

THE NORTH



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Christ Church, June 2023, Newsletter, Issue 5



CHRIST CHURCH EXMOUTH

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Minister: Bishop Josep Rossello

The Minister's Council: Bishop Josep, Laura Empson, Simon Pike, Patrice Rossello, Julia Lowrie and Mark Nowaczyk.

Church Council: Bishop Josep, Julia Lowrie (Minister's Warden), Mark Nowaczyk (People's Warden), Maggie Liggins and Simon Pike.

An Open Letter to the Men

Dear brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace be with you. I pray that this letter finds you well and that you are continuing to grow in your faith and commitment to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As you minister, it is my privilege and responsibility to shepherd and guide you in your spiritual journey. As we embark on this new season in our journey of faith, I wanted to take a moment to write to you today to share some thoughts and encouragement specifically for the men at Christ Church.

Firstly, I want to express my profound gratitude for each one of you. Your presence in our church community and your commitment to God's work are invaluable. You play a vital role in upholding the principles of faith, integrity, and love within our families, church, and society at large. Your dedication to your families, your fellow believers, and your commitment to serving others is truly commendable.

In today's rapidly changing world, the challenges we face are diverse and often demanding. It is crucial for us, as men of faith, to stand firm in our beliefs and values. Let us hold fast to the teachings of Christ, seeking His wisdom and guidance in all aspects of our lives. As the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 16:13, *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."*

Brothers, we are called to be leaders in our homes, our workplaces, and our community. We are called to be strong and courageous, to stand firm in our faith, and to be examples of men living like Jesus and advancing God's Kingdom. Our actions and attitudes should reflect the character of Christ. Let us be humble and teachable, to seek wisdom and guidance in God's Word, and to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and minds. By doing so, we may bring glory to God's name.

I want to encourage you to take seriously your role as spiritual leaders in your families. This means not only providing for your material needs, but also taking an active role in nurturing your relationship with your wife and your children, praying for them, and leading them in spiritual growth. It means modelling godly character and integrity in your words and actions, and being willing to admit your mistakes and seek forgiveness when you fall short.

I also encourage you to actively engage in the life of our church. Together, we can create an environment of spiritual growth and mutual support, where we can spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

In addition, I want to challenge you to be intentional in your relationship with other men in our church. We need each other for accountability, encouragement, and support in our walk with Christ. I encourage you to seek out opportunities for fellowship and discipleship with other men, whether that be through Groups, prayer, or other activities.

Create opportunities to gather, to share your joys and struggles, to pray

for one another, and to encourage each other in our walk with Christ. The bond of brotherhood strengthens us and provides a place of refuge and support in times of need.

I want to remind you that we are engaged in a spiritual battle, and that our enemy seeks to destroy us and our families. We must be vigilant in our prayer and study of God's Word, and we must be willing to stand up for truth and righteousness in the face of opposition and adversity.

Finally, I want to remind you that you are not alone in this journey. God is with you, and so are your brothers in Christ. Lean on each other, seek guidance from those who are further along in their walk, and be willing to offer support to those who may be struggling. Together, we can grow in faith, deepen our relationship with our Saviour, and make a lasting impact on our families, our church, and the world around us.

I am grateful for each of you and for your commitment to following Christ. Let us continue to encourage and support one another as we seek to live out our faith in a world that desperately needs the gospel.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of you, empowering and

equipping you for the calling you have received.

In Christ, your brother Josep.

Biblical Principles for Christian Fathers in the 21st Century

In today's rapidly changing world, the role of a Christian father is more important than ever. As we navigate the challenges and complexities of the 21st century, it is crucial for fathers to ground themselves in timeless biblical principles that guide and shape our approach to parenting. By embracing these principles, we can raise our children in the ways of the Lord and leave a legacy of faith. Let us explore some key biblical principles that are relevant and applicable to Christian fathers in the 21st century.

LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL

The greatest commandment Jesus gave us is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. As fathers, our love and devotion to God should be our highest priority. By placing God first in our lives, we set

an example for our children to follow. Through regular prayer, studying Scripture, and cultivating a personal relationship with Christ, we demonstrate the importance of faith and invite our children to join us on this journey of spiritual growth.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Our actions often speak louder than our words. As fathers, we have a responsibility to lead by example, exhibiting Christ-like character and integrity in all areas of life. Our children are watching and learning from us, so let us be men of integrity, honesty, humility, and love. By modelling a Christ-centred life, we provide a foundation for our children to build upon as they develop their own faith. Each word and action matter, as they observe us and learn from us.

TEACH AND INSTRUCT

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 instructs us to impress God's commandments on our children, talking about them at home and on the road, from morning till night. As fathers, we are called to nurture and instruct our children in the ways of the Lord. Regularly engage in family devotions, teach them the truths of Scripture, and guide them in applying biblical principles to their lives. Be available to answer their questions, address their doubts, and provide biblical wisdom and guidance.

DISCIPLINE WITH LOVE

I am aware it is not a popular topic in our society. However, discipline is an essential part of parenting, but it must always be rooted in love. Ephesians 6:4 reminds us not to provoke our children to anger but to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Discipline should aim to correct, teach, and train our children, not to shame or discourage them. Seek God's wisdom and guidance in setting appropriate boundaries and using discipline as a means of shaping their character and pointing them towards God in Christ.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Children thrive in an environment of love, affection, and affirmation. Express your love and affection for your children through words, physical presence, and quality time. Encourage and affirm their unique gifts and talents, reminding them of their inherent value as beloved children of God. Create a safe space where they feel supported, loved, and accepted.

PROVIDE AND PROTECT

As fathers, we are called to provide for the physical and emotional needs of our families. Work diligently, manage your resources wisely, and seek God's guidance in making wise financial decisions. Provide a stable and nurturing environment for your family. Protect them from harmful influences, both in the physical and digital realms. Equip your children with the knowledge and discernment needed to navigate the challenges they may face.

PRAY WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Prayer is a powerful tool that connects us with the heart of God. We have the privilege and responsibility to intercede on behalf

of our children. Lift them up before the Lord, seeking His guidance, protection, and blessings upon their lives. Cultivate a habit of praying with your children, teaching them to rely on God, and fostering a deeper relationship with Him.

CONCLUSION

Being a father in the 21st century is both a privilege and a challenge. By embracing these biblical principles, we can fulfil our God-given role with

wisdom, love, and purpose. Let us strive to love God above all, led by example, teach and instruct, discipline with love, offer affection and encouragement, provide and protect, and pray fervently for our children. Through our faithful commitment to these principles, we can raise a generation that knows and loves the Lord, impacting the world for His glory.

JR

Just for Fun Word Search

T L O R D B O N D A G E F J
V W E C R E S C U E R V A U
E M O T H E R I T A G E B D
R D R W R I A F Q E O B R G
E K I Y N S K P J H K B A M
D O S C W R I N E W V O H E
E X A H O A J B V O D G A N
E O A O K E G O D B P Q M T
M K C C T L N P V X A L C S
N H C H I L D R E N Y R E S
V S G E G Y P T I A N S W Y
Q X U R J K N O W F Y C X B
I T C X P Z X N Q Z O T T M
F J P X W Q I N M J A C O B

"Therefore say to the **children of Israel**: 'I am the **Lord**; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will **rescue** you from their **bondage**, and I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and with great **judgments**. I will take you as My **people**, and I will be your **God**. Then you shall **know** that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the **Egyptians**. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**; and I will give it to you as a **heritage**: I am the Lord.' "

—EXODUS 6:6-8

What is the worship that is pleasing to God?

Of utmost importance is to understand what is meant by the word “worship.” The primary word translated “worship” in the New Testament is the Greek word *proskuneo*. Literally, it means “to kiss toward.” Practically, it means “to give reverence to, pay homage, make obeisance, prostrate oneself.” Therefore, all worship requires making God the focal point of all one’s actions and intentions. Worship is not designed to entertain the congregation, neither is it designed to appeal to “the unchurched.” It is designed to honour and glorify God.

John 4:24 is a key verse in this study: “God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Let’s look at this verse more closely and identify its component parts.

“**God**” is the *audience* of worship. Too many people think those sitting in the pews are the audience. When real worship is being done, every church member should seek to honour and glorify God by their worship.

“**They that worship him**” is the *actors* of worship. I use the word “actors” not in the movie sense of someone playing a role different from who they are, but because worship requires action. Therefore, those who provide the actions of worship are the actors. Again, every member present is worshipping God, not seeking to be entertained by others. Too much of what is called worship today is nothing more than wholesome entertainment designed to appeal to people. While wholesome entertainment is good, it is not worship.

“**Must worship him**” is the *absolute* of worship. The word “must” show an absolute. That is, there is no room for change, bargaining, or such like. When I tell my children “you must” that settles the matter. When God uses the word “must” in respect to worship, then whatever God says is to be followed without addition, subtraction, or alteration of any kind.

“In spirit” is the *attitude* of worship. The spirit here refers to the inner person – his/her thoughts, intentions, emotions, and desires. Worship must be heart-felt, else it is empty and vain. We should desire to worship God because of all He has done for us. David said, *“I was glad when they said to me, ‘let us go into the house of the Lord’”* (Psalm 122:1). Psalm 100 indicates the state of mind we should have when entering into worship: *“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.”*

“In truth” is the *action* of worship. As we noted earlier, worship must be heartfelt, else it is in vain. However, sincerity and gladness of heart are not sufficient in and of themselves to validate worship. There must also be the proper action. God’s word is truth (John 17:17). Thus, to worship in truth is to worship according to the word of God. All things are to be done

in the name of (i.e., by the authority of) Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17).

Jesus once condemned the worship of the Jews on two counts, saying, *“This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines human commands”* (Mt 15:8-9). The two condemnations are (1) the failure to engage their hearts in worship and (2) worshipping according to the doctrine of man and not according to the word of God.

Note that *“in spirit”* is joined to *“in truth”* by a coordinating conjunction (John 4:24). Therefore, both aspects are subject to the absolute of worship. Worship *“in spirit”* (right attitude) but not *“in truth”* (right action) is vain. Likewise, worship in truth (right action) without the proper spirit (attitude) is also in vain. The absence of either one negates the entire effort.

There are five acts of worship found in the church of the New Testament. They are:

- 1) observing the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:18-34);

2) giving as prospered each first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7);

3) prayer to God the Father (Acts 2:42, 12:5);

4) preaching of the Word (Acts 20:7-12);

5) singing (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 14:15).

Declaration of Principles

The Declaration of Principles affirmed by Christ Church in its Trust Deed. It explains our historic standard and why Christ Church was founded in 1896. Christ Church remains true to the declaration while also embracing the liberty of worship that is contemporary, Spirit-filled, and God-honouring.

Christ Church [...], which is a branch of the Holy Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, united by faith to Him, who is the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, and recognising the essential unity of all who, by a like faith, are united to the one Divine and Common Head, makes declaration of its Principles as follows:

The [...] Church, holding “the faith once delivered to the saints,” declares its belief in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and the sole Rule of Faith and Practice; in the Creed commonly called “The Apostles’ Creed”; in the Divine Institution of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and in the Doctrines of Grace substantially as they are set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

This church recognises and adheres to Episcopacy, not as of Divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of Church polity.

This Church, retaining a liturgy which shall not be repressive of freedom in prayer, accepts the Book of Common Prayer, as it was received, prepared, and recommended for use by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal

Church, A.D. 1785, reserving full liberty to alter, abridge, enlarge, and amend the same, as may seem most conducive to the edification of the people, “provided that the substance of the faith be kept entire”.

This Church CONDEMNS and REJECTS the following erroneous and strange doctrines as contrary to God’s word:

First – that the Church of Christ exists only in one order or form of ecclesiastical polity;

Second – that Christian ministers are ‘priests’ in another sense than that in which all believers are a ‘royal priesthood’;

Third – that the Lord’s Table is an altar on which the oblation of the body and blood of Christ is offered anew to the Father;

Fourth – that the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is a presence in the elements of Bread and Wine;

Fifth – that regeneration is inseparably connected with Baptism.

In accordance with the liberty given in Article 3 of the above Declaration of Principles, this Church accepts the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, with such revisions as shall exclude sacerdotal doctrines and practices.

This Church, as a Reformed and Protestant Church, hereby reaffirms its constant witness against all those innovations in doctrines and worship, whereby the primitive faith has been from time to time defaced or overlaid, and which at the Reformation were disowned and rejected.

This Church will maintain communion with all Christian Churches and will set forward, so far it lies within its ability, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people.

All evangelical Christians should have no problem accepting such a declaration, which represents classical evangelical beliefs and practises within our Reformed Episcopal heritage. To God be the Glory!!!

Is the Devil Omniscient?

The devil is not, nor can he be, omniscient (know all things). If he were omniscient, he would be God. A passage pertinent to this discussion is 1 Corinthians 2:6–8, which says, *“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”*

There can be no doubt the devil was the driving force behind those who hated Christ and had Him killed. Paul’s statement here notes that if the truth had been known, Jesus would not have been killed. Think about this for a moment—the only way all men could be saved would be for Jesus to die in their place. If the devil had known this, he would have done everything in his power to stop it!

Also consider Hebrews 2:14–15: *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

Jesus, through His death and resurrection, destroyed the power of the devil. If the devil were omniscient, he would have known this ahead of time and never allowed Jesus to be crucified.

In like fashion, if the devil were omniscient, he would know exactly how to tempt us at all times in order to get us away from God. I believe the devil only uses what has worked in the past, and when we learn to conquer that particular temptation, he tries something else.