

Authentic. Worship.

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, if you'd like to learn more about the church, you can go to FCCGreensburg.com or you can check out the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. And it is always our heart to get into the Word of God, but most of all, let that Word get into us and change these hearts.

So let's say that after you listen to this message today, you go out to lunch and someone asks you, hey, what was the preacher's message about?

Today and today alone, you can respond back with, which one? Because I'm going to preach two messages and we're going to see how well they merge.

But I do have some good news. I'm still only preaching for probably about 25 to 30 minutes, so you don't have to wait too long at El Reparo, okay? Now, how many of you have seen the movie Catch Me If You Can?

[1 : 02] Came out back in 2002 with Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks. It's probably in my top 15, 20 movie list. And I remember the first time I saw it, I thought, wow, that's creative.

And it's based on a true story. That's even cooler. See, it's the tale of Frank Abagnale Jr., this exciting and extravagant life where he was an airline pilot, a doctor, a lawyer, and extremely wealthy all before the age of 18.

See, the word that best describes this master of manipulation is counterfeit. It was all fake. Done through lies, manipulation, deceit.

Always staying one step ahead of the authorities. He assumed several false identities. Moved all over the world to escape the police. Even stole over \$2.5 million through check fraud.

And that was the 1960s. So we're talking over \$20 million today. Now, the silver lining is that after he finally got caught, he got his life all cleaned up, and he ended up spending his career as an expert in fraud helping to catch the bad guys.

[2 : 17] But that word counterfeit is really important to me because I've been in the Big C Church now for 24 years, and sadly, I've seen too much counterfeit faith.

I've even had times where I had to fall on my knees before God and repent because I'd gotten too comfortable with lukewarm devotion to Christ. And the words of Brennan Manning that I first heard quoted in a DC Talks song, they still ring in my ears.

The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny him by their lifestyle.

That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. So welcome back here to sixth week of our series called DNA.

So far, looking at our unique spiritual DNA here at FCC, we've talked about the why, our vision. It's Jesus first in everything.

[3 : 23] And just like Jesus taught, that's when everything else falls into place. We've also looked at the how. How do we accomplish that? Well, we belong to, believe in, and become like Jesus.

And then last week, we began looking at the what. What guides us as a church? What parameters keep us on the right track?

Those are called values. And we talked about the Bible as our authority to teach, to rebuke, to correct, to train, so that you and I may be thoroughly equipped to walk in God's perfect, not easy, but perfect will for our lives.

And in this message, we jump into our second value that helps guide us as a church. Authenticity is our pursuit. We don't want to be counterfeit, fake, inauthentic, phony, an imitation, a sham, bogus, a forgery, hypocrites, or whatever other word you want to use.

It is our desire as a church family to always be real, transparent, and authentic in our walk with Jesus, and even how we relate to one another in the church and outside of it.

[4 : 46] And the reason this is important to FCC is because it was important to Jesus. He couldn't stand fake. In fact, He got extremely bold and called it out.

Let me show you one really big example here of many. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 23. Matthew chapter 23, probably about three quarters the way through your Bible.

The very first book of the New Testament. You got Matthew, Mark, Luke, and then John. So Matthew. Matthew, and as Jesus is teaching His disciples and the crowd around Him about these dangers of hypocrisy, He straight up calls out the men, the untouchables who are supposed to be leading the nation spiritually.

These Pharisees, these teachers of the law, the very men who conspired against Him and eventually led Him to a cross where He would die to set us free.

But let me take you on a quick ride through this chapter. And if you get a chance to read it all, please do. But starting in Matthew 23, verse 1, here's what it says.

[5 : 54] Then Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples, The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you.

So here's Jesus saying, hey, submit to authorities, okay? But then He says, but do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Everything they do is done for people to see. And then we jump down towards the end of that chapter, verse 25, and Jesus says, Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees.

And once again, He uses those words, you hypocrites. You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, He says, first clean the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will also be clean.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

[7 : 07] In the same way, on the outside, you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. You know, when I was a new Christian, I looked at that chapter like, Yeah, Jesus, give it to them, man.

How dare they live such a fake life, those suckers, you know? That's kind of how I used to look at it. But after walking with Him now for 24 years, I approach it a little bit differently, hopefully with more of a heart of compassion.

But I think, yeah, they were wrong, of course. And I'm glad He called it out. But now I look at my own heart, And I ask, Lord Jesus, show me where I may be looking too much like a Pharisee.

Because while it's so easy to see those behaviors in others, what about this heart? So if you want to take notes with this today, you can always go to the YouVersion Bible app under events, under First Christian Church of Greensburg.

But if you're a note taker, let's start in the outline with this. The pursuit of authenticity starts with me. It always starts with me.

[8 : 16] So how did Jesus put that in Matthew 7, 5? He said, you hypocrite. First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

That strong word hypocrite that we've been reading over and over now, in the Greek, it kind of beckons us back to the world of plays, where often one person would act out multiple roles.

So they'd have a different mask depending on the character they were portraying in that moment.

But Jesus is saying to us, hey, take off the mask. Don't be a hypocrite.

Come before me authentically. Be real. You're not perfect. You'll never be. But you can be sincere in your pursuit of Christ and his holiness.

And this is not the time to think, well, I sure am glad Miss Bertha Flannery is sitting three rows in front of us here in this message today. Because it fits her to a T, right?

[9 : 15] I used the fakest name I could think, so hopefully no one has that name. But no, this is you and me. Us coming before Jesus, pursuing to live an authentic life in him.

Having the same heart as King David when he prayed that sincere prayer in Psalm 139. He said, search me, God. Know my heart.

Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Let's start by looking at our own hearts, surrendering any hypocrisy to Jesus. And then let's finish that sentence. The pursuit of authenticity starts with me and then overflows to others. You know, as I talk to people who visit our church, I often hear that they simply want real. Authentic people who also have struggles, who they can connect with in real ways. Authentic worship that pursues excellence without the need for production. And sincere preaching.

[10:23] Not a guy in a fancy outfit speaking from his ivory tower down to us unclean peasants. No, real people in the same boat as you break down the word of God so that we can find hope and grow in our relationship with Jesus.

So hear me. Church, body of Christ. That should be where you can take off your mask and you can be vulnerable. Get real about letting Jesus take control of that heart.

If you need to let the tears fly, go for it. We've all been there. I can't tell you how many times I've been bawling my eyes out at worship and somehow I have to compose myself because I'm supposed to preach in three minutes.

Or maybe you have just faith questions. Don't be afraid to ask. You got struggles? Me too. It's a daily process of giving that to Christ.

And let's stop listening to Satan's lies when he says we're the only one dealing with this because we're not. See, at 18, when I came to Jesus, I didn't need pomp and circumstance.

[11:27] I didn't need to hear that so-and-so would have gone with that carpet in that space or that pews are somehow holier than chairs or that you could only sing this style of worship music or read from this certain translation of the Bible.

I wanted the truth that set me free. And that's something that I love about our church family. And it's my prayer that when a lost world encounters us, whether in our church building or out on the street, my prayer is that they'll experience real, real, authentic followers of Christ committed to putting Jesus first.

So let me end this first message with 1 John 3.18 that simply says, Dear children, let us not love with words or speech.

You could also say, like, let us not love with mere words or speech, but with actions and in truth. In other words, he's saying, let's be real. And here at FCC, authenticity is our pursuit.

Okay, so we've landed the plane on the first trip. Now take a deep breath with me, okay? Re-fasten your seatbelts because we're getting fueled back up and ready for takeoff.

[12:43] But, you know, I'll never forget a very special moment in a ministry we had in Tennessee. A church that's very dear to us because of how they loved our family.

But it was a typical Sunday morning. A lady named Sandy, like she often did, was on the piano. She had played soft music during communion. But during the offering, she livened it up a little bit.

And when she finished, the church family clapped in appreciation. They loved what she did. And then she headed back to her seat. It was fourth row outside wall. And I know that because we're right in front of her, third row outside wall.

At the time, Joes, our oldest, was probably three, three and a half. And he's just figuring out how church works. And as he listens to her play, and then he hears everyone clap for her as she walks back to her seat.

He doesn't know exactly what's happening, but he loves her. He wants to celebrate with her. So he bellows out, you did it, Miss Sandy. You did it.

[13:46] And we all laughed at his precious innocence. And then we would even joke from time to time that someday, and I said in 20 or 30 years, whatever it is, if I get the opportunity to preach your funeral, that that is going to be the perfect story.

You did it, Miss Sandy. You did it. Kind of sounds biblical, doesn't it? 2 Timothy 4, 7 and 8. You did it.

You repented of your sins, surrendering your life to Christ, discovering forgiveness and hope. You authentically pursued his heart through the word, letting the Holy Spirit be your constant guide. You persevered through all life's trials and troubles, while sometimes his were the only footprints in the sand. You faithfully loved and encouraged your fellow saints in the church while serving with your gifts for his glory.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Now don't misunderstand my point. The only reason we can say you did it is because of what Jesus did on the cross and by the empty tomb.

[15:11] But there's an amazing reward for those whose trust is in him. And that's a pretty good picture of what worship really is. Because sometimes our definition of worship is too small.

Some say worship is what we do on Sunday morning. And they're not wrong. It's just a small picture. The word, the Lord's Supper, prayer, life together, donuts, you know, just the essentials, right?

That is a beautiful part of worship. But it's a small part. Because worship is 24, 7, 365. And every four years, it's 366.

So, as I was working through this message, I really felt the Holy Spirit impress upon my heart this sentence that I want us to get today. Worship is all of me pursuing all of Jesus all the time.

You won't do it perfectly. You were saved by grace and you'll be held up daily by grace as well. But that's the goal that we pursue because worship is our lifestyle.

[16:18] So, grab your Bible for me. Turn to Romans chapter 12. This is the passage we're going to break down here. Romans 12. If you're still in Matthew, just jump ahead.

About five big books. Go through Mark and Luke and John and Acts. Then you'll come to Romans chapter 12. And let's start in verse 1. Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters.

So, he's giving a very strong command. Like, this is important. Make sure you do this. He says, therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Holy and pleasing to God. Listen to this. This is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Worship. Worship. Worship is all of me.

[17:22] What did that passage just say? Offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. So, if my body is a living sacrifice seeking to please God by walking according to his ways, then it's all of me.

All. And this struggle with walking in the flesh, it isn't new to 2025. 130 years ago, Andrew Murray wrote these profound words.

He said, there are many who have accepted Christ as their Lord, but have never yet come to the final absolute surrender of everything.

Do you remember a couple weeks ago when we talked about our youth group here at the church, our 6th through 12th grade ministry, how they have a new theme verse from Galatians 2.20?

Well, this passage is a beautiful picture of coming all in with Jesus in worship. Here's what it says. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

[18:28] The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. See, the first step in worship is to realize that maybe I've been worshiping something else.

It sure is easy to do. Maybe it's me and my wants, my selfishness. Always got to get my way. Maybe I worship sports or my kids' activities.

Maybe I worship church or a building or how we've always done things. Maybe it's my physical appearance. Maybe it's vanity. Maybe it's my status in society or the house I live in, the car I drive, the money in my account, the title I hold in the community.

There's as many idols as there are people probably listening to this. But true worship begins with a daily surrender. That this life of mine is no longer about me because my ways lead to emptiness. My ways led me into a pit. But instead, a lifestyle of worship is waking up in the morning, putting my feet on the floor, and saying, okay, Lord, I know Satan's not taking the day off, but I'm so thankful that the one who is in me is greater than he who is in this world.

[19:46] I'm so grateful, Lord, that you are with me. The Holy Spirit lives inside of me. And just like yesterday, I ask you to take all of me, even that and that.

Oh, and that too. You get it all because I want to fully belong to you. I want to worship you with everything I am. So worship is all of me.

Here's the next part of that sentence. Pursuing all of Jesus. Now, if we look back at Romans 12, two parts I want to break down here. So first, it says, therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, watch this, in view of God's mercy.

So why would I dare offer my body as a living sacrifice? Because of what Jesus has done for me, right? Romans 5, 8. But God demonstrated his love for us in this.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The most amazing act of selfless love that's ever existed. The innocent Lamb of God being slain for you and me so that we wouldn't have to suffer the punishment our sins deserve.

[20 : 57] So why would I pursue all of Jesus? Because he pursues all of me. And he has extended that most amazing offer of salvation to each one of us who would deny self, pick up our cross, and daily follow him.

And then the second part of that passage, at the start of Romans 12, two, says, do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

So authentic worship is making the choice to be transformed rather than conformed. Transformed into the image of Christ instead of me being conformed to the image of the world around me.

And when I say yes to following Jesus, I'm saying he gets all of me pursuing all of him. I don't get to redefine Jesus. I don't get to reshape him into the image I think he should be.

I hear Christians all the time say, well, I think... Well, listen, I don't mean to be rude, but it doesn't matter what I think.

[22 : 07] What matters is what Jesus and his word teach, because he is God and I am not. And I don't want cuddle me Jesus, or kung fu Jesus, or hippie Jesus, or whatever other false, limited, one-sided view that people portray him as.

I want the real deal. I need the author and finisher of my faith, Hebrews 12, two. I hunger for the bread of life that sustains me, John 6, 32 through 35.

I can enter through the door. That's Jesus, the door to eternal life, John 10, 9. I need Emmanuel, God, with me. I want the Prince of Peace who can calm this anxious heart, Isaiah 9, 6.

I thirst for the living water, John 4, 10. And I only seek the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, John 14, 6.

When I pursue all of Jesus, I want the biblical version, because he's the only one who is mighty to save. Worship is all of me, pursuing all of Jesus, and here's the last part, all the time.

[23 : 19] Now, you'll notice in Romans 12, 1 and 2, that there's really no time frame for this all of me stuff, right? This all of me, all of Jesus. This, there's not a time where you kind of shut it off.

It's not okay when you walk into a church building on Sunday morning. This is when you turn it on, and you act holy, and you talk that Christianese. No, this is a continual thing, a daily process of pursuing holiness in Christ.

So that means worship is all the time. Just like this value says, worship is our lifestyle. I want to look the same when I'm watching basketball as I did when I was there at church on Sunday morning.

I want to have the same joy on Monday morning. I want to close out my week living out my faith instead of feeling the need to drown my sorrows in a drunken stupor.

I need Jesus to be my source of sufficiency all the time. And that's a pretty good definition of worship. All of me pursuing all of Jesus all the time.

[24 : 29] If that is our heart before Christ, man, that's going to be awesome. So you've had your complimentary peanuts and Sprite aboard the two flights that you've taken with me today.

We're landing the plane now, but before we do, some final words from your weird preacher because I'm not about to call myself a pilot. And this is where the analogy breaks down, right?

But the reason we wanted to put these two values together today is I hope becoming obvious now. Authenticity is our pursuit. Worship is our lifestyle.

And here at FCC, we want to live authentic lives of worship before our God. And I'm telling you, when this becomes your lifestyle, God's going to do some awesome things in and through you.

So as we wait for our luggage to appear here, do me a favor and shut your eyes. And when you think of someone who authentically worships Jesus through their lifestyle, who do you picture?

[25 : 37] What's the first face that comes to your mind? What is someone, I didn't say they were perfect, but just a great example of authentically pursuing the heart of God, worshipping Him 24-7 to the best of their ability as they seek His heart.

What's the first face that comes to your mind? Now, my hope is if I asked you this same question 10 years from now, and I asked it among the whole church family, that somebody will picture your face. Not for notoriety's sake, not to put you on a pedestal, but simply because you lived your faith in a very real way, and you made an impact on them.

Authentic worship. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I just thank you so much for your words of hope and your words of life that you have spoken over us today.

I just pray right now that you will just help us to pursue that authenticity, that that could be our pursuit, and that worship won't be just a one-day-a-week, turn-it-off type of thing, but it will be a lifestyle that we live, because we know that authenticity and a lifestyle of worship is exactly what your word teaches.

[27 : 02] So, Father, we pray. We pray that you will do an incredible work in each of us, that you will mold and shape us into the image of our Savior, and, Lord, we give you permission to do that right now.

Thank you for your word. Thank you for breathing life into us today through your word, and we pray all of this in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And God's people said, Amen and Amen. Hey, I want to offer you just a quick invitation. Maybe you have questions about the church. Maybe you have questions about your faith.

Maybe you're ready to talk about giving your life to Jesus Christ and walking with Him for the rest of your days. Regardless of what you need to chat about, there's a couple ways you can reach out to us.

Once again, my name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. You can reach out to us in a couple different ways. You can call the church office.

[28 : 04] We're open Monday through Thursday from 8 to 430, and you can call us at 812-663-8488. That's 812-663-8488.

Or you can go ahead and email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com. Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today.

We pray God's richest blessings on you and your family.