

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

(The Life of Christ Series)

Studies in Luke's Gospel

'The Seeker-Centered Church'

Seeker-centered isn't a good term for believers who belong to churches like **Christ's Bible Fellowship**. The phrase implies that a church bases its ministry style and programs on what appeals to all people seeking a happy, casual connection with some nice people and a God they can be comfortable with. Such churches purposely avoid being too overt about Christian symbols like the cross or any terminology such as *sin, sinners, lost souls, repentance, saved*, etc. that may offend non-Christians or mediocre believers who are seeking a comfortable religious environment to get near to God - but not too close!

A similar mitigated term is *seeker-sensitive* which isn't as non-committal about Christ, the cross, repentance and salvation as the *seeker-centered* church. These two *church growth* philosophies are very appealing and quite popular today with Christians *searching* for a totally positive, feel-good church that requires little to no personal life transformation nor sacrificial commitment to follow and serve Christ as Lord. Many of the mega-church ministries (*2000 or more Sunday attenders*) thrive using this *seeker style* approach of entertainment, theatrical performance services, and personal development programs. Although *seeker churches* do thrive numerically and financially, their philosophy is not found in Scripture.

Certainly good churches try to be friendly and sensitive to those with weak faith or no faith at all in attendance, but nowhere in God's Word does He command catering to the weakest in the faith or those who have no faith at all, just to keep them coming and financing a spiritually weak ministry just to become enormous, prosperous, and famous. God's Word defines *seeker* entirely different than this *lame, people-centered* focus. Such churches are more *sinner-sensitive* than *Savior-sensitive*.

The *Seeker* we are to be *centered upon* and *sensitive to* isn't people at all. According to the Lord Jesus Christ in **John 4:23-24**, **God is the Seeker** of sincere, committed, faithful worshipers. He is to be the Audience of One Whom we worship, praise, sing, and study His Word each time we gather.

In *seeker churches*, people come to *get something out of it* for themselves; in a **Seeker church** God's people come to *give something special to Him*. True worship is making sure He got something out of our time in church. Did He get all of our loving praise and devotion, our money, service, ministry and fellowship to His people, and did we give the teaching of His holy Word our undivided attention and obedience?

Worship continues after the service in **Seeker churches** as humble, transformed disciples of Christ go forth to their jobs, schools, neighborhoods, and families *seeking* lost souls by sharing the gospel of Jesus with them between church services. Whenever we go out, we *seek and find* unbelievers and wayward Christians to bring with us next time we go to church. We bring a new believer to church to be with Him, *the Seeker of their souls*, for reverent devotion with other faithful disciples of Christ. In **Seeker churches**, they learn to be a true worshiper. That's what God is seeking. God is seeking your sincere worship – will He *get something out of you* today? If so, you'll get something out of it, too. **'You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart'** today (**Deuteronomy 4:29**). PtL

‘The Spirit-Filled Mission of Jesus’
(The Lord Jesus’ first sermon – the synagogue of Nazareth)
Luke 4:14-30

A Spirit-blessed Service

(The place of God is for practical, expository Bible teaching)

*“Then **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And **He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all**. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, **He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read...**”* **4:14-16**

A Spirit-filled Speaker

(The pulpit of God is for called, anointed, gifted Bible teachers)

*“...And **He was handed the (scroll) of the prophet Isaiah**. And when **He had opened the (scroll)**, He found the place where it was written: **‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’**”* **4:17-19**

*Then He closed the (scroll) and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, **“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”** So all bore witness to Him and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, **“Is this not Joseph’s son?”**”* **4:20-22**

*He said to them, **“You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.’”** Then He said, **“Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country**. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian...”* **4:23-27**

A Spirit-led Separation

(The punishment of God is the removal of His Word and His presence)

*“So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. **Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.**”* **4:28-30**