

“Egocentric Christianity”

(selected Scriptures)

Introduction

➤ Many years ago, I started preaching a “Fourth of July” sermon the Sunday nearest the 4th of July. Little did I know then that this would be an annual tradition that would last decades. I have often referred to these sermons as “The State of the Church Address”, as the intention is to highlight a relevant issue or threat facing the church.

Over the years, I have preached on topics such as homosexuality, humanism, Mormonism, abortion, evolution, the inerrancy of Scripture, Open Theism, and submitting to the government. My desire is to help us think and respond biblically to various threats against the church or attacks against Christianity.

➤ This year, I have identified an issue that I think is especially plaguing Christianity (in America) today. While this threat is not new, I think it is a scourge that is growing and destroying the very foundation of Evangelicalism. The title for this year’s Fourth of July message is “Egocentric Christianity”, and in this message I am going to address the ever-increasing trend toward a self-serving and self-centered view of the Christian faith.

Egocentric Christianity is the attempt to use Christ (or “Christianity”),
first and foremost, for your own benefit or pleasure.
It is thinking and acting as though God primarily exists to serve and to bless you.

➤ Let me be clear at the outset: it is not wrong to see and experience the benefits and blessings of living the Christian life. To be sure, God does answer our prayers, He help us in our struggles, He comforts us in our sorrow, He equips us for ministry, He strengthens us when we are weak, He encourages us when we are discouraged, He guides us through life, He protects us in the midst of spiritual battles – He gives us joy and wisdom and love and peace, etc. The blessings of God are both infinite and eternal (Eph.1:3). Being a child of God is – in a word – awesome (1Jn.3:1)!

God is neither pleased nor praised when we downplay or diminish the joys and blessings of Christianity. True humility is not achieved through a negative, self-deprecating, or self-loathing view of ourselves. But God is not pleased or praised by the self-centeredness and self-exaltation of egocentric Christianity. As Christians, we must embrace both our utter unworthiness apart from Christ and our infinite worthiness in Christ.

➤ Essentially, “Egocentric Christianity” is pride. Pride has always been a fundamental problem for mankind. It was the primary cause of Satan’s fall from heaven (Lk.10:18; Is.14:12-15), and the primary cause of the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen.3). Scripture is replete with warnings and judgements concerning the sin of pride.

Prov 16:18-19 ~ “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. ¹⁹It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

1 Cor 10:12 ~ “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”

Rom 1:28-32 ~ “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent [*hybristēs*], haughty [*hyperēphanos*], boastful [*alazōn*], inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”

2 Tim 3:1-5 ~ “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self [*philautos*], lovers of money, proud [*alazōn*], arrogant [*hyperēphanos*], abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit [*hybristēs*], lovers of pleasure [*philēdonos*] rather than lovers of God [*philotheos*], ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

1 Sam 15:23 ~ “For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. ...” (NIV)

➤ “Self” can be a major hindrance to worship. God’s Word graphically commands that we “*put off [the] old self*” (Eph.4:22), that we crucify the old self (Rom.6:6; Gal.2:20; 5:24), that we “*deny*” self (Lk.9:23), and that we “*put to death*” all that is “*earthly*” in us (Col.3:5; Rom.8:13). We must mortify sin, and crucify self, so that we can truly and fully worship God.

✓ Illust: “For most people, to be loved is to be made much of. Almost everything in our Western culture serves this distortion of love. We are taught in a thousand ways that love means increasing someone’s self-esteem. Love is helping someone feel good about themselves. Love is giving someone a mirror and helping him like what he sees.

This is not what the Bible means by the love of God. Love is doing what is best for someone. But making self the object of our highest affections is not best for us. It is, in fact, a lethal distraction. We were made to see and savor God – and savoring Him, to be supremely satisfied, and thus spread in all the world the worth of His presence. Not to show people the all-satisfying God is not to love them. To make them feel good about themselves when they were made to feel good about seeing God is like taking someone to the Alps and locking him in a room full of mirrors. ...

Standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon and contemplating your own greatness is pathological”

(John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life*, p.33).

✓ Illust: “Our fatal error is believing that wanting to be happy means wanting to be made much of. It feels so good to be affirmed. But the good feeling is finally rooted in the worth of self, not the worth of God. This path to happiness is an illusion. And there are clues. There are clues in every human heart even before conversion to Christ. One of those clues is that no one goes to the Grand Canyon or to the Alps to increase his self-esteem. That is not what happens in front of massive deeps and majestic heights” (John Piper, *God is the Gospel*, p.13).

➤ Egocentric Christianity is especially heinous and dangerous because it seeks to justifying one’s self-centeredness as Christianity; it seeks to exploit Christ for selfish gain. Egocentric Christianity is not merely self-centeredness, but self-centeredness masked as godliness. It is narcissism dressed up to look like righteousness. It is a self-serving attitude masquerading as spirituality. In its worse form, it is idolatry labeled as “Christianity.” This is a blasphemous, potentially damning, perversion of Christianity.

✓ Illust: “Some worship [God], intending thereby to make Him amends for the wrong they have done him; wipe off their scores, and satisfy their debts; as though a spiritual wrong could be recompensed with a bodily service, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeased by a carnal flattery. Self is the spirit of carnality; to pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of self, is rather to mock Him than worship Him. When we believe that we ought to be satisfied, rather than God glorified, we set God below ourselves, imagine that He should submit His own honor to our advantage; we make ourselves more glorious than God, as though we were not made for Him, but He hath a being only for us; this is to have a very low esteem of the majesty of God. Whatsoever any man aims at in worship above the glory of God, that he forms as an idol to himself instead of God, and sets up a golden image, God counts not this as a worship” (Chamock, Stephen. *The Existence and Attributes of God*, p. 245).

➤ This self-centered, self-exalting, (false) “Christianity” raises its ugly head in many ways.

Egocentric evangelism

Egocentric evangelism is “accepting” Jesus as Savior in order to have a better life, and to go to heaven. This is seen in the common evangelistic saying, “Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life”, and in the heretical “Prosperity Gospel” which teaches that God wants to make you healthy and wealthy. Such pithy clichés, and unbiblical teachings, encourage the sinner to come to Christ so that can be (physically, materially) blessed and happy, and so they can live their “best life now.” Such evangelistic efforts ignore or diminish the sinner’s depravity and condemnation, and package the “gospel” as the means to a better life.

Egocentric prayers

To be sure, God wants us to bring our needs and requests before Him. But that should not be the only reason why we pray, or even the main reason why we pray to God. Our prayers need to be more than a laundry list of things we want from God (devoid of thanksgiving and praise). We dare not treat God as some “comic bellhop” or “divine genie” – who only exists to do our bidding and to grant our wishes. Our prayers ought not to be dominated by selfish or self-benefitting requests. If we are not careful, even our praying for others can be self-serving (e.g., praying for our enemies, or even for our family, so that our lives will be easier or happier).

Egocentric Bible study

Viewing the Bible as your own personal spiritual guidebook is egocentric, and studying the Bible for purely selfish reasons is egocentric. The Bible must be much more than our “devotional guide”, our answer book, or even the “Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth” (B.I.B.L.E.). It is not to be used only “in case of emergencies”, or as a “good luck charm” (to ward off evil spirits), or superstitiously (to receive blessings, and not curses, from God), or self-righteously (to earn points with God, or to impress others), egotistically (to find self-fulfillment or self-enlightenment). It is the holy and living Word of Almighty God, and we should study it to know more about Him and to know how to please and glorify Him in everything we do!

Egocentric worship

Worship is egocentric when it is primarily self-focused and/or self-exalting. God will not receive self-styled or self-centered worship. He will not accept worship that is not solely and sincerely offered to Him. There has been a subtle, yet notable, shift in Christian “worship” in America over the years. This trend is to focus more on the worshipper than on the One who is to be worshipped. For many Christians, and in many churches, “worship” is designed to make the worshipper feel good or to have some kind of emotional or euphoric (“spiritual-high”) experience.

The sentiment is, “If you want me to ‘worship’ in your church, you better ‘worship’ the way I want to.” The often spoken (negative) sentiment is this: “I didn’t get anything out of worship today.” To which I often want to respond: “That’s ok. It was primarily for you anyway.” The most important question is not “What did I get out of worship” but “What did God receive from my worship?”; not “Was I pleased, or honored, with the service?” but “Was God pleased and glorified with the service?” True worship is first and foremost about God, and His glory, not the one worshipping God!

Egocentric church

To view the church as a religious organization that primarily exists to serve you (and your family), and you do not serve in that church, is egocentric. With the abundance of “churches” in America, many people look for a church that best meets the personal (felt) needs and want. They treat the church like service organization, or as a consumer-driven business. Then whenever that church fails to meet their expectations, or another church seems to be better, they leave. Such people are called church “hoppers and shoppers.” They are merely attenders, not congregants; audience members, not participants; consumers, not contributors.

Egocentric service/ministry

Egocentric service is a self-serving ministry – it is serving in the church, but only when it is seen as beneficial. Oftentimes, this is seen when people serve in ministries that are designed to serve their family, or their own self-interests. Such people rarely (or never) serve sacrificially or selflessly. If they serve, it is (primarily) for their own benefit or glory, or for the benefit of those they love. In addition, people who serve egocentrically typically want recognition or praise for their “service.”

Egocentric fellowship

Simply put, egocentric fellowship is only associating with those who you like or those who are like you. It is attending a church where most people are in your same demographic (age, race, social status, political worldview). It is rarely associating with those who are deemed difficult or different. And, in its most ugly form, it is only associating with those who are deemed valuable or beneficial.

Egocentric preaching

This is twofold: 1) Those who preach sermons, and 2) Those who listen to sermons. Egocentric preaching is centered on the “Christian”, and particularly on “felt needs.” The preacher preaches self-esteem building messages, that are inoffensive and non-convicting. Such messages are devoid of themes regarding sin, judgment, obedience, holiness, hell, or wrath. The “gospel” is packaged to fit the consumer’s (seeker’s) whims and wishes, with the hope of drawing a large crowd and being liked (or accepted) by the world. Sermons are entertaining, theatrical, hilarious, ego-boosting, ever-practical, and rarely (if ever) biblical. Preachers preach whatever will draw and hold a crowd, and the crowd comes as long as the preacher continues to preach to their “itching ears” (2Tim.4:3).

Egocentric giving

While most egocentric Christians do not give at all, those who do give to ministries and project that benefit them or those they love. For example, they give to the children’s or youth ministry to benefit their children, they give to missionaries who are their family and friends, they designate money to projects or events they are interested in. In addition, the egocentric giver wants to be recognized for their giving or they won’t give at all.

Egocentric obedience

Egocentric obedience is motivated not primarily by a love for God, or a desire to please or glorify God, but a desire to be blessed or rewarded by God (and to avoid God’s discipline or punishment). It reveals not a true hatred of sin, but a dislike of the consequences of sin. It reveals not a true love for Christ, but a utilitarian view of Christian obedience – if I obey Christ, Christ will reward me.

Egocentric theology

At its core, egocentric Christianity is idolatry – it pretends to worship God but actually worships self. It is self-centered and not God-centered, viewing God as a means to their own self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction. Worship songs are essentially about or for them, Scripture is fundamentally self-esteem building and practical, church exists to serve them, prayers are mostly about them, and God exists to serve them. Such people love God because He blesses them and is good to them.

Consequently, some professing Christians have even become “disappointed” or “angry” with God because, in their minds, He has not done enough for them. They want salvation plus a good job; salvation plus a happy marriage; salvation plus a suffering-free, sorrow-free, life. Some even threaten to not believe in God anymore, if He does not perform as they like or do what they want.

Egocentric eschatology

Some Christians long for the return of Christ not primarily to see Christ glorified in His Second Coming, but because they are tired of living in this world. They want to be free from the pains and griefs and trials of this life. While such feelings may be true, they ought not to be the main reason why we long for Christ’s Return.

➤ In our sinful nature, spurred on by our sinful culture, we are all prone to selfishness. Even as Christians, we are not immune to selfish attitudes, selfish actions, and selfish thoughts. If we do not recognize, and fight against, these tendencies we will likely fall headlong into destruction (Prov.16:18; 1Cor.10:12). Denying or ignoring the problem is neither a safe nor sacred alternative. For egotism, or narcissism, does not reflect the saving and sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ (Phil.2:5-8). Left unchecked, our pride can lead us into idolatry (the worship of self) – even if we call ourselves Christians.

True Christianity is Christ-centered, not self-centered.
The antidote to Egocentric Christianity is ...

➤ To be truly Christ-centered, requires three biblical perspectives:

1. A right view of God

➤ First, we must have a right view of God. Christianity starts with God. God is not our divine servant or cosmic genie. God does not exist to make us happy or perform according to our wishes and whims. God is not subservient or inferior to anything, and He is not restricted by or obligated to anything (other than His own divine nature and character). God cannot be deceived, and He is not constrained by our illusion of human “free will.”

God alone is the one true God. God is the Creator, and we are His creation. He is the Savior, and we are the sinners. He is holy, and we are unholy. He is immortal, we are mortal. He is absolutely sovereign, and we ... are absolutely not! Thus, God alone is worthy of worship and glory.

Ex 20:3-6 ~ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Ex 34:14 ~ “(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)”

Isa 48:11 ~ “For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.” (see Is.42:8)

Matt 4:8-10 ~ “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”

➤ God is not only inherently and absolutely worthy of our worship, but He alone is also worthy of our highest and greatest love.

Matt 22:37-38 ~ “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment.’” (Deut.6:5; Rev.2:4; 1Jn.2:15)

➤ There is to be no love in our lives equal to or greater than our love for God – including self-love. There is nothing in our lives that should seek to displace or diminish God’s glory. We must never attempt to use God as the means to self-improvement or vainglory.

Acts 12:21-23 ~ “On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. ²²And the people were shouting, ‘The voice of a god, and not of a man!’ ²³Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.”

1 Cor 10:31 ~ “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

➤ God alone is God! As God, He alone is worthy of our exclusive worship and supreme love. To be sure, true worship does affect the worshipper – mentally, emotionally, spiritually. A person who truly worships God will be edified, humbled, instructed, encouraged, renewed, etc. But true worship is first and foremost about praising God! True worship never begins nor ends with man and his need, but is preoccupied with God and His glory! We must constantly fight against being self-centered (or “others” centered) and fight to be Christ-centered!

✓ **Illust:** This is the essence of Matt Redman’s great worship song titled “The Heart of Worship.” The song was written at a time when Redman’s pastor, in the late 1990’s, thought his church was merely going through the motions (the production) of worship – concert goers and not worshippers.

“There was a dynamic missing,” said Redman, “so the pastor did a pretty brave thing. He decided to get rid of the sound system and band for a season, and we gathered together with just our voices. His point was that we’d lost our way in worship, and the way to get back to the heart would be to strip everything away. ... ‘The Heart of Worship’ simply describes what occurred.”

I’m coming back to the heart of worship / and it’s all about You, it’s all about You, Jesus.

I’m sorry, Lord, for the thing I’ve made it / when it’s all about You, it’s all about You, Jesus.”

(Matt Redman © 1999 Thankyou Music Ltd)

2. A right view of others

➤ Initially, we may think that Egocentric Christianity by simply “putting the cart before the horse.” That is, we have made ourselves “the horse” and God “the cart.” And, in a sense, this is true. But, in another sense, even this is an egocentric way of thinking. The Bible teaches that we are to put, and to think of, others before ourselves.

Phil 2:3-8 ~ “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Rom 12:3 ~ “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”

Rom 12:16 ~ “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

1 Peter 5:5 ~ “... Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

➤ As Christians, we are called to live as Christ lived (Phil.2:5; 1Jn.2:6). This means that we are called to be selfless and humble. We are called to love others in the same way that God has loved us, and the same love with which He has loved us.

Eph 5:1-2 ~ “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

John 15:12 ~ “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

1 John 3:16 ~ “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

Luke 6:27-28 ~ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

1 Cor 13:4-5 ~ “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast [*perpereuomai*]; it is not arrogant [*physioō*] ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful”

1 Cor 13:4-5 ~ “Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful.” (NET)

Matt 22:39 ~ “And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

- True Christianity does not elevate “self” above God, nor above others. True Christianity is self-sacrificing not self-serving, self-denying not self-absorbed, selfless not selfish, Christ-centered not self-centered. Christians do not demand that things go their way. They practice deference; putting others before themselves and putting God first and foremost.

3. A right view of self

- Thirdly, we must have a biblical perspective of self. Namely, that every truly good thing about us, and every truly good thing that comes from, is by the grace of Almighty God. They recognize that apart from God they are justly and eternally condemned.

Rom 3:9-12, 23 ~ “... For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. ... ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (see Jer.17:9; Is.59:2; 64:6)

Titus 3:3-6 ~ “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”

Eph 2:4-5 ~ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved”

- Understanding our own sinfulness – our utter depravity – apart from Christ, should cause us to be incredibly grateful and humble. No one who truly understands the saving grace of God responds with pride and arrogance.

Luke 17:7-10 ~ “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy [*achreios*] servants [*doulos*]; we have only done what was our duty.’”

Mic 6:8 ~ “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

- Christians are to be humble, not egocentric. They do not long to be honored; they are not easily or often offended; they recognize that they deserve nothing good from God – but have received unmerited and unmeasured grace and mercy and love from God.

- ✓ Illust: Andrew Murray profoundly described humility as “the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing” (*Humility: the Beauty of Holiness*; ch.8, “Humility and Sin”).
- It is important to say again that Christians have the glorious reality of being children of God. Meekness is not weakness, and humility is not self-loathing. Humility is not a disparaging view of self, but a realistic view of self. It is understanding that all the glory, for our lives and our salvation, goes to God alone (1Cor.1:29, 31; 2Cor.10:17; Gal.6:14). Christians understand who they were apart from Christ and who they are in Christ.
- ✓ Illust: True humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. In the words of C.S. Lewis, “[the truly humble man] will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all” (Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*, p.128; Kindle edition).
- ✓ Illust: Hymn: “My Worth Is Not In What I Own”:

Verse 5

Two wonders here that I confess: My worth and my unworthiness;
My value fixed my ransom paid at the cross

Chorus

*I rejoice in my Redeemer, Greatest treasure, Wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him no other, My soul is satisfied in Him alone*

Graham Kendrick | Keith Getty | Kristyn Getty © 2014 Getty Music Publishing

Conclusion

- God is absolutely, infinitely, and eternally worthy of worship – in and of Himself. While we praise and thank God for His goodness to us, we must not worship Him conditioned upon any earthly circumstance or blessing. We are to worship God, first and foremost, for who is and not for what He does or gives (Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:5; Phil.3:7-8). Everything else attempts to rob God of His glory, which is the essence of idolatry.
- We must not make the grave mistake of turning the worship of God into a worship of self. If we are not careful, our love for God can be primarily (if not exclusively) motivated by a love for self. That is, we love Him because He is so good to us; we serve Him because He blesses us; we give to God because, in doing so, He gives us more in return. In short, we love the gifts from God more than we love God Himself. To put it another way, to only make much of God because He makes so much of us!
- ✓ Illust: “The love of God is not God’s making much of us, but God’s saving us from self-centeredness so that we can enjoy making much of him forever” (John Piper; “The Goal of God’s Love May Not Be What You Think It Is”; Oct. 14, 2000).
- ✓ Illust: “The [hypocrite] rejoices in himself; self is the first foundation of his joy: the [true saint] rejoices in God. ... True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures. ... But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: *they first rejoice ... that they are made so much of by God; and then on that ground, he seems in a sort, lovely to them*” (Jonathan Edwards; quoted in “God is the Gospel” by John Piper, p.150).
- The truth is this: God is absolutely, infinitely, and eternally worthy of worship – in and of Himself. While we praise and thank God for His goodness to us, we must not worship Him conditioned upon any earthly circumstance or blessing. We are to worship God, first and foremost, for who is and not for what He gives (Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:5; Phil.3:7-8). Everything else attempts to rob God of His glory, which is the essence of idolatry.
- ✓ Illust: The following song, however, rightly portrays the Gospel, and rightly declares that true worship is about making much of God; not God making much of us:

*How could I stand here and watch the sun rise; Follow the mountains, where they touch the sky;
Ponder the vastness, and the depths of the sea; And think for a moment, the point of it all was to
make much of me; Cause I'm just a whisper, and You are the thunder and ...*

Chorus:

*I want to make much of You, Jesus; I want to make much of Your love; I want to live today and
give You the praise that You alone are so worthy of; I want to make much of Your mercy; I want to
make much of Your cross; I give You my life take it and let it be used to make much of You*

*And how can I kneel here, and think of the cross; The thorns and the whip and the nails and the
spear the infinite cost; to purchase my pardon, and bear all my shame; to think I have anything
worthy boasting in except for Your name; Cause I am a sinner And You are the Savior and...*

*This is Your love, oh, God not to make much of me; But to send Your own Son so that we could
make much of You for all eternity*

(“Much of You”; Words and Music: Stephen Curtis Chapman © 2004)

➤ We must constantly fight against being self-centered and fight to be Christ-centered! We must fight against any and all forms of an Egocentric Christianity, any and all forms of self-centeredness and pride. We must consciously and continually pursue making much of Christ in our lives. We must rejoice in the truth that in saving us, God enabled us to make much of Him for all eternity!

Col 1:15-18 ~ “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

Phil 2:9-11 ~ “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”