

Six Streams of Christian Life and Prayer

Study Four: Practicing the Word-Centred Life – The Evangelical Tradition

Based on 'Streams of Living Water' by Richard Foster See items in bold type for a swifter study

Aim

To understand how God reveals himself to us through his written word – the Bible, his living word – Jesus Christ and his spoken word – the proclamation of the gospel.

You will need...

A Bible, pen and paper.

Starter

• **How did you first become aware of the good news of the kingdom of God? Did you hear it proclaimed by a person, or did you read about it in the Bible?**

Prayer

Jesus and the Word-Centred Life

Read [Luke 4:16-20a](#); [42-44](#)

Jesus finds a welcome and praise as he begins his preaching ministry in his home region of Galilee, but as farmers living in villages and small towns the Galileans were thought of as backward by their fellow Jews, the Judeans, who viewed themselves as cultured and refined. For centuries the Galileans had waited in hope for a messiah who would free them from political oppression, hope kept alive by listening to the scriptures, especially [Isaiah 61:1-2](#), a favourite verse. Imagine the shock when this son of Mary and Joseph, who grew up in Nazareth claims to be the anointed one and proclaims the year of the Lord's favour. Undeterred by their anger Jesus continues his ministry of proclamation of the "good news" throughout his home region and Jerusalem.

• **How does Jesus speak the good news of "release to the captives" to your life?**

God and the Evangelical Tradition

The written word is the Bible. The living word is Jesus Christ, the clearest expression of God, John 1:1 "in the beginning was the word..." When we look into the face of Jesus we see God, because Jesus is God. The spoken word is the proclamation of the gospel which is at the core of the Word-centred life. With spoken words we communicate the gospel to those who have not heard – [Romans 10:17](#). We are witnesses to the person of Jesus Christ whose story resides in the Bible, and we use words to tell the good news to everyone. Our task is to proclaim God's words, not our own.

• How has the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ influenced your life? Can you describe its effects?
• **Does the concept that the Evangelical Tradition includes the written word, the living word and the proclamation of the gospel help or hinder you?**

Practicing the Evangelical Tradition

The Evangelical Tradition emphasises the proclamation of the gospel – Read [Romans 10:13-15](#)

Firstly a person must be sent to those who have not heard the word of God. Secondly, the messenger must proclaim the word, or witness to it. Thirdly, the listener must receive the word and believe. Fourthly, the listener must ask God to restore their relationship. "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" Romans 10:17.

• Memorise a verse of scripture – such as [Galatians 2:20](#), [Romans 5:1](#), [John 3:16](#), [Psalm 1:1](#) or [Ephesians 2:8](#)

• Read one of the shorter books of the bible out loud – The Gospel and Paul's letters were read out loud to the early Christians. As you read, imagine hearing the words for the first time.

* Meditate on a verse or a brief passage about Jesus Christ – Keep your selection simple e.g. [John 1:1](#) or [1:14](#). Read slowly and carefully, asking God questions about the meaning and relevance of the verse

• **Imagine yourself as one of Jesus' brothers – Read [John 7:1-8](#). How do Jesus actions make you feel? Do you share some of the doubt his brothers felt? If so ask him to help you overcome it.**

• Look for an opportunity to tell someone about your faith. Begin by praying for the right opportunity. Do not speak in a way that manipulates or judges. Simply tell what has happened to you.

• Proclaim the gospel by your actions – Francis of Assisi said: "always preach Christ, use words if necessary". Let your actions speak for you.