

Introduction: Pg. \_\_\_\_

It's Medford Night tomorrow night at the Celtics game, so I'm taking my little girl to her first Celtics game at the Garden.

- Now for those of you who have been to watch the C's, you know that there is a lot different side attractions to get caught up in that you could actually lose your focus on the GAME.
- You've got all of the concessions and festivities in the concourse area. Parker might talk me into a piece of pizza or some nachos or popcorn, but chances are I can get away with buying her a Sprite. Kid you not, that's her favorite. She's easy.
- Then you've got the arena itself, all of the banners, scoreboards, the crowd itself. I love counting the Scalabrini jerseys each time I go.
- Don't forget about the halftime show and the dancing fans on the jumbotron. Look here. No, look there. No look there.
- Here's the problem. We could enjoy all of the side attractions and miss the main attraction, the whole point of the experience - which is watching the CELTICS play the GAME!

What is Christianity about?

- Christianity is Christ.
- The first chapter of this Gospel, records Jesus simply saying: "Follow me." (John 1:43)
- One of the greatest leaders of the early church was the Apostle Paul. He said: "To live is Christ." (Philippians 1:21) My entire life is defined by Christ, driven by Christ, and directed to Christ. He is the goal.

Here's what I want to invite you today, this week, and the rest of your life: Take a *REALLY* LONG look at Jesus. I want us to LINGER and BEHOLD.

This is not an easy task. It's hard to focus. We are easily distracted. Think about our culture.

**The Culture of the Culture (Every minute...)**

- **Facebook users share nearly 2.5 million pieces of content.**
- **Twitter users tweet nearly 300,000 times.**
- **Instagram users post nearly 220,000 new photos.**
- **Email users send over 200 million messages.**
- **Amazon generates over \$80,000 in online sales. ([Domo.com](http://Domo.com))**

Yo, Pastor Tanner tryna make me feel guilty up in church." No! I'd probably be in the top 5% of data consumption in the room. The point is not to do away with these tools that can actually be great assets and a lot of fun. The point is to put them into perspective and realize they can serve as a massive distraction, rather than enhancing our pursuit of who matters most: JESUS.

Not only is it the culture of the culture, it's the...

**The Culture of the Church [What about the church?]**

- Sometimes we are quicker to focus on all of the gifts that flow from Jesus (salvation, forgiveness, peace, joy, restored relationships, purpose in life) that all of the sudden we lose sight of the Giver as the Greatest Gift. IF NOT for the Giver of the gift, the gift would not be a gift.
- We can actually do 1,000 great things "for" Jesus or in the atmosphere of Jesus, but miss Jesus in the process. We can sing songs, hear from the Bible, go to Group, serve others with good deeds, but not out of a heart amazed by Jesus.
- It's what Augustine said: "He loves thee too little (not enough; a level that fails to communicate his worth) who loves anything together with thee that he loves not for thy sake."

**"For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ." - Robert Murray McCheyne**

In your life, **is Jesus central or is Jesus secondary?**

We can never ask this question enough because the essence of faith is daily belief in the gospel...

**“Jesus is the Issue”  
John 10:22-42**

**The Point: Make Jesus central in your life by believing his words and works.**

The Question in verse 24 Drives the entire Narrative: “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

- Their question does not seem sincere. In fact, these religious leaders seem to be looking for ammunition to incriminate him and hand him over to the authorities.
- Regardless of their motives in asking, the answer only has two possibilities.
  - Yes or No;
  - I am the Christ or, You’re crazy, you got the wrong one.
- Jesus begins to answer in verse 25. *Read 25-30*
  
- Now, to his one answer, there is two possible responses:
  - It’s true. He is who he says he is. It’s not true. He is a liar.
  - He is God or he is blasphemous.
- Neutrality is not really an option.

T: In this dialogue, Jesus provides two simple but infinitely deep reasons to believe in him. #1

**I. Believe in Jesus because of his words.**

*My words have told you.*

- We’ve already seen those who did not even believe in Jesus say: “No one ever spoke like this man.” (John 7:46)
- But Jesus does not just speak true words, or authoritative words, or life-giving words. Jesus is “The Word.”
- As the Eternal Word, he is “how God expresses himself.” Jesus came to make God known to the world.
- If you want to know what God is like, the God who made everything your eye will ever see, the God who keeps 1 billion, trillion stars burning in existence, the God who keeps your heart beating even this very moment, if you want to know that God, LOOK at Jesus.

But why would Jesus say, “I’ve already told you?”

- There were many occasions both in personal conversations (which probably were reported to others rather quickly) and public conversations where Jesus would say things like:
  - I am the Son of Man who came down from heaven (3:13–14).
  - My Father is always at work and I too am working (even on the Sabbath)” and they wanted to kill him because he made himself equal with God. (5:16-18)
  - I have authority over life and death (5:22-26 & 10:10-19).
  - ‘Before Abraham was born, *I am*’ (8: 58), invoking the divine name.
  - Jesus also presents himself as the good shepherd (10:11), identifying himself with God who, in the OT, is the shepherd of Israel.
- But now, for Jesus to say: “I and the Father are one” was an absolutely staggering statement. He could only say this (*If and only if*) he is God!
  - The Jews certainly understood his claim to divinity.
  - That’s why Verse 31 says: “They picked up stones *again* to stone him.”

- That's why when Jesus courageously questions in verse 32: "You want to kill a man for doing good? I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" They retort in verse 33: "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."
- For Jesus to say he and God the Father are One means they are perfectly unified in purpose and mission, which implies they are one in terms of their essence and being. Unity of purpose flows out of unity of essence... (Functional oneness & ontological oneness)
- This what the church has always believed about Jesus. **The Nicene Creed**, penned in 325 A.D. Says:
 

**We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made;  
of the same essence as the Father.**

When Jesus speaks, God speaks, and when Jesus speaks, his words possess life-transforming power. We see the word-centric nature of Christianity as the dialogue continues. Jesus answers the accusation of blasphemy starting in *Read 34-36*.

- Follow this argument carefully.
- Jesus quotes the OT Scripture, which they wholeheartedly believed was authoritative for their lives and inspired by God.
- By citing Psalm 82, he reminds them that the Word of God actually calls human rulers or judges, "gods."
- "He argues that "if human judges can in some sense be called gods (in light of their role as representatives of God), this designation is even more appropriate for the one who truly is the Son of God.
- He argues from the lesser to the greater. If God called them "gods," it is not a stretch at all for Jesus to be the Son of God.
- And in these words, we have one of the clearest statements on the trustworthiness of the Bible: "The Scripture cannot be broken." You cannot break the unbreakable Scriptures. [Matthew 5:18]
- So why do I believe the Bible? Jesus did. We have the very words of God in this book.

App: One of the clearest indicators of spiritual health is how much we are taking in, enjoying, and then applying the words of this Book? And it is a joy! If you read the Bible and rarely smile, you're reading it wrong. That's stings. Like a needle that brings that brings healing to my bones.

T: I told you by my words, and I told you by my works. Not just what he said, what he did....

## II. Believe in Jesus because of his works.

My works have told you. What works? In this gospel, we have seen Jesus...

- Turn water into wine... Make a lame man walk...
- Feed 20,000 hungry people from a few pieces of bread and fish...
- Walk on water... Give a blind man sight.
- And a thousand other moments of kindness. Hanging out with lepers. Serving the poor. Speaking an encouraging word to a friend in need. Displaying grace to his hard headed disciples

T: I hope you have seen the way John presents Jesus in a rhythmic fashion.

*The Rhythm of Christ in John*

- Often John will present a Statement of Jesus then a Sign that explains the statement. For example, Jesus will say: "I am the light of the world." Then he'll give a blind man sight by giving his light.
- OR Sometimes he'll record a sign of Jesus and then provide a Statement that explains the Sign. For example, Jesus will feed 20,000 hungry people, and then he'll say: "I am the bread of life."
- His works are consistent with his identity. His works are telling us not just that He IS God. As if that weren't enough, but also what kind of God he is. Ducks quack. Dogs bark. Birds fly. And the Son of God, the Messiah, causes the blind to see, heals the lame, turns water into wine, raises the dead, and rises from the dead. He is kind, compassionate, patient, loving, the abundant provider.

What he does reveals who he is. We see this again in this story....

- What did Jesus tell us in John 10:11? "I am the Good Shepherd." Now, he introduces one of the most brilliant aspects of his Shepherd care in vv. 28-29.
  - Look at this. #1. No one or nothing can take a believer out of the hands of the Son.
  - But no one or nothing can take a believer out of the hands of the Father.
- One of the most comforting and powerful expressions of God's love toward us is how he causes us to persevere to the very end.
  - God brings us into the Christian life *and* keeps us in by his grace as a gift.
  - If we are truly in, we can't lose it. You can't lose your salvation. He will lead you to persevere to the end.
  - Yes, we will still sin against God and fail to honor him many times, BUT the pattern of our life is that we are changing to become more like Jesus.
  - What about people that say they're Christians but don't live like it?
    - Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord..." (Matthew 7)
    - "They went out from us because they were not of us." 1 John 2:
  - The pattern of their life will reveal that they have not really been changed. There's no real turning and returning to God for his grace to continue to work in them.
- But for those who truly believe and have been changed, they are forever secure in Christ.

How does he accomplish this? **"He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:12)**

This week we will remember and celebrate the death (It's what Good Friday is all about) and we will remember and celebrate the resurrection of Christ - next Sunday on Easter. And it is going to be an awesome week, and each day is going to be awesome, as long as we take a *really long* look at Jesus.

When we are thinking rightly, we can NEVER get tired of this. Mike Reeves says, "Our boredom is simple blindness."

*Conclusion:*

The words of Christ and the works of Christ were meant to inspire belief! *Read 37-42*

These are still the reasons to believe today. And here's the amazing part for us... We not only get to experience Christ, but we get to live for Christ in such a way that people experience Christ through us. We engage in good deeds. People experience Christ. And then we simply say, "Jesus has changed my life. This is how. He can change yours too." That's the rhythm of a Christian.

**"For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ." - Robert Murray McCheyne**

**Is Jesus central or is Jesus secondary?** Let's live for him as the Centerpiece of Everything! It's all about him

?PRAY?

Jesus, it's all about you.

Is Jesus the Issue for you? Does he define everything in your life? I hope this is an amazing week of worship for you as an individual. I hope this is an incredible week of reaching out to those around us. I pray that the walls shake in Fanuiel Hall on Friday night when we worship the world's Greatest Revolutionary, Jesus Christ. I pray that the ribbon in this Theatre is pushed to the last row because so many of our friends and so many of our neighbors pack into the Chevalier for our Easter celebration.

Jesus, it's all about you.