

Why?
Why Jesus?
4/23/17
Philippians 2:5-11

Welcome CrossPoint.

Here is the thing though, the idea of "Why?" is important. Earlier in the year, we talked about having a personal vision that directs your choices and decisions in life that focuses on the question of "who am I." And when we talk about what it is that motivates us, the reason behind our choices and decisions, we are talking about our "Why?" Too many times we jump right to the "what" question...what do I want to eat, what do I want to do when I grow up...forgetting that the who and the why questions need to be answered first.

There's a TED talk by this guy named Simon Sinek entitled "Start with Why." The idea is that if we are going to do something we first begin with a reason. In the talk, he mentions the fact that if we just focus on what we do rather than why do it we'll always be going through the motions, never really getting anywhere. You've been there before, right. Where you've forgotten why you do something and you've slipped into a pattern of simply going through the motions. Sinek points out that if we focus on why we do things then we begin to become more directed with our lives and our choices and decisions not only become easier, but they become better. It seems like a great way to go about life. By answering this "why?" question we begin to realize that there is a greater depth to many of the other things in our lives.

The question "why?" is also a natural one isn't it? We are told to do something or not do something and naturally the question rises, "Why?" Those of you who have kids have probably heard this question more times than you'd like. In this series, we are going to look at several of the most important "Why?" questions that we have in today's world. I think this series has the power to encourage us and transform our way of thinking so that we can become deeper, and more passionate followers of Jesus.

So, this morning we are going to jump right into the deep end and ask perhaps the most important question that we have before us. Why Jesus? More specifically: Why should we follow Jesus instead of any other leader or all of the other messages we get each day?

Some estimates are that we get between 4000-10,000 messages per day! One blogger actually tried to record the number of messages that he was exposed to in a given day. He stopped at breakfast because he had already counted 487 messages. Let that sink for a moment. A glance at Facebook and you're already exposed to so many different messages. Commercials seems to take up more and more time on tv, not to mention billboards and signs you pass every day. Then there are other messages out there that we take in through the shows we watch, the music we listen to, the books we read. With all these messages it is sometimes hard to see what makes Jesus so unique. Especially when many of those messages tell us the exact opposite of what he taught. So, let's dig a little deeper today and really focus on why Jesus.

[Read Passage]

Paul is writing this letter to the Philippians and he is urging the church to follow Jesus and to show love to one another. He has in his mind to help them unite and remove destructive conflict. He gives a series of things to commit to and asks some rhetorical questions and then moves into this wonderful description of who Jesus is and why that matters.

Listen again to the first part of our passage. Read verse 6-8. This tells us that Jesus gave up his divine privileges and that he suffered a criminal's death. Jesus chooses to move from having divine authority to a place of humble submission. That's an incredible act of humility. I think we forget the sheer magnitude of what Jesus did. We hear those words that Christ died on the cross for our sins. Yet, we lose perspective on

just how incredible that really is. Look, if the gospel begins to seem too good to be true, you're just starting to get it. That's how incredible this is. Jesus left his throne so that God became flesh, he then died a criminal's death and thus redeemed the world. In other words:

Jesus gave himself for us.

⁶Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Philippians 2:6-8

Everything about this speaks of an incredible love, doesn't it? The fact that he left his throne and gave up his divine privileges, the fact that he took on the humble position of a slave, the fact that he died a criminal's death on our behalf. This is remarkable and it stands in contrast to much of the other messages we hear every day. At the time of his writing it was a common practice in the Roman empire that the ruling Caesar was worshipped as a god. Notice the contrast between the message that Paul is giving and the message that the rest of the world is hearing. One is filled with pride and selfishness, the other is humility and love. Now you might be saying that we don't worship our leaders like they did then but, all I have to point out how much we pay sports figures...enough said. This is why the message of Jesus is such a contrast to our world's understanding of authority and leaders. Jesus begins with humility.

The starting point for Jesus is humility.

⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Philippians 2:7-8

Let's be honest again, humility does not come naturally to us. Even if you don't like necessarily being the leader we still tend to think about ourselves first and care for our wants and desires before others. So, when Jesus acts in humility there is something inconceivable about it and yet incredibly attractive. The depth of his humility is unparalleled in human history. It makes Jesus unique...that's why Jesus!

Let's look again at verses 9-11. We are told here by Paul that God elevated Jesus to the place of highest honor and that his name is above all other names. This whole concept points to the fact that Jesus has been given all authority by God. Again, Paul is writing to a church that is under Roman rule. They have been told that Caesar is lord. That the one true authority in the world is Caesar. Paul, however, is writing a different story. He is declaring boldly here that Jesus is Lord, not Caesar. Jesus being Lord changes everything. It means that all other authorities are below him and because Jesus has this authority he also has the power to back it up. He says this himself to his disciples in the great commission when he says to them that all authority and power have been given to me. They have a powerful message about the real Lord.

Jesus has all authority and power.

⁹Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

So, this is why we follow Jesus. The message of Jesus often stands in contrast to what we hear around us. Sure, we see glimmers of it lived out in others, but the message of Jesus still stands as unique. Here the Son of God took on flesh for us. He died a death we deserved so that we might have eternal life. Then God raised him and put him in the position of highest honor and has given him all power and authority. Why follow Jesus...because of who he is and what he has done for the world and there's no one like him before or after.

The last part of our passage says that every tongue will declare that Jesus is Lord. You see, when we answer the question "why" we are faced with the next question. So now what? Jesus left his throne, took on flesh,

died for us, and rose again and is now seated at the right hand of the Father and is Lord of all. Many of us say that we believe this but, if we truly know it, then this understanding should give us direction to every aspect of our lives. Every choice we make, every decision that we're faced with should be viewed through the lens of Jesus. Why Jesus, because he is Lord. And if Jesus is Lord, then we begin to see that our lives matter. That what we do in this life matters. We begin to see that we can live without fear because we know the one who has all authority and power. We can be at peace when everything seems chaotic and difficult because we believe in what Jesus can do.

Because Jesus is Lord, everything changes.

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:10-11

Paul is talking to the Philippians and pleading with them to understand this fact that Jesus is Lord. It is because of this fact that we are moved toward others. It is because of this fact that we are compassionate and humble. Paul is relating this passage because he is so caught up in emotions. He is so enamored with Christ that he breaks out into this hymn. This is the passion that we should have. Our hearts should be so caught up in the message of Christ and the message of hope that we need to be moved in the same way. Paul was so motivated by the message of Christ that everything he did flowed from that. He took on persecution and failure. He took on beatings and imprisonment, all because Jesus was Lord. What if we lived from that reality? What if we lived with that as our Why? What if we lived knowing that Jesus is Lord and that that changes the way we think and the way we act.

Why Jesus? Because there is no other choice!