

Is Christ Central?

Introduction: Why Today's Blog?



Have you ever wondered if Jesus' unexpected responses—those bold, countercultural nuggets of wisdom—could make us question His central role? If so, you're not alone. Over the course of this blog series, we've explored some of these surprising moments: Jesus flipping the tables on dualistic thinking, sidestepping yes-or-no traps, and revealing wisdom that resonates far beyond any one tradition.

Many readers have found deep connections with truths they've encountered in other faiths.

But this raises an important question: if Christ's wisdom echoes across traditions, can Christians still hold Christ as central? And if we do, how does this shape the way we dialogue with those of other faiths—or no faith at all?

This blog is our way of diving headfirst into that question. Spoiler alert: the answer isn't just about talking more about Jesus or insisting on doctrines. It's about something far more radical. To hold Christ as central is to *become* Christ—to embody His love, humility, and presence in our world.

In the chapters ahead, we'll explore what this means for us as Christians, how it aligns with interfaith respect, and why it's not only possible but essential to *be* Christ in a world full of diversity. Let's move forward together, with open minds and hearts firmly centred in Christ.

Chapter 1: Being Christ, Becoming Christ

"Be Christ." It sounds like an impossible call, right? But what if that's exactly what we're meant to do?

Consider this: Mother Teresa told her sisters in Calcutta not to preach Jesus but to *be Jesus*. It wasn't about words—it was about presence. This kind of radical transformation is at the heart of the Christian journey. And it's not a new idea. St. Augustine marvelled that we've been called not just to follow Christ but to *become Christ*. St. Paul wrote in Galatians, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."



So, what does that look like in practice? For one thing, it's about putting on the Mind of Christ, as Paul urges in Philippians. It's a mindset rooted in humility, service, and love—a total reset of how we see ourselves and the world. It's also about letting go of our ego-driven need for control and allowing Christ's spirit to work through us.

This isn't just about feeling holiness; it's about becoming fully alive. When we embody Christ, we bring His healing presence into our relationships, our communities, and even into interfaith dialogues. Becoming Christ is the most profound way to hold Him as central—not just in belief but in action.

Am I, are you, ready to step into this call? It's bold, it's challenging, and it's exactly what we're made for.

Chapter 2: Why Examine Jesus' Unexpected Responses?

If you've been following this blog series, you know that Jesus had a knack for responding in ways no one saw coming. His answers weren't just clever—they were transformational. When someone tried to trap Him with a question about paying taxes to Caesar, He didn't pick sides. Instead, He reframed the entire discussion, revealing truths far beyond the political squabble of the day.

These unexpected responses aren't just interesting anecdotes; they hold keys to the deeper wisdom of Christ. They challenge us to see beyond binary thinking, to step out of "either/or" traps, and to embrace a more expansive, kingdom-centered consciousness.

But this blog isn't about another one of those responses. Instead, it's about the big-picture question many readers have raised: What do these stories mean for how Christians hold Christ as central, especially when His wisdom resonates with truths found in other faiths?

Here's the thing: recognizing divine wisdom in other traditions doesn't diminish Christ's centrality. It deepens it. The unexpected responses of Jesus aren't just about sidestepping traps; they're invitations to see with His eyes, think with His mind, and live in His love.

This blog aims to tie it all together, showing how the centrality of Christ isn't about exclusion—it's about transformation, a call to embody His love in a world rich with diversity.



Chapter 3: The Universal Christ—Present in All Faiths

When we say "Christ is central," we're not just talking about the historical Jesus of Nazareth. We're also talking about the Universal Christ—the eternal Logos, the divine Word through whom all things were made. This idea is woven into the fabric of scripture: "In Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17), and "Through Him all things were made" (John 1:3).

Here's where it gets exciting: if Christ is the divine blueprint of creation, then His presence can be found everywhere—even in faiths and traditions that don't explicitly name Him. Does this mean all paths are the same? No, but it does mean that truth, wherever it's found, has its roots in Christ.

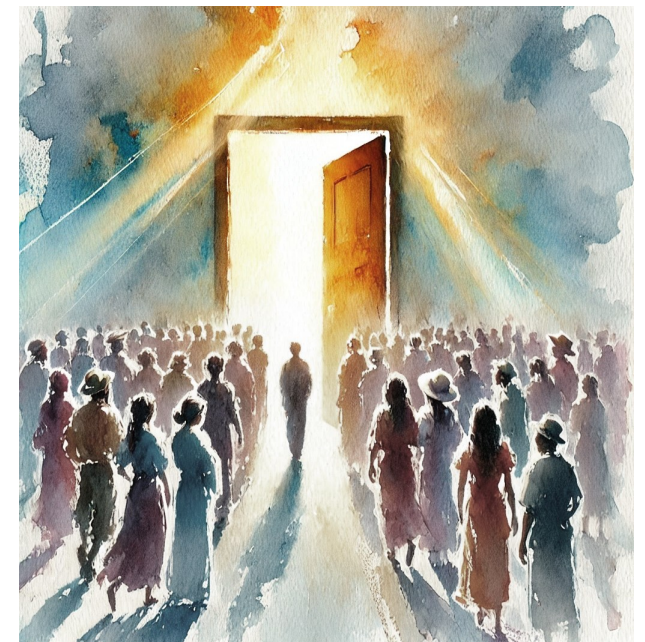
Think about it: when we encounter the compas-

sion of the Buddha, the wisdom of Confucius, or the devotion of Rumi, aren't we seeing glimpses of the same divine light? Franciscan monk Richard Rohr calls this the "Universal Christ"—Christ as the divine presence in all things, not limited to one time, place, or people.

For Christians, this doesn't deny the uniqueness of Jesus; it magnifies it. Christ's centrality is cosmic, not tribal. It invites us to recognize Him in all creation while holding Him as the one in whom all things are fulfilled.

The Universal Christ isn't just a theological concept—it's an invitation to see the world with new eyes, grounded in Christ's love.

Chapter 4: Christ Saves All—The Inclusivity of Salvation



Chapter 5: Jesus Challenges Duality

Can Christ's salvation extend beyond explicit belief in Him? This question can feel tricky, but scripture gives us a resounding yes—and it's a yes filled with mystery and grace.

John 3:17 reminds us that Jesus didn't come to condemn the world but to save it. Colossians 1:20 speaks of Christ reconciling "all things" to Himself. And when Paul says that "every knee will bow" (Philippians 2:10), it's a vision of a universal reality, not just a Christian one. Christ's work is cosmic in scope—reaching beyond human boundaries of religion, language, and understanding.

Theologians like Karl Rahner call this the idea of the "Anonymous Christian"—those who live in truth and love, guided by God's grace, even if they don't explicitly know Christ. Trappist monk Thomas Merton, too, saw Christ's presence in the deep spiritual traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. Their journeys toward ultimate reality are, in a sense, encounters with the Logos—the divine Word.

For Christians, this doesn't mean that "all roads lead to heaven" in a simplistic way. Instead, it magnifies the scope or range of Christ's saving work. Salvation isn't just about affiliation or belief—it's about God's grace transforming hearts and lives.

Christ's love is inclusive, not exclusive. It calls us to hold Him as central while celebrating the ways His light shines in places we might not expect.



Have you noticed how often Jesus sidestepped the traps of "either/or" questions? Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we condemn this woman caught in adultery? Time and again, Jesus refused to take sides, instead reframing the issue to reveal a deeper truth.

Why does this matter? Because dualistic thinking—our tendency to divide the world into "us vs. them," "right vs. wrong," "good vs. bad"—is a trap. It limits our vision and keeps us from seeing the bigger picture of God's kingdom.

Jesus' responses teach us to look beyond these false dilemmas. He challenges us to embrace a "both/and" perspective or, better yet, a Kingdom perspective. When He tells the crowd, "Let the one without sin cast the first

stone" (John 8:7), He's not just offering a clever rebuttal—He's inviting them into self-reflection, humility, and grace.

Richard Rohr calls this kind of thinking "nondual consciousness." It's the ability to hold tension, to see beyond opposites, and to trust that God's truth is bigger than our categories. This is the mindset of Christ—the one Paul urges us to put on.

For Christians, this isn't just intellectual—it's deeply transformative. To follow Jesus is to let go of the need to win arguments or prove ourselves right. It's to step into the radical freedom of love, where grace and truth are never in opposition but always one.

Chapter 6: How Can Christians Dialogue with Other Faiths?



Talking about faith in a world full of diverse beliefs can feel like walking a tightrope. How do we hold firm to the centrality of Christ without dismissing the beauty and truth found in other traditions? The answer lies in how we approach dialogue—with humility, respect, and love.

One of the most powerful examples of this is Mother Teresa's approach. She told her sisters not to preach Jesus to those of other faiths but to *be Jesus*. Actions speak louder than words, and when we embody Christ's compassion, people encounter His love, even if they don't recognize His name.

The Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* encourages Christians to “acknowledge, pre-

serve, and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among Non-Christians.” This doesn't mean watering down our faith; it means recognizing the Holy Spirit at work in places beyond our own understanding.

Dialogue isn't about winning arguments or converting people on the spot. It's about listening, learning, and sharing authentically. It's about being present, open, and rooted in Christ's love.

When we approach others with this spirit, we reflect the heart of the Gospel. We don't need to fear differences; instead, we can celebrate the ways God's truth shines through many lenses while confidently witnessing to the one in whom all truth is fulfilled—Jesus Christ.

Chapter 7: The Call to Radical Transformation



Becoming Christ isn't just a lofty theological idea; it's a radical call to transformation. It's about letting go of our ego-driven desires and allowing Christ to live through us.

St. Paul captured this beautifully in Romans 12:2: “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This transformation isn't about self-improvement or moral perfection; it's about surrender. It's about stepping out of the driver's seat and letting Christ guide our thoughts, actions, and priorities.

Think about what happens when we truly put on the Mind of Christ. Our focus shifts from “What's best for me?” to “How can I serve?” Our need for control gives way to trust, and our judgments are replaced by compassion. This transformation doesn't just change us—it changes the way we interact with the world.

This is why becoming Christ is central to the Christian journey. It's not enough to talk about Jesus or admire His teachings. We're called to *embody* His love in every aspect of our lives. It's a bold, messy, beautiful process that requires humility, prayer, and grace.

When we allow Christ to work through us, we become instruments of His peace, justice, and mercy. This isn't just personal transformation—it's how we participate in God's ongoing work of renewal and reconciliation in the world. And it all starts with saying, “Here I am, Lord.”

Chapter 8: Practical Implications—Living as Christ in the World



If becoming Christ feels like a high calling, that's because it is. But it's not about perfection or grandeur—it's about bringing Christ's love into the ordinary moments of life. This is where theology becomes action, where belief becomes embodied practice.

Living as Christ starts with the little things: treating others with kindness, being patient when it's hard, and forgiving when it hurts. These acts may seem small, but they're where transformation happens. As St. Teresa of Ávila said, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours."

In a world that thrives on division and self-interest, living as Christ means choosing love over fear, service over self, and unity over division. It's about stepping into the messy reali-

ties of life—caring for the poor, advocating for justice, and showing compassion to those who are different from us.

This also means embracing interfaith dialogue with an open heart. When we encounter truth in other traditions, we can celebrate it as a reflection of Christ's light, while holding firm to our faith. Living as Christ doesn't require shouting His name from rooftops; it requires showing His love in ways that resonate universally.

The call to live as Christ is both deeply personal and profoundly communal. It's how we witness to the world that Christ is central—not just in word, but in life.

Conclusion: Christ at the Center of All



So, is Christ central? For Christians, the answer must be a resounding yes. But the depth of that answer goes far beyond words or doctrines. To hold Christ as central is to live in Him, through Him, and with Him. Even, ultimately perhaps, as Him. It's to become Christ—not in name, but in presence, love, and action.

This blog has explored how Christ's centrality is cosmic, inclusive, and transformative. He is the eternal Logos, present in all creation, the Savior of all, and the One who calls us to radical transformation. Recognizing the divine truths in other faiths doesn't diminish Christ's uniqueness; it magnifies His reach. Christ is the source of all light: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." (John 1:4) And His love knows no bounds.

For us as Christians, this is both a reassurance and a challenge. It's reassuring because it affirms that the wisdom we encounter in the world ultimately points back to Him. It's challenging because it calls us to embody Christ in every aspect of our lives.

As we move forward, let's hold onto this profound truth: Christ is central, not because we say so, but because He is the beginning and end of all things. And as we live out His love—whether in dialogue with other faiths, in service to the needy, or in the quiet moments of our day—we bear witness to His universal presence and transforming grace.

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