

"Core Value"
Dallas Willard @ Navigators Conference
Session 1 of 3 [56:30]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKWLg23CQJo>

*The session was typed from the YouTube (audio only) with good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The [brackets] & **bold** disclose the scribe's commentary and also cross-references to other Dallas Willard teachings.*

Ephesians 3:1-10 - "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 [a]By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight [b]into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."

The "mystery of Christ" may still be a mystery.

v. 5 - Here is the mystery: Gentiles were fellow heirs of the promise in Christ Jesus with the gospel. They had been a covenant people but they did not understand this. The Abrahamic Covenant had made it plain - Through Abraham and his seed all will be blessed. The light of God revealed to the Israelites & Gentiles. We have to remember that for it is a recurring problem.

v. 8 - *"I have been made a minister of grace...to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ."*

The idea here is that something indescribably wonderful is happening in this Universe and Jesus Christ is conducting it...and everyone is invited to be a part of it with no cultural, ethnic conditions attached.

Through the history of God's people the ethnic condition has reattached itself.

* Dallas asks Jewish Students,

"Can a person can be right with God without being a Jew?"

They have trouble with it. It's a very complicated question

Perhaps we have that same problem as Christians.

- Can a person be right with God without being a Christian?

That's a very complicated question.

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Over and over the problem has come back - Can we present the unfathomable riches of Christ to people and bring them directly to Him and allow them to enter what He is doing, to enter the Kingdom of God at His invitation by trusting Him?

Is that for the whole world or is that something religious?

Again and again, we see Jesus restricted to something religious rather than something cosmic.

v. 9 - *"to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things"*

The connection is to be restored in the person of Jesus Christ

v. 10 - the outcome of the riches of Christ: *"the manifold wisdom of God made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places...eternal purpose in Christ Jesus as Lord."*

We are talking about the **passion** to know, love and become like Jesus Christ.

(t) How can this be effectively approached?

PASSION

1.) This is a value - something you aspire to have.

We need to stop and think about it. A value is a goal, an objective that is chosen. You are choosing this as a goal. You are choosing a passion. This raises some interesting issues because you can't choose a **passion** directly. You can't say, *"I will choose to have a passion."*

How do you go about it? How do you do it indirectly?

Where does **Passion** come from? [[Answers from the Group](#)]

The Heart
Desperation
Relationship
Aspiration

Passion is related to "passive". When we speak of the Passion of Christ, we are talking about the sufferings of Christ, the things which were imposed on him

That is an element of what this "Core Value" is about - the idea of something that is going to lay hold of you. Curiously, you're also talking about laying a hold of it.

~ **Let Me Suggest - Passion comes from Vision**

"Goals" are something you want to bring about.

"Vision" - Your vision is a sense of how things are that grips you and determines your feelings and automatic orientation in action.

* OT Prophets - "Seers" - They saw the Kingdom of God.

The primary source of passion is vision.

That vision comes from a sense of reality.

* Paul - "Unfathomable riches of Christ" - He is referring to a vision of reality. A vision which the church has lost from time to time and has rarely clearly lived in and is being called again today to live in the vision of the "unfathomable riches of Christ". You are being drawn to a vision of a greater Christ.

The single greatest danger to the church is that it will not perceive and present the greatness of Christ.

Normally it will present him only in familiar, religious terms. That's what happened immediately when Christ came - the attempt to categorize him in familiar religious terms. The disciples had a terribly difficult time with this.

"Who is the Christ?" - Matthew 22:42

A question designed to reverse the issue that the Lord would be the son of David. That became a set sermon for the early church.

Who is Christ since David called him Lord? Something no Jewish son did to a Father.

Who do you say He is? Carpenter —> Prophet —> Messiah

Problem - Vision of Christ to bring about the passion.

Passion = gripped with a desire to know, to love, to be like Him.

We as the people of Christ are coming through a time when we have settled for a great deal less than that. That has produced a disciple-less Christianity. The normal assumption of our form of Christianity is that you can be a Christian without being a disciple.

It is the heart of the disciple that says,

"I would know Him, love Him, be like Him."

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A disciple has looked at the possibilities of life and they have said, "*I must have Christ.*" They are learning from Him how to be like Him. They are gradually arranging and rearranging their affairs so that it actually happens. And they believe it can happen.

We are up against a theology that many people think it can not happen. Christlikeness in what was spelled out in His words and His deeds are unrealistic to think about. So the passion is not there and it is not catching.

* You have to have a fever to pass it on.

A fever or passion for Christ is thought not to be essential.

It is OK for full time workers but for persons running a school, a store, a writer, it is not necessarily for them.. You have this option of opting out of discipleship. This betrays the whole heart of the vision.

Passion comes from reality. In order to have the passion, you have to see the reality and that effects the gospel that is preached.

We need to ask ourselves - *Are we preaching a gospel that generates passion for knowledge, love and conformity to Jesus Christ?*

Is that our central message?

Or, is our central message a message of the Christ of unsearchable riches? To miss out is something we can't stand.

That's the picture of the Christ of the New Testament. As you go through the New Testament, you see Christ getting bigger and bigger.

Revelation - A vision of this incredible being.

He came to a people and inhabited them and they came to see that's who He really was.

We have to ask ourselves - *Are we preaching a gospel that presents that Christ?*

Here's what your missing out on when you miss out on Christ.

We have to come to grips with the fact that we have a theology of salvation that blocks the way to a passionate involvement with Christ. [19:40]

That's an idea of salvation of Christ merely paying for our sins and we accept the payment.

~ **Alternative Account of Salvation**

To be saved is to be caught up in a life that Jesus is now living on Earth.

"*Is He now living a life on Earth?*" People will say, "Well, yes."

We know the right answer. But, when we are faced with the issue of what practical difference to salvation, the tacit, if not explicit response is no.

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Colossians 3:1-3 - *"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

Sounds like the "luxury" edition. It's an option. What I'm saying to you is that it is not an option. It's the real thing. Christ did not go the cross so we can avoid it but that we can join Him on the cross and walk through it to the resurrection of new life. To step out in that we bear the unsearchable riches of Christ and bear witness to it.

* Acts 14 - Paul at Thyatira - lame man healed.

People tried to worship Paul & Barnabas. *"Don't do that. We are men of like passions."* These men of "like passions" were living a resurrection life that could not be accounted for in normal human terms. That was a part of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We have to ask ourselves:

Is the gospel we preach one that invites people into this kind of life?
"Forgiveness of Sins" - got to be there. That's taken care of. You have to accept that. But that's only a part. The full version is new life in Christ and that's the main New Testament Language - entering the Kingdom of God - the new birth is to be able to see and enter the Kingdom of God. **John 3:16** is not a forgiveness verse, it is a new life verse.

Of course you have to be forgiven and you have to live on the basis. Justification is by grace through faith. But that is not the story of salvation. The story of salvation is Jesus Christ the person and our faith is in Him and not something He did or said. When you put your faith in Him you get everything He did and said and everything He is doing now. When you begin to see that you would see how someone would have a passion to know Him.

~ Knowledge

[24:50]

The Bible never refers to "head knowledge". Knowledge always refers to intimate interaction. To know Him is to have a passion to intimately interact with Him.

* Paul in Philippians - his passion is to *"know him and the power of the resurrection and share in the fellowship of the suffering."*

That's the glorious part that goes with it. When you are living with that life, you have a world against you. The suffering is nothing compared to the life of resurrection you are living in.

~ **Four Levels of Discipleship with Jesus** [26:00]

1.) Jesus Speaking to Us

A disciple is with Him learning to be like Him.

* Child learning long division from a teacher is a disciple of the teacher.

What kind of relationship would it be like if He never talked to his disciples? Disciples hear the voice of their Lord and they talk to Him.

* *"He walks with me and He talks with me and He tells me I am His own."*

2.) He helps me learn how to do what He said. [27:20]

* *"Let your Yes be Yes, No be No"*

Ever have trouble with that? One of the most common afflictions for human beings. How to shave language and convey meanings which shouldn't be in there. We're trying to engineer our kingdom and get our way.

I want to know how not to use language to get the better of other people. and get what I want them to do and think what I want them to think. I want to be able to speak to people in your presence and let them do what they believe to be right rather than try to control them.

Jesus was using primarily religious language. Invoking God.

How do I learn that? I have to learn to trust myself and other people to God in that context and retrain my body. For example, not always try to get the last word.

Jesus and I are communicating about learning to do the things he said.

3.) Acting in the things He did not say anything about [30:30]

* Travel plans; School; Medical things; Run a business
Jesus knows more than anyone else on Earth.

4.) How to act in the power of God

[31:30]

That's knowledge. I have a passion for that because I know the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have some very challenging issues in our culture because people don't think about Jesus as if He were smart. They think He was nice but not smart. We have to revise that because you can't be a disciple of someone you don't think is smart. You'll be someone else's disciple.

We have to understand the greatness of Jesus and part of this comes out with acknowledging Him to be the most intelligent person who ever lived on Earth. How can you not accept that? If He is the Son of God, He's bound to be pretty smart. Look at the stuff He did. Things scientists today can't figure out.

We are working in an area of knowledge. The way we work in on that is seeing Him, having the vision of His greatness and that leads us to trusting Him. There is one God, one man, one mediator the man Christ Jesus. He is the One who saves us. When He saves us, it is the whole deal.

~ Love, Care & Desire

[33:30]

When we grow in our knowledge, we **love** Him. To love someone is to **care** for them. To love God is to care for God and you will the things that are good for God. I hope you won't say, "God doesn't need that." If God has chosen to involve us, that's how we love Him. Our will is set to do Him good as His will is set to do us good.

Our culture has a hard time distinguishing **desire** from **love**. How the will works is vital to understand. To love someone is to will their good.

* Love Chocolate cake - You don't will it's good. You want to eat it.

In many cases, we have delight in the person as well. Sometimes there's so much confusion, "I loved her so much I killed her." Desire thwarted produces **anger** and anger is set to harm people.

When you love, you love Jesus and you are prepared to do whatever you can to care for what He cares for. Because He is so wonderful, you delight in Him too and that delight will carry you a long ways. That delight is for one who is set to promote the good of Jesus Christ, to be a soldier in His army. We preach a gospel for everything that is good. Do it for Jesus. For His cause, it

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will prosper. Start with the business I am in right now. Let Him honor your love for him bringing good in everything you are doing.

For someone facing a meaningless life, here's the answer - lose your life in what Jesus is now doing on Earth.

It is evangelism, education, those are among the greatest things we can do, but it doesn't stop there.

Colossians 3:17 - *"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and give thanks to the Father of our Lord."*

In His name is on His behalf, with His power and His resources.

Knowledge and love brings us naturally to conformity to Him. We want to understand that this conformity is one that comes from inward transformation.

The trap of the cultural approach to Jesus is taking outward behavior as the essence of life. Things that are often used to define the essence of the church. We have to distinguish from...

~ **Vessel & Treasure**

[39:00]

A great deal of what we see in nearly every form of Christian religion is not treasure, but is vessel.

* My "Vessel" is Baptist. I like it. That's because I was raised in it. Everything is funny if it's not mine. I can get all caught up in that.

The heart of the matter is knowing and loving Jesus.

That's the treasure.

We all have to have vessels but what we are really after is inward conformity to Jesus Christ. That means that we have different thoughts, different sets of our will, different feelings. Our body is ready to do the things that Jesus would do. The depths of our soul have been and are being transformed increasingly to be like His. When that happens, then we can talk about a passion to know, love and to do and be like Jesus Christ.

If you are going to talk about a passion, do try to be very precise about what you have in mind.

What does it mean to know Him?

What does it mean to love Him?

What does it mean to be like Him?

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Try to escape the traps that are built into that. You really are preaching to the Gentiles. What Paul is talking about is not done yet. We have not finished the job of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. We are still struggling often with a lot of unnecessary and artificial baggage that we need to lay aside.

We can't do it if we can't identify the real thing. That's what I am really concerned that you would know. When that real thing is there, the effect is going to be just like in was Paul's case.

"Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifest through us a sweet aroma of Him in every place the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ unto God...among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one an aroma of Death to death and to another an aroma of life to life." **II Corinthians 2:14**

The power of this passion lived in this vision of Christ completes the cycle. We know then that Christ is alive in our midst. He is our confidence and He is our trust. He will see to it that the fruit of the Kingdom of God comes forth to His glory.

~ ~ ~ End of Session @ 44:15 ~ ~ ~

~ ~ ~ Q & A ~ ~ ~

Q - What was your third point?

A - [44:40] Especially areas like Leadership, Government, Education, the Arts - How badly we need people who will go into those areas and succeed for Christ and the power of Christ.

Q - [inaudible]

A - [45:30] Two things.

1) Try to read what the New Testament says about it. We don't always see what's there. When you really get a vision of the Cosmic Christ, the one in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the One who holds everything together, the King of the kings of the earth".

2) We need to pray He will give us a greater vision. We need to approach Him directly. Ask Him to teach us how to see Him. Then I think you will have experiences out of those two things that will fill you mind in a different way of the vision of Christ.

Q - What God gives us in His love. Capacity to do His will?

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A - [47:10] We have to recognize our part once we come to life in Christ in putting off the old person and putting on the new one. Deeper areas of discipleship - spiritual disciplines - activities that enable us to go to the deeper causes.

What if I acted unloving to someone? Why didn't I? There's a reason why. It is up to me with that ongoing conversation with Christ to find out what is going on. I have to think more deeply what is in my circumstances?

The important thing to see is this is not going to be done for us. It will be done with us. If we do nothing, it will not happen. That's why it is always put it in the imperative.

II Peter 3:18 - *"Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.*

Once you understand that grace is God's acting in our lives to accomplish in our lives what we can not accomplish on our own, it ceases to be paradoxical. We open our lives to that. That what is involved in putting off the old, putting on the new.

Teachings of Jesus - nothing that we can't learn to do and almost nothing there we can do by direct effort.

When we do it, we speak of the fruit of the Spirit - they are not actions, but attitudes. That's the internal change and it changes the outward behavior.

Disciplines in a walk with Christ are not behavior modification.

* AA is behavior modification - to ingrain the idea they never recover. They are always recovering.

There is a very great difference between spiritual transformation and recovery. You can be sober and still be a pretty wicked and miserable person. Christ is going deeper and changing the inside. We have a part in that - our interaction with Christ as our teacher as His disciples. My faith in Christ puts me with Him, not just enjoying the benefits of something He did. With Him, I go through a process of training that transforms me inwardly. For example, I am able to recognize a temptation and deal with the temptation instead of waiting and try to deal with the sin.

Q - [inaudible]

A - I am going to talk about Spiritual Transformation after dinner.

Q - [inaudible]

A - [51:40] A discipline is something I do in my power to enable me to do what I can not do by direct effort.

It is important to understand that doesn't cease when you enter the realm of grace because grace is not passivity. You are now able to do things. You act and grace acts with you.

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* Solitude, silence, fasting, scripture memorization, study, service, fellowship, confession, sharing...no complete list of the practices. You see them in the life of Jesus and His followers through the ages.

You do not immediately but fairly quickly come to the roots of wrong doing and those are changed. Sometimes it will be because of change in thinking, or feeling or bodily or social conditions. It always has the effect of simply removing the root of wrong doing. That's what the disciplines go after - the root of wrong doing.

One of the reasons they have been badly misunderstood is they have been turned into legalisms. Some Christians were abused by them. These are not deeds of righteousness, they are wisdom. Not everything we deal with in life is a not matter of sin.

Hebrews 12 - "*lay aside the weights*" are not sins, like...

* Food - uncontrolled dependence upon it sets us up for bad things.

We have to learn the things that are tripping us up.

Where we put our eyes, what we look at, our fantasy life.

* Rest - God never gives us too much to do.

We need to gracefully learn how to not try to do too much.

We don't undertake disciplines on our own,
we undertake them with our teacher.

~ ~ ~ Q & A ends at 56:16 ~ ~ ~

[+ 2 minutes of announcements]