

the IRRELIGIOUS LIFE

experiencing the inside-out spirituality of Jesus

Week 2: *UNDERSTANDING OUR GOAL*

Closer is He than breathing.

~ Alfred Tennyson

Church is the place where people ought to breathe most freely and most together. Church is the place where people ought to feel most free to be themselves and most accountable to one another.

~ Leonard Sweet

Perhaps a revolution is under way, a revolution of the Spirit that is about to shift our core energies *away from* arranging life to make it as satisfying as possible *to* drawing near to God. Jesus seekers across the world are being prepared to abandon the old way of the written code for the new way of the Spirit.

~ Larry Crabb

What we do in our meetings as Christians should be focused on enabling us to do this effectively wherever we are. Those meetings should and could be centres from which powerfully redemptive community spreads.

~ Dallas Willard

The Church is not a religious community of worshippers of Christ but is *Christ Himself* who has taken form among men.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

A fundamental mistake of the conservative side of the Western church is that it takes as its basic goal to get as many people as possible ready to die and go to heaven. It aims to get people into heaven, rather than to get heaven into people.

~ Dallas Willard

To be human is to have been designed for intimate relationship with the Divine. In spite of the messages of Western culture, personal fulfillment lies in connection, not autonomy. Spirituality is the discovery of the

fundamental connection that exists between us and God – a connection that properly aligns us to others, the world and our deepest self.

~ David G. Benner

It is an inherent weakness of religion not to take offense at the segregation of God, to forget that the true sanctuary has no walls.

~ Abraham Joshua Heschel

Who we are in our inmost depths is the most basic issue. ... Being must always precede doing, for what we do will be according to what we are.

~ Ray Stedman

Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.

~ King Solomon

Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

~ Jesus

COMMUNION

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

~ Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30 (NRSV)

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

~ Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

The greatest need you and I have – the greatest need of collective humanity – is renovation of the heart.

~ Dallas Willard

His death on the cross was a great example to the world.

~ Gandhi

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

~ *The Apostle Paul, Romans 5:8 (TNIV)*

You do not understand Christ till you understand his cross.

~ *P.T. Forsyth*

The cross, in fact, is the redeeming turning-point of history. It is the goal of Israel's strange covenant story. As a result, it is God's way of healing his world.

~ *N.T. Wright*

The death of Christ is the central point of history.

~ *Stephen Neill*

God's own heart suffered on the cross.

~ *Karl Barth*

The nail that pierces the hand of Jesus goes through to the hand of God. The spear thrust into the side of Jesus goes through into God's.

~ *George Butterick*

Before we can begin to see the cross as something done *for* us, we have to see it as something done *by* us.

~ *John Stott*

Amazing love! How can it be, That thou, my God, should'st die for me?

~ *Charles Wesley*

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

~ *The Apostle John, 1 John 3:16*

Without the incarnation, we cannot perceive that God cares so much for us that He would fulfill all of love's demands even to the point of dying for us. In other words, the incarnation of God as man is the only window that allows us to see how much God loves the world and how gracious and personal He is to redeem and recreate the human spirit.

~ *N. Kenneth Rideout*

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give my self away –
'Tis all that I can do.

~ *Isaac Watts*

He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

~ *Jim Elliot*

For as the surest source of destruction to men is to obey themselves, so the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever he leads. Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God.

~ *John Calvin*

Everything of God gets expressed in Jesus, so you can see and hear him clearly.

~ *Eugene Peterson*

What happened in Jerusalem on that Friday afternoon was what the temple was always pointing to. This was the place where the pain and the sin and the shame and the guilt of all the world, of all people, of all history, was concentrated – and was dealt with once and for all.

~ *N.T. Wright*

Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection.

~ *Watchman Nee*

At the heart of our universe is one who not only loves us but has made his love known in the most unforgettable way.

~ *Derek Tidball*

The single most important thing in our mind is our idea of God and the associated images.

~ *Dallas Willard*

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And poor contempt on all my pride.

~ *Isaac Watts*

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

~ *Jesus, John 4:23 (NASB)*