

What's the goal of life? Simple; Jesus. Being known by Jesus, getting to know Jesus, sharing life together in an open, honest relationship that gives expression to Jesus' loving personality.

Life isn't about having my personal needs meet, that'll just make me a needy person! All the physical attributes of life; food, clothing, body are gifts from Jesus so that I can put his love into action, so that we can share real life together. These things are not the goal of life, but the tools Jesus gives so we can live out the goal, so we can give a physical

expression to the love we share, the grace and mercy he seeks to love us with.

Does Jesus want us to share life with him? Certainly. Does Jesus want us to follow him, trusting him with our lives, with our life decisions? Of course. Does Jesus want you to be his disciple, so in that wonderful relationship you grow to greater maturity reflecting him in all you say and do? That's his stated goal. If that's Jesus' goal, and if that's what he wants to bless, in other words to grow, to multiply and fill the earth with, won't he give us the

tools to live his goal? Of course he will, no worries.

Let us pray.
Jesus today we ask for your wisdom so that we don't get led astray and end up being drawn in different directions. We have no other direction than sharing life with you, than enjoying your company, listening to you and living life your way. Help us to repent where we need to, and confirm us in those areas where we are heading in your direction. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' Disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples...

27 February 2011

LIVING IN JESUS' KINGDOM—5

Matthew 6:24-34



Today Jesus' message is simple; 'Don't Worry'. Simple to say, but not always simple to do. When Jesus calls us not to worry, does that mean we shouldn't be concerned about something? Being concerned about others is an act of love. What does Jesus mean when he calls us not to worry? Does that mean it is a sin to be anxious? How would you define worry?

Jesus' definition of worry is found in verse 24: "No one can serve two masters... You can't serve both God and money." Worry is the result of divided loyalty.

This week I read that worry means; 'to be drawn in different directions.' Worry pulls us apart. Who or what can I trust with my life;

with my life decisions, with the people and things I treasure. I don't want to lose it all. Who can I trust?

Jesus gives two options; either we trust Jesus or something else. Trusting Jesus with my life doesn't mean I won't go through stressful situations. In fact Jesus always guarantees that if you follow him, you'll face different forms of persecution. Your trust will be challenged, and that will prove to be stressful. But Jesus will always be there with you, for you, coming through on all his promises.

So facing stressful situations isn't a sin and it isn't worry. Worry is when I let my focus be drawn in different directions. When I look to different people,

schemes, and the like to make my life decisions.

What was the first thought that came to your mind when you heard this verse; "For pagans run after all these things..." (Matt. 6:32) When I first hear that I think that pagans don't worship God, but that's not true. Pagans worship **MANY** gods. They have a different god for each different situation of life.

So you have the god of war, the god of agriculture, the god of fertility, the god of economics, the god of your city region. So depending on what you're doing you have a different god to consider and try and get on side. You might even be tempted to play one god of against another to get a better deal!

The pagans worship many gods to get what they want. They're drawn in different directions depending on what they want at a given time. So god simply becomes the means they use to get what they want. If I was a Greek I'd pray to Poseidon when going to sea, for he was the god of the sea. Going to war I'd pray to Ares, the god of war. Starting a family I'd pray to Astarte the goddess of fertility and hopefully I'd have prayed to Hera when I got married, the goddess of marriage.

Are we tempted to have divided loyalties, to be drawn in different directions depending on what situation we find ourselves in? When might we be tempted to live like pagans?

The first area that jumps to my mind is finances; money. I go to an accountant, and

have the underlying thought of profit. Could I be slowly drawn into trusting what my accountant says, and neglect what Jesus has to say about finances. Do I judge my accountants decisions on what I know are Jesus' values, or do I simply work by the god of profit. If I make a

When might we be tempted to live like pagans?

profit it must be right.

Where else in life could we be tempted to have divided loyalties?

When are we tempted to simply use God to get what we want, or feel we need?

Do my perceived needs creep in and begin to determine the way I live and how I make my life choices? That's the very thing Jesus warns us about. What I want becomes what I need and before you

know it my life is shaped around getting what I perceive I need for a healthy, full, enjoyable life.

Before I know it I find myself worshipping the god of comfort. After all, life is about being comfortable. And before you know it my finances are used to make me comfortable, to protect me from some uncomfortable situation. The god of comfort ends up demanding a lot.

One of the most worshipped gods in Australia is the god of fun. We need to have fun to have a good life. What does the god of fun say is the way to live, the way to treat other people, the way to use your time. We need great experiences to have fun. The god of Sport claims our allegiance, that's if you want to have fun. And the best fun is when you win, especially

when you win the grand final. Wow, that's living.

Where are you tempted to have divided loyalties?

There are all sorts of marriage and family experts on the TV who are inviting us to follow them so that we have a successful marriage. And success is defined by what makes me happy without any stress, being able to do what I want, achieving my potential.

We live in a society when it comes to marriage and family which has said Jesus doesn't know anything, and unless you can prove it by a scientific study we're not interested. What does Jesus say about marriage and family? If all I know is; don't get divorced, them sadly I'm building the rest of my marriage on what other people say, on what other gods say.

Jesus has much, much more to say about marriage and family life than don't get divorced.

First he says that marriage is good. And then we read: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will

What does Jesus say...

become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt on shame." (Gen. 3:24,25) What a treasure trove for a healthy marriage, for a healthy society.

Leaving, giving priority to each other, not the bottom line. Sacrificing yourself for the other person's good, because you can trust them with your life. How do you build trust; by being open and honest, by admitting when you're wrong, by not

demanding your own way. And it isn't a secret but the community is involved, and has a chance to bless this wonderful new marriage.

The pagans of Australia believe that marriage has to give them something, and once it's no fun, leave. That certainly doesn't reflect God's wonderful gift of marriage, and a healthy society that is built on his love being living out in marriage as two people sacrifice themselves for each other.

Don't worry, but I will worry if I'm not getting my needs meet.

Step one in not worrying, Jesus says; 'don't worship your needs, don't make a god of them. Then they'll consume you.' If my goal in life is to have my needs meet, I need to change. That's not the goal of life.