way to heaven. You see what we're doing? You go through life and you meditate on everything.

You find Jesus in everything. What about the truth? You're walking in the woods and you see that's a tree. Okay, so I can't climb up it.

And if I hit my head into it, it's going to hurt, right? Okay, that's a puddle. If I step in it, it's going to get my feet wet, right? You all think I'm being absurd. No, this is how we meditate on Jesus, right? There's a cliff.

Okay, I'm not going to walk over that cliff because then I would fall, right? That's Jesus. He's the truth. He's coming in our ways.

He's showing us what we should do and what we shouldn't do. That's a blue jay. That's a hawk.

Okay, that's Christ giving us truth as we walk through life. And finally, the life. You walk on that path through the woods and you're breathing in.

And you're breathing in Jesus. Where does your happiness come from? Let me be very clear. I'm not saying that the air is Jesus.

I'm saying that as we breathe in, we can meditate and say, He's the life. He's my only source of life. He's my source of happiness, my source of joy, my source of growth, my source of health.

My only source of life. Amen. I want to close just by giving you a picture of a man who lived in this sweetness.

The sweetness of making Jesus absolutely everything. He was a man named Samuel Rutherford. And he was born in 1600.

You could all look him up. You could actually read his letters. He wrote 365 letters.

You could read one for each day in the year. Samuel Rutherford ministered in Scotland. Let me just tell you a few things that were said of him.

He was a man who was saturated with Christ. He was a man who made Christ everything. A man named Andrew Bonar said this of Rutherford.

He was known to fall asleep at night talking of Christ. And even to speak of him during his sleep. Indeed, he spoke of his dreams being about Christ.

Can you imagine that? You want your life to be that saturated with Jesus? Where you're going to sleep and you're lying on your bed and speaking of him. A man who heard Samuel Rutherford preach said this. In the pulpit, he had a strange utterance.

A kind of a scray, which means a caw or a screech. He was screeching from the pulpit about Jesus. Many times I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Jesus Christ.

This is a man exhilarated by Jesus Christ. And Rutherford himself said this. Listen, my Lord and Master is chief of ten thousands of thousands.

None is comparable to him in heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for him. Pray for Christ.

Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ. Beware of men pleasing.

The chief shepherd will shortly appear. And I encourage each and every one of you to make Jesus everything in your life. You know that each one of us could go deeper, don't you? You know that we could say, okay, I'm at 65%, Lord.

Lord, I want to surrender more of myself to you. You know that, right? Give him more. Study him.

Preach him. Pray to him. Love him.

And this is the final thing I want to say. Why is this verse, verse six here, the lifeblood of our church? Why do we need to make Jesus everything? So that anyone who comes in that door, when they meet us in this church, we counsel them with these three things. Are you making Jesus the one and only way for you? Or is anything else getting in the way? You see how you counsel with this verse? Something else gets... Are you adding a few of your works there, brother? Get rid of him.

He's the way. And then we counsel people and tell them he's the truth. Are you adding some other truth, sister? Are you more concerned with politics or culture or something else? Or is he the one and only truth for you? And then how do you counsel with the life? Are you getting your life source from Christ? Are you adding something else, brother? We must have this love right here to offer the world around us.

That we make Jesus everything. Amen? Let's pray and then we're going to sing a final hymn. Lord, I pray that these words have fallen on receptive ground.

Lord, I pray that we each go home and that we beg you, Lord, to take over more of our lives. That we see more clearly that the exclusivity of our Lord. That nothing else matters.

That you are the only way. You are the only truth. You are the only life.

Lord, please make us a church that preaches this. For your glory's sake. Amen.

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