

EVANGEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

2040 N. WESTRIDGE, WICHITA, KS 67203

(316) 942-5882

E-Mail Address: church@evangelpca.org

Web Page: Http://www.evangelpca.org

Sunday Worship 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Senior Pastor: Donald W. Rackley

Associate Pastor: Tim Rackley

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The Christ Centered Life

The Apostle Paul sets forth God's desire for the Church in Ephesians 4:17-18; "Let me say this, then, speaking for the Lord: Live no longer as the unsaved do, for they are blinded and confused. Their closed hearts are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds against Him, and they cannot understand His ways. They don't care anymore about right and wrong and have given themselves over to impure ways. They stop at nothing, being driven by their evil minds and reckless lust."

Paul then urges those who profess faith in Christ to throw off the old ways and become a new and different person; holy and good. We are to never forget that we belong to Christ; Ephesians 4:31.

The Word of God is clear that worship and service to Jesus Christ is the function of Christianity. He is to be at the center of our lives, activity, plans and relationships. Our lives move around a center. This is true of all of us. But nothing works well at the center except Christ. If we live for money we become sour and cynical. If we live for power we become lonely and insecure. If we live for our self, our lives become barren and empty. Put your children at the center and they move away. Put your spouse at the center and she dies and you must let go of her hand. Only Jesus works well at life's center. He gives guidance on how to live successfully. He gives power enabling us to do the right thing. He gives comfort in times of discouragement and trouble. He gives purpose that is big enough to capture our imagination and to fulfill all our longings for immortality. He must be at the center of our lives. We must individually and corporately orbit Him. Christ is to be the center of our lives and He is building His Church.

Consider, the Church was in the heart of God before time; Ephesians 1:4. The Church has an exalted place in the heart and plan of God. Jesus said, "I will build My Church;" Matthew 16:18. No other institution has such a high position. The Church is destined to display God's character throughout eternity; Ephesians 2:6-7. Rulers and authorities in heavenly realms now stand in awe of God's wisdom as they observe what He has done and is doing through the Church; Ephesians 3:10. It is because of this that the Apostle Paul pleads with believers to honor and love one another, since the Church is one body; Ephesians 4:3-4. Believers are in the Church together and we are in it forever.

The Church has survived some very tough times. It has even flourished. This is difficult to imagine when we consider the men to whom Jesus left His work. Were told about these men in Matthew 10:2-4. They differed in politics, personality and temperament. But they had to work together for a common purpose in spite of their differences. They had made a commitment to Jesus Christ that was irrevocable. This resulted in a radical change in life. The challenge of this commitment can be seen in Matthew 28:16-20. He was going to leave them. What would hold them together? John 13:33-34 tells us that it was love for Him and love for each other. They were determined to pursue the Master's will no matter what the cost was for them.

Jesus had commanded His followers, "To love one another" and He would provide what He required. Paul writes of this, "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us," and the fruit of the Spirit includes love; Galatians 5:22.

Being self-centered is natural for all of us. It is our nature. We possess instincts of self preservation. We also, quite naturally, develop a determination to satisfy our every desire. But God calls us to be different; to be Christ centered. The Christian's relationship to God must envelop and color all that he is and does. All of the believer's other relationships are to be subservient to his primary relationship with God. Jesus demanded an exclusive priority that a person center his life, loyalty and values solely upon God. The apostle said: "For me, to live is Christ" and because he could say that he could also say, "To die is gain;" Philippians 1:21.