

# ***Treasuring Christ Nurturing Philosophy***

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Our vision is to fuel your passion for treasuring Jesus Christ in all things unto the glory of God and your enjoyment of Him.*

So, when you come to our fellowship, we will seek to nurture you towards that end in line with the Biblical principles here outlined. We believe that rightly applied these principles will

- increase your personal confidence that *you* are saved;
- increase your confidence that your salvation is secure.
- increase your satisfaction in God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, to you;
- bring glory to God in worship from a sincere heart seeing Jesus Christ, the object of your worship, as the greatest treasure in the universe;
- help you to grow in obedience to Christ's commands through the unconstrained obedience of a joyful and contented heart;

Jesus encourages you, His follower, towards finding your *greatest* source of joy *not* in your personal victories or successes, as good as these are, but *rather* in the present reality of your guaranteed eternal salvation and all that salvation encompasses.

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:19-20

To enable you to rejoice aright, that your name is written in heaven, a number of things must take place:

- Firstly, *you* must actually have *your* name written in the book of life or your rejoicing is in vain.
- Secondly, you need *confidence* that your name is written in heaven or you won't be able to rejoice as Jesus teaches.
- Thirdly, you must be confident that your name will *remain* written there or your Christian walk will carry an element of fear that you may fall away.
- Fourthly, being fully assured of eternal salvation, you are now to realise that your highest source of joy is found in the *present reality* of your *guaranteed* eternal salvation lest you seek your primary source of joy elsewhere.
- Fifthly, to genuinely rejoice in the eternal salvation of your soul, you must recognise the greatness of the rescue and the guaranteed eternal treasure secured for you in that salvation.

- Sixthly, to rejoice in ever increasing measure over your eternal salvation, you must grow in ever increasing measure in expectation and adoration of what you are going to receive when you get there, namely, Jesus Christ.

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain”. Phil 1:21-22

We seek to bring you to genuinely treasure Jesus Christ in such a way that for you to live is Christ and to die is gain.

We acknowledge that beyond bringing a Christian to a Christ-treasuring dependency there are numerous areas in which believers need focused nurture and we recognise there are varying gifts which also require special sharpening. However, the fullness of Christ, expressed in the gospel, set continually before you is the foundation and continual wellspring from which all other growth flows. Treasuring Jesus Christ with joy in all things is the very means to realising a greater love for God, personal growth, mortification of sin, and bringing God the glory He is seeking for Himself through Jesus Christ.

We seek to nurture you through this process as you walk this journey with us.

The above summarises the goal of our nurturing. The following further expands on the outworking of our nurturing approach.

## **NURTURING PHILOSOPHY EXPANDED**

Our nurturing approach will work out in a number of areas outlined below.

### **1. Bringing you to Christ, our Treasure, to be received without money and without price.**

Of primary importance in your nurture is ensuring you understand the gospel and are trusting in Christ alone for your enjoyment of eternal life and that you are *not* trusting anything in yourself; NOT your faith, works, love, giving, knowledge, self examination, associations, sorrow for sin, prayers, repentance, joy, participation in the sacraments or any such thing. These things will never secure your name being written in the book of life. Receiving the full and free gift of Christ and His righteousness is the exclusive grounds of your present comfort, eternal happiness, rescue from sin, citizenship in Heaven, and harmonious walk with Him.

### **2. Assurance: Establishing your *confidence* that Jesus Christ is *your* treasure.**

We seek to nurture a growing confidence in your personal salvation and entitlement to Christ as your Treasure.

Having ensured a person is brought to an understanding of salvation by grace through faith alone we seek then to aid them in a growing confidence they are indeed in Christ and thus entitled to the free riches of Christ, indeed Christ Himself.

### **3. Security Guaranteed Eternally - Your Safe Deposit.**

We teach the absolute preeminence of Christ in all things including salvation. He is the author and finisher of your faith. We seek to bring you to understand that once your name is written in heaven it stays there. Your salvation depends not on your hold on Christ but on His hold on you and that hold is safe and secure. As the *author* and *finisher* (or perfecter) he is the one that first sets His love on you. He then draws you to love Him, repent of your sins, and trust on Him for the free gift of His righteousness supplied to you. You get salvation and eternal joy and God gets all the glory through Jesus Christ.

We nurture you to enjoy the rest and peace that this truth brings.

*Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream,  
The only fitness Christ requires, is to feel your need of Him.*

Your eternal treasure is safe and sound in the hands of Christ.

### **4. The Priority of Joy.**

#### ***a. Joy, Your Priority.***

Jesus instructs us to find joy in Him in spite of outward circumstances whether good or bad. Even in the midst of sorrow we have a hope of joy.

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:11-12 (see also 20:16-24)

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full". John 16:24

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

We believe the pursuit of joy in Christ is a healthy and necessary part of the Christian life (see for example Psalm 81, Acts 2:28, Acts 20:24, Rom 14:17, Rom 15:13, 2 Cor 1:24, Phil 1:25). *We either satisfy ourselves in Christ or we seek joy elsewhere.*

Therefore, in our efforts to nurture your soul we are "fellow workers for your joy" (2 Cor 1:24) and this we do that we "may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you." Rom 15:32.

#### ***b. The Priority of Your Highest Joy.***

We have much to rejoice over in all that is given freely to us by the hand of our loving Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. There are many things in this life that may bring us joy: physical and material wealth; favorable circumstance; victory over sin; good fellowship; healthy life, a good church, and escape from judgment, to

name a few. However, within the vast amount of good things bestowed upon us from the hand of God there is an everlasting source of joy that we are to pursue above all others.

Simply stated, we pursue our highest source of joy in treasuring Jesus Christ. We treasure:

- His Person given in relationship to us as a friend, brother, king, prophet, and priest;
- His preeminence in all things ruling His universe, His world and His kingdom as he sees fit, which always brings glory to God and good to His people;
- His performance in service of His Father and His work on our behalf resulting in the free gift of the righteousness we require before God;
- His delightful perfections in all He is and does; and,
- His promises lavished upon us in abundance.

Within the great riches and wealth of the kingdom of Christ, the manifest presence of the King is the greatest treasure to be valued and enjoyed above all else. To nurture your soul we seek to set Christ before you in His many and varied fascists to bring joy to your soul. We do not so much stir up joy as simply present Christ and allow the truth of Christ expressed in the Word to win and allure your heart bringing you joy as you contemplate Him in all His power, loveliness, splendor, kindness, mercy and grace.

## **5. Valuing the Treasure.**

To genuinely rejoice in the eternal salvation of your soul, you must recognise the *greatness* of the *guaranteed* eternal treasure secured for you. Thus we seek to display the person and promises of Christ in all there wonder and greatness to you. Christ is your greatest treasure realised here and now in the mystical union we have with him by the power of the Holy Spirit. The full realisation of that mystical union, when we enter our rest, is our eternal hope and happiness. That is, being in the manifest presence of our Lord, Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ, for all eternity to His glory and our joy.

## **6. Increasing Delight in Eternal Treasure**

Christ, your treasure, doesn't *gain* value, He is already infinitely valuable. We seek to display to you the wonder of the length, breadth, and depth of His immeasurable excellencies so that Christ gains ever increasing value in your apprehension, appreciation and estimation of Him.

To rejoice in ever increasing measure over your eternal salvation, you must grow in ever increasing measure in expectation and adoration of what you are going to receive when get there, namely, Jesus Christ.

## **7. Gospel Sanctification.**

We seek to continually display all the treasures freely given to you in Christ and to ingrain within believers an understanding of their right standing in Christ. This forms a sure foundation from which to seek to grow in grace.

We approach believers as those that have a new nature in Christ and therefore desire and are enabled towards the enjoyment of Christ, to walk in the Spirit, glorify God and have the victory over sin. We seek to help believers in this common endeavor by the power of the Spirit through prayer, meditation and the Word. While we recognise the conflict within every believer dealing with their indwelling sin, we take care to not treat believers as though this is the governing principle in their lives because greater is He that is in them (1 John 4:4).

We encourage believers *toward **Spirit-powered holiness*** through treasuring Christ and abiding in Him. We encourage believers *away from* will-power holiness: doing the best that lies in their own power and trusting on the grace of God and Christ to help them in such resolutions of their own will. Rather, we nurture believers to trust on Christ, 'to work in them to will and do, by His own power, according to His own good pleasure'. Will-power holiness is a trusting on the flesh for holiness through acts of the will, resolutions, determination, and personal efforts, instead of trusting on Christ. Christ is to be enjoyed and trusted upon as the author and finisher of our faith.

We encourage you toward '**vertical**' effort for the achieving of '**horizontal**' results; savoring the sweetness of the Savior to sanctify the soul and sever the root of sin. Thus we encourage you to pursue conformance to the holy law of Christ through prizing the preeminence, promises, performance, person and perfection of Jesus Christ freely expounded to us in His gospel. We desire you to seek personal holiness through abiding in Christ and He in you to produce the inner holiness of a joyful and contented heart resulting in natural and unconstrained obedience to His commands.

True holiness is first and foremost *relational*. The secondary behavioral aspects of holiness flow out of your relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” John 15:4

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Heb 11:5-6

Therefore, *the manner* of achieving true holiness is, from first to last, *by faith*. A resting, trusting, God-ward, Christ-treasuring, Spirit-fueled faith expressed throughout scripture in terms such as “Christ lives in me . . . I live by faith” (Gal 2:20, Heb 10:38), “walking by faith” (2 Cor 5:7); “faith working by love”(Gal 5:6), “overcoming the world by faith” (1 John 5:4); “quenching the fiery darts . . . by the shield of faith”, “walking, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith” Col 2:6,7), “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:13), “being strong in the Lord, and the power of His might” (Eph 6:10).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1). Therefore, to live by faith, is to continually be influenced towards holiness by embracing the gospel promises of His sweet abiding presence, continual abundant love, guaranteed eternal comfort, and everlasting joyous fellowship with Christ, all given to us freely.

Therefore, we encourage you to *learn to linger*: Through prayer, the word, and meditation we encourage you in the empowering reality of doctrine cherished and

adored, in particular as it pertains to and flows from the gospel and person of our Lord Jesus Christ. True holiness is obtained and sustained by the grace of our Lord working in our hearts to prize all we have in the Lord Jesus.

We encourage **external obedience** to flow from our satisfaction in God lest our service be performed with legalistic hearts far from the Lord (Mark 7:6). However, when a believer does not feel like doing their duty before God we do not excuse the performing of the act of obedience but rather encourage the performance of the both the external duty while *in parallel* dealing with the internal problem through repentance for heard-heartedness, resting in free forgiveness, meditating on the goodness and example of Christ, prayerfully pleading for joy in all things, and seeking satisfaction in Christ freely offered and flowing through to all our service of our God.

## 8. Spiritual Repentance

We believe you ought to maintain a deeply sorrowful sense of indwelling personal sin while also rejoicing in the present reality of the full and free forgiveness in Jesus Christ, looking forward with expectation to the final delivery 'from this body of death'. A high view of our Holy God mixed with a sorrow over your own personal sin leads to a treasuring of Jesus Christ and complete surrender to His wondrous gracious and extensive Gospel promises and gift of Himself as the only way to return us to the embrace of our loving heavenly Father.

Repentance therefore ought to be coupled with a relishing of the full & free gospel promises of love, forgiveness, acceptance, justification and of union with Christ Himself. Otherwise, repentance can become a defeated and mournful wallowing in the very slough we are being saved *from* rather than a turning from it and glorying in the eternal happy state we are being saved *to*. Thus even your repentance ought to be to the heart-felt praise and glory of God.

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ***I thank God*** -- through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Rom 7:23-25

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that ***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners***, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. ***Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.*** Amen” 1 Tim 1:15-17

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, ***meditate on these things.***” Phil 4:8

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, ***do it all for the glory of God.***” 1 Cor 10:31-32

“. . . ***God's kindness leads you toward repentance.***” Rom 2:4

## **Preaching & Teaching**

The basic **tenor** of the preaching and teaching is aimed at ministering grace, comfort, hope, joy and assurance, NOT directing believers toward an unhealthy preoccupation with law, duty, searching, fear, questioning, introspection, and discouragement. In other words, we pursue a *Christ-treasuring tenor* in the preaching and teaching.

The **direction** we encourage people to look in our instruction is to Christ, constantly displaying Him in all his fullness and glory, with the aim of bringing you to being intensely preoccupied with Christ alone. By contrast we do NOT set believers to look upon themselves to see how they measure up against the searching demands of the commandments of God to strive for in order to feel entitled to enjoyment of Christ's blessings. We want you to look to Christ and be happy with Him and His achievements on your behalf.

As a precious member of Christ's flock, the **ground** upon which we base our appeals to walk well-pleasing to your Heavenly Father is the glory of God, Sovereign grace, and the cross, always beseeching you by the mercies of God (Rom 12:1). We do NOT use God's commands as a club to drive believers or imply the withdrawal of His love until you measure up. Neither do we deny the necessity of holy living.

Biblically Christ-exalting instruction leads believers to a greater degree of assurance, a more joyous and hope-filled life, and greater victory over personal sin. We seek to ensure our instruction is freed from tendencies that lead you to doubts, fear, defeat or joyless striving to measure up. We want to lead you to the place of abundant satisfaction and happiness in Christ that results in natural and unconstrained fruit blossoming to His glory.

Thus we seek to **preach grace** in the morning, grace in the evening, grace issuing forth from the Father, grace through Christ the Son, grace poured out in the Spirit, grace in its fullness, grace in its sovereignty, grace in its sweetness, grace undeserved, grace in its freeness offered to all, grace with compassion, grace with joy, grace in the gospel, and grace in its transforming power.

## **Prayer / Planning Balance**

As true spiritual vitality can be programmed and planned out of the life and ministries of an organisation we seek a power beyond our own in moving forward in all aspects of our ministry.

We desire all activities to honor our Lord and glorify His name thus we encourage all regular meetings to be characterised by 'agonising not organising' with 'a pound of prayer to every ounce of planning', whether leaders meetings, logistic meetings, or routine ministry coordination meetings.

Therefore, the question, "How much prayer went into this activity?", needs to take priority over the question, "How much planning went into this activity?".

We are of the conviction that to provide you with a truly God-honoring, Christ-treasuring, Spirit-dwelt environment we must seek the face of our Lord in regular, earnest and persistent prayer regarding all aspects of the Treasuring Christ ministries.

In practice, when you join a ministry team with an eagerness to share your ideas and vision, you may find the emphasis and time spent on prayer difficult to get used to. This will be especially true if the time spent in prayer runs its course and squeezes out time that otherwise might have been used for discussion.

We ask that you be patient and join us in this endeavour to earnestly and persistently pray for God to breath the power of the Holy Spirit into our ministries. The flesh will always tend to talk and activity rather than prayer. Therefore, we make a point of encouraging all leaders and coordinators to not lose heart but rather pray over their ministries as a priority.

The reason given by our Lord in Scripture to be persistent in prayer and not lose heart is that our Heavenly Father hears and answers persistent and earnest prayer. He gives good gifts to his children through prayer. There is much to be received from his hand and blessed with power from on high that will come through the means of persistent prayer alone. Prayer is the means established by our Lord to achieve his purposes.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:13

***The most proactive way for us to provide lasting spiritual nurture for you is to be in prayer for you and to ensure the ministries you are involved in are bathed in prayer!***

### **Pastoral Care and Counseling**

First and foremost we seek to bring you to a Christ-treasuring dependency from which to strengthen you to deal with all hardship of life.

We seek to increase faith and set Christ before the conscience to bring cleansing and relief from guilt.

There are numerous areas in which believers need focused nurture and we seek to provide as needed and as we are able. However, the fullness of Christ, expressed in the gospel, set continually before you is the foundation and continual wellspring from which all other growth flows.

Treasuring Jesus Christ with joy in all things is the very means to realising a greater love for God, personal growth, mortification of sin, and bringing God the glory He is seeking for Himself through Jesus Christ.

We seek to provide proactive care to you through prayer, treasuring Christ, enjoying grace, fellowship ministries, worship, preaching, teaching, training resources, practical care, and personal help. We aim to give priority to these proactive means of grace to strengthen you and reduce the crisis that arise from the soldiers of Christ being untrained, unarmed and left naked to face the battle.

## **Development of Gifts**

We will seek to nurture and develop your gifts in the context of the overall benefit and strengthening of the church. Your gifts are given for the strengthening of our mutual faith for the treasuring of Jesus Christ.

## **Limitations of Eldership Rule**

We believe elders have an *ecclesiastical, or church*, authority and not an absolute authority. Therefore, it is important for us, in nurturing you, to know there are God-ordained boundaries in areas of life in which elders are not to exercise rule. We recognise there are boundaries which we are not to cross and seek grace and wisdom to know where our limits extend. While we do provide *instruction* regarding all aspect of life, as we nurture you towards treasuring Christ *in all things*, our authority is limited to church rule.

We want you to feel safe and loved in our church and ministries and to be assured that we will endeavor to not abuse our authority or extend it beyond appropriate bounds.

*It is our joy and privilege to nurture you toward an inflamed passion for treasuring Jesus Christ in all things unto the glory of God and your enjoyment of Him.*