

11/14/04 – “JESUS PREEMINENT”

“I urge you, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Worship is more than words, singing, more than just lifting our hands – Ultimately, worship is giving our lives as a living sacrifice – Romans 12:1

Paul challenges us not to be conformed to this world – Not to be squeezed into the mold of “the world’s agenda” but to be transformed

We are absolutely inundated with information – So much technology, media and competing imagery – “Attention Deficit a national syndrome”

We need to quiet our souls...slow down – God doesn’t reward busyness (Mary & Martha), He rewards friendship and intimacy

We can’t presume how much time we have - “Shortevity” crisis in Africa - Entire nations dying in their early 30’s

There is no way to escape eternal death except through Jesus Christ – Now is the time to live for Christ...not yesterday, not tomorrow...but today!

“...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, proving what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” – Rom. 12:2

BLESSEDNESS

When Jesus spoke the Beatitudes, He was giving the fundamental laws and blessings of His kingdom – Matthew 5:3-16

Jesus is telling people that if they live the Beatitudes they shall surely be BLESSED! – Beatitudes are contrary to our natural ways

Blessedness is not being controlled by things - We get caught up in the external and visible, while the Beatitudes focus on the internal and invisible

What good is it if a man gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Jesus says it’s a bad deal – even gaining the entire world

HUMILITY

Humility is moral realism – It’s seeing ourselves in light of God’s holiness – Jesus Christ is the perfect standard of humility and God’s blessing

Scripture says us that before honor comes humility – “The way up is the way down” – We are to be clothed in humility

God gives grace to humble people – He resists proud people - We are to esteem others better than ourselves...more important than ourselves – Philip. 2:1-4

“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him because He cares for you.” – 1 Pet. 5:5-7 - It’s in surrender and humble trust that He will bring us through

Takes humility to turn to God in repentance, “...If My people who are called by My name, humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” – 2 Chronicles 7:14

Humility rejoices at the success of others and mourns at their pain...to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice

Humility is seen in the fruits of brokenness – David said in **Psalm 51**, “...**a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.**”

Humility is freedom from having to win or be right – Humility is the foundation of all unity - One of the keys to a successful marriage is humility

Humility is a mark of maturity - Humility is a mark of authenticity – “The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life.” Pr. 22:4

What do I have that I have not received? Everything I have has been given to me - Where did I get it? – Parents, teachers, family, friends, mentors, etc.

Things we possess are not to possess us - To be blessed is far deeper than joy or gladness – Blessedness abides when joy and gladness leave – Matthew 6:33

Apostle Paul said, “I have learned the secret of being content, whether I’m abased or abound I have learned the secret of being content

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.” – Matt. 6:33 – Our #1 priority?

Being blessed has its own reward...we are always going to have problems (Storms, trials, temptations, struggles) in this world

“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33 – Jesus first and foremost

What a wonderful and mighty God we serve! I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me