

June 05, 2022

Center Stage Who's on center stage of your life?

In the U.S. two-thirds of the polled (18–29-year-olds with a Christian background) have withdrawn from church.

A Conversation with an involved and active believing 20 year old...

"What does it mean to be a Christian?"

"It means that you ask Jesus into your heart."

"Yes, all right, but what does that mean?"

"It means that you ask Jesus to forgive you."

"Okay, but what do you ask him to forgive you for?"

"Bad things? I guess you ask him to forgive you for bad things, the sins you do."

"Like what?"

[Silence –With a deer in the headlights look].

[pastor rephrases:] "Why would Jesus forgive you?"

She fidgeted. "Um, because you ask him?"

"What do you think God wants you to know?"

[now she smiles, like she's got this one] "He wants me to know that I should love myself and that there's nothing I can't do if I think I can."

"And what does God want from you?"

"He wants me to do good stuff ... You know, be nice to others and don't hang around with bad people."

- Does this girl really know what the good news of Jesus is all about?
- Let's compare Paul's description of his faith with her description.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- His description sounds very different from hers doesn't it?
- Paul's description and that girl's description are as different as the living kernel of truth compared to the dead husk.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live".

What would that 20 year old girl make of this? What do you make of it?

“But Christ lives in me.”

Do you think that 20 year old girl had ever experienced this? Have you ever experienced this?

Please don't let this witty quote from Winston Churchill be true of you.

“Occasionally he stumbled over the truth, but hastily picked himself up and hurried on as if nothing had happened.”

– Winston Churchill

- If you are stumbling over this truth, I want to give you something better than a quick explanation: A SERIES CHALLENGE!
- MEMORIZE Galatians 2:20!
- Start with some help in the “Talk It Over”

Week 1: Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

Week 2: Jesus Is Greater Than David

Week 3: Jesus Is Greater Than Expected

I. **A prototype is a smaller, simplified model of the REALITY**

God set the stage throughout history with promises, prophecies, and prototypes to demonstrate that the reality was no human invention.

Deuteronomy 18:18 (NIV) I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.

God said this to Moses. Jewish Rabbis understood this to be a promise that the future Messiah would be like Moses.

The Apostles of Jesus took notice, and described how Jesus was the fulfillment of this promise, prophecy, and prototype!

- Both Moses and Jesus were liberators, lawgivers, and shepherds.
- Both Moses and Jesus were rescued as infants in Egypt, tested in the wilderness, and suffered for the nation.

- Both Moses and Jesus proclaimed laws of God’s Kingdom from a mountain: **Moses** from Mount Sinai (Exodus), and **Jesus** from the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5-7).

II. The **LAW** and the **PROPHETS** are no longer center stage

And neither are Moses representing the LAW and Elijah representing the prophets. As we shall see from what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration!

Luke 9:28–36 (NIV) About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) ³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, “**This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.**” ³⁶ **When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.** The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

- Only Jesus was shining with “glory” on the Mount of Transfiguration. (not Moses or Elijah, who were monumental figures in Israel’s religious history!)
- Peter, not knowing what to say, thought that each of these three men deserved to be honored on the spot! He thought he was doing well to put Jesus right up there with the BEST!
- **But God interrupted HIM!** Peter was mistaken for thinking that Moses and Elijah are on par with Jesus. That’s the point of God’s booming voice interruption! **“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”**
- Then poof, Moses and Elijah are gone, and Jesus stands alone.

The Prophets are no longer center stage; JESUS is!

The Law and the Prophets is no longer center stage; JESUS is!

III. **PASSOVER** was a prototype

We get this from Jesus himself:

Luke 22:15–19 (NIV) . . . “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. . . . ¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this

and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; **do this in remembrance of me.**”

The long-standing memorial was redirected to memorialize JESUS himself!

Jesus was the reality, prophesied by John the Baptizer ...

John 1:29 (NIV) ...John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Jesus is greater than the EXODUS!! AND THE LAW ITSELF!

Acts 13:39 (NIV) Through him [JESUS] everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

IV. Trade it all in for **JESUS**

Luke 22:20 (NIV) In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood,** which is poured out for you.

Jesus replaced the entire sacrificial temple system with himself, once and for all.

How was it even possible that countless crowds of JEWS were convinced that this could be TRUE?

Only two things can account for such a colossal shift!

1. Jesus’ life and ministry demonstrated the power of God.
2. Jesus’ irrefutable resurrection testified to God’s vindication of Jesus’ claims! **Jesus is the Son of God, Messiah, Savior of the world!**

Jesus is the center of all of history and he can be the center of your story too, but for this to happen you must see him for who he is, and gladly give him the center stage of your life.

Series Challenge: Memorize Galatians 2:20.

Talk It Over

CENTER STAGE

(Week 1)

Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

SMALL TALK

1. As a child, what experience demonstrated that you enjoyed being the center of attention?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Galatians 2:20.** What grabs your attention in these statements? Which phrases do you stumble over and wonder what they mean? What are your ideas about these statements?
3. **COMPARE Paul's words in his sermon in Acts 13:38-39 with Galatians 2:15-16.** How would you summarize what the Gospel is all about?
4. **READ Galatians 2:19-21.** What controversy in the early church do these words address? If you want to be placed in a right relationship with God, what works and what does not work?
5. Which descriptive phrases in Galatians 2:20 place Jesus on the center stage of Paul's life? How does he take himself off of center stage? How does this change everything?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Are you a "self made person"? Why or why not?
7. Have you ever been caught in the "performance trap"? What did that look like? How does the performance trap undermine the gospel of grace through faith in Christ Jesus?
8. Which truth from Galatians 2:20 will help you avoid the performance trap?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

9. VVCC's 5 core statements listed below are obedience steps. Explain how these are not for "earning" God's approval, but rather a description of a life of faith in the Gospel of grace.