

To Know Christ
Philippians 3:4b-14
October 2, 2011

status symbols =

_____ had a whole list of status symbols.

Paul says, "I have come to regard all this as _____ because of the surpassing value of:

Knowing Christ has turned his whole world _____.

Paul writes this letter from _____.

Paul can be joy-full in jail because:

1.

2.

When we come to know Jesus, our _____ change.

Jesus has claimed me, and now I want to _____ him and make _____ goal _____ goal, his _____ my _____.

Young people ask the question:

The world says, your purpose is:

God's goal is:

Jesus' mission is:

What is your goal/purpose/focus?

Prayer Concerns:

This week we will be exploring God's mission. What was God's mission from the beginning? What did God reveal about God's mission in the incarnation and life of Jesus?

Monday: Read Genesis 1-2:3

This is the first creation story in the Bible, describing in poetic form as God creates the world. Notice the repetition of the phrases: God said, God made, and God saw that it was good. God speaks creation into being.

* In 1:28 God gives the humans a purpose or goal. What is it?

* There has been much debate over what it means to have "dominion" over creation. Certainly, if humans are made in God's image, then we should understand dominion according to how God exercises it. How does God show dominion over us and over creation? What does this tell us about how we are to treat God's creation (the earth, animals, plants, and other humans)?

* Humans beings are given the distinction of being made in the image of God. If we are to "image" God in the way we live, what should our lives look like?

Tuesday: Read Isaiah 65:17-25

The prophets called the people to return to God. They reminded the people about what God's wants for the world and therefore, how God calls them to live accordingly.

* Notice that the new creation is not about going to heaven, but about God creating a new heaven and a new earth. What is this new creation like? What is missing? How do people relate to one another? How do the animals relate to one another? (v. 25)

* We live in a world where it is still reality that many infants die from preventable diseases; many build houses for others while they live in substandard housing; many work in the fields and harvest food while they struggle to feed their own families; many labor in vain while they struggle to survive. If Isaiah is giving us a picture of God's dream where these things don't happen, what might God be calling us to do to work for the dream?

Wednesday: Read Micah 4:1-4

Micah is another prophet who called the people to turn back to God and painted a picture of God's future.

* Notice that there is movement in two directions: people are streaming to Jerusalem even while the word of the LORD is going forth from Jerusalem. What do the people seek? (v. 2)

* How do conflicts get decided in this vision? (v.3) Why do you think that the tools of war are turned into tools for farming?

* V. 4 that no one shall make people afraid. Do you sense fear in our society today? Who are those who perpetuate this fear and make people afraid? How might God call us to confront this fear and those who perpetuate it?

Thursday: Read Matthew 20:20-28

Mrs. Zebedee is a classic overzealous mom, striving so that her boys, James and John, will be higher than the other disciples and will have permanent places of privileged status in God's kingdom.

* What is Jesus' mission, according to 20:28? Is your goal to be great or to be a servant?

* Do you more often seek or expect to BE served, or to be the one serving?

* Who might Jesus be calling you to serve?

Friday: Read John 10:1-10

Both the Old Testament and Jesus use the metaphors of shepherds and sheep, which were well known in their context. Jesus identifies himself in several different roles in this passage. He is the good shepherd, but he is also the gate. He is the one who cares for the sheep as well as protecting them.

* What is Jesus' mission, according to verse 10? How do you define the abundant life? What do you think Jesus means by "abundant life?"

* The Gospel of John is sometimes called the Gospel of Life, because Jesus talks about life so often. Try skimming through John or searching online to see how many times Jesus talks about life and what Jesus means by this.

Saturday: Read Revelation 21-22:5

The very end of the Bible gives us one of the most beautiful descriptions of God's intention for creation. Notice that this passage is not about heaven, but about the New Heaven and the New Earth. Notice that we don't go UP to be with God; God comes DOWN to dwell fully and completely on the new earth!

* People tend to put a lot of focus on pearly gates and streets of gold, but this passage gives a much richer hope of what God wants to do with creation besides the exterior decorating. In your opinion, what are the most powerful aspects of this new creation?

* What things are missing in the new creation?

* What do the people do in the new heaven and new earth? (22:4-5) According to what we know about God in the Bible, what might it mean for us to "reign?" Think back to Genesis 1, the creation in God's image and the call to dominion.