

Lent #2 - Re-Centering

Icebreaker Question

When someone asks “How are you?” and you answer “Fine” what are some of the possible reasons why you might do so? Are most people who answer this way trying to cover something up by wearing a mask or being ‘inauthentic’?

In what situations do you feel most comfortable with sharing your authentic self?

Sermon Discussion

Pastor Josh said that in Matthew 23 Jesus is warning people to not be like the religious leaders. Are there Christian leaders today that people should be warned about? What about their message might justify this? Are there leaders you would direct people towards?

Josh explained that the Jewish faith was attractive to some people living in Jesus’ time as it provided a sense of morality and the worship of one god instead of the many in Greek and Roman religions. In our time what might be attractive about Christianity to those seeking a faith to live by?

What experiences have you had with zealous/preachy Christians who make it their main aim to ‘convert’ people?

How does the legacy of the church’s treatment of the indigenous people of Canada fit into this idea of conversion?

Pastor Josh pointed out that a faith that is not centred on Jesus is toxic. Can you think of any other example of this in history or with the modern church?

Josh said the Pharisees were passing along a system of guilt, shame and a focus on outward appearances, but Jesus wanted people to discover that God’s disposition towards them is acceptance and love; it is the offer of a new and better way of doing life that lifts us up and doesn’t weigh us down. And it is all centred on Jesus. How has that message of love made a difference in your life? Did it bring a sense of freedom and/or a desire to follow in this way?

What are some religious things (Christian checkboxes) that can take the place of Jesus?

Have you ever fallen into the danger of thinking that you have this faith thing all figured out (kind of like the teachers of the law and Pharisees)? That you knew/know the ‘right’ set of beliefs or the ‘right’ way of behaving? Related to that, did it make you think less of other churches/Christians?

What are some dangers of becoming too confident in our conclusions about faith? (pride, placing expectations on others, being less open to new ideas) Has there been a time in your faith journey when this has been true of you?

Discuss this passage from the message:

Faith isn’t about nailing down all the answers. It is about being open to what Jesus is doing in our lives. It is about asking real questions, wrestling with doubts and discovering that we don’t have to pretend with him.

Is there something specific and practical that you could do this week that would help you centre or recenter your faith in Jesus?