

# JESUS Centered

## The Salvation Army National Prayer Focus 2022: Jesus Centered AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 11 2022

**Access all the resources here:**  
[mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022](https://mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022)

The Salvation Army Australia invites you to join in 22 days of prayer for our National Prayer Focus from Sunday August 21 to Sunday September 11. Our 2022 theme is 'Jesus Centered', and has three key ways to get connected:

### **National Prayer Focus 22 Daily Devotionals**

#### **'The Salvos Field Guide Devotional: Recognising Jesus in our everyday'**

This freely available 22-day devotional can be read online, downloaded or printed. Featuring 22 short reflections from Salvos, the devotional has thought-provoking questions, worship-song suggestions and first-hand story about how these Salvos recognise Jesus in everyday of life. There are four accompanying sermon outlines for each of the Sundays in National Prayer Focus 2022, available on the site.

### **National Prayer Focus 22 Nightly Online Meetings**

Find the link for National Prayer Focus Online meetings live or recorded here: [mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022](https://mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022)

Join us from Sunday August 21 to Sunday September 11 for 22 nightly online prayer meetings. These will be 45 mins in total, featuring a variety of ways to pray, artists and ideas for being Jesus Centered, and involve times of group prayer. The meetings and associated artistic creations will be uploaded after each night.

### **Paperback 'Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a distracted world' by Steve Brown**

The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus 2022 is based on 'Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a distracted world' by Steve Brown. 'The Salvos Field Guide Devotional' does not require you to be familiar with the book, but if you would like to purchase a copy to continue your prayer journey, The Salvation Army Salvationist Supplies have copies available at a discounted rate while stocks last. Email [trade.melbourne@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:trade.melbourne@salvationarmy.org.au) to order.

There will also be a Salvos Field Guide Devotional for Kids made available from July 31, with simple activities and reflections to engage the children in our lives in prayer.

The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus 2022 will be a powerful time of connection, rejuvenation and joy as we seek God and seek good together. The National Prayer Focus 'Salvos Field Guide' daily devotions and corresponding nightly online meetings will provide a deep and valuable prayer resource as we walk forward into the future. We expect remarkable things as God's people stop, listen and lean into what God is saying. May we recognise Jesus in our everyday, as we place Jesus as the centre of all we do.





JESUS  
Centered

## Sermon outline

### National Prayer Focus

### Week 2

SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2022

.....

**Theme: We can be Jesus-centered by worshipping him**

**Bible reading: John 4: 4-26**

.....

#### Introduction

Week Two of our journey of 'centering Jesus' in The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus.

We place Jesus at the center of our worship. Worship is how we express our adoration, our admiration, our love for something or someone. The way of expressing our adoration and of expressing our love for something is putting it at the top of the list, allowing it to shape our everyday actions and the energy we place in making sure it stays in the center of our minds.

#### Main point 1: We worship what we put in the place of highest priority

##### ILLUSTRATION:

*Use a story of a local sports or other team, and someone who is 'fanatical' about supporting them. What 'merch' of theirs is seen around the city, or your community or in your own house? Sharing a story of your own where you have been incredibly 'in' to something, where other people could relate to you through that shared and broadcast interest sets the scene for 'worship'.*

We worship what we put in the place of highest priority. For some, it is their career, their children, their partner, the gym or even a certain lifestyle. We worship what we say we cannot live without.

We worship the thing that is number one in our lives.

If there is nothing that will get in the way of my attendance at the footy, if there is nothing that I consider more important than going to the gym, if there is nothing that I consider more important than spending eighteen-hour days at the office, then that is the thing, the lifestyle, that I worship.

If I am centering Jesus in all I do, this will not be about 'showing off' or making a show of religious things, but in being filled with fruit of the Holy Spirit and having the 'light' - the shining of Jesus's love and motivation - go before our deeds.

*Galatians 5:22-23 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.'*

*Matthew 5:16 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'*

**Framing questions:** How do we ensure Jesus is our highest priority? What does being 'Jesus Centered' look like on a day-to-day basis? We do not have Jesus 'merch', so what do fruit of the Spirit look like as we grow them out of relationship with God?

#### Main point 2: What we worship becomes part of who we are

When we worship, we focus on something to the exclusion of all else. We become known for it and what we worship inevitably becomes part of our identity.

If we frame something as a 'must': i.e. I must scroll social media the moment I wake up, I must make that footy game on Saturday, I must be at that work meeting, I must gain their approval, I must look like a good Christian - then that becomes part of who we are.



This is the same for us if we are Jesus-centered too:

- Those who are 'Jesus Centered' place Jesus in the position of highest priority.
- Those who are 'Jesus Centered' fix their gaze on Jesus
- Those who are 'Jesus Centered' have Jesus at the top of their list
- Those who are 'Jesus Centered' say they cannot live without him
- Those who are 'Jesus Centered' frame Jesus as a 'must'.

John 10:10 'I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.' Worshipping God, prioritising Jesus, fixing our gaze on him is not about living a life of obligation, but of true abundance.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*What is a time you have become 'known' for doing something, without even realising? Or when you have identified someone else's passion by their actions, words, or belongings? Use a story of a time you have recognised someone as a Jesus-follower by an unusual or consistent action of theirs.*

#### APPLICATION:

*When you worship Jesus, fixing your gaze on him, placing Him in the place of highest priority, when He becomes the 'must' the important things become easier. You love better. You serve better. With his strength, you strive to be better. When we place Jesus first, other priorities find their proper place.*

### Main point 3: We must ensure we approach worship with authenticity and intentionality.

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

The account of Jesus' interactions with Mary and Martha in Luke 10 and Martha's inability in the moment to focus on Jesus provides a helpful illustration of this. It was no small thing for Jesus to be in the house of his dear friends, Martha would have wanted everything to be perfect. But, whilst Martha busies herself trying to achieve the goal of being the perfect, most hospitable hostess, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus to listen, fixing her gaze on him. Intentionally prioritising him.

This is so important, demonstrating two different approaches to prioritising Jesus. I am sure both women thought that their approach was right, but only one engaged their spirit.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*What does a 'routine' look like for you? Go through a morning waking up with busy priorities ahead, hour by hour – and how this has sometimes led to you forgetting important things as you go on 'auto pilot.' Have we 'autopiloted' God? Give an example of a time you realised you may have done just that.*

John 4:23, 'God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in Spirit and truth.' We are commanded to approach worship with authenticity and intentionality. It is not a thing we do, but a lifestyle that we live which prioritises Jesus authentically. Commentators suggest that 'spirit' in John 4:23 means both the Spirit of God and our spirit. We cannot do it passively.

#### APPLICATION:

*Our worship cannot be authentic unless Jesus holds the place of highest priority. Denominations, traditions, sacraments, music styles, uniforms, flags, they all matter, but they do not matter the most. They must not become our priority if we are to truly and authentically worship Jesus. Jesus must take his rightful place on the throne of your life. What would it look like to clear-mindedly take 'stock' of what is on your 'must' list right now, and put Jesus up to the top of that list?*



**JESUS**  
*Centered*

## Review

The Westminster Catechism was a work written to teach people about the doctrines that Christians are to believe about God and how we must live in response, according to the Church of England. One question it asks is 'What is man's chief-end,' in other words, what is the purpose of humanity? What is the purpose of life? What is our purpose?

And this is how it articulates our purpose '[Our] chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.' Unlike the worship of earthly things, the worship of God does not come at the expense of abundant life, but we must worship him authentically. We must glorify him authentically. We must place Jesus at the center of our worship and be shaped by worshipping him in response.

## Challenge

If we are to be Jesus-centered, then we must place him in the place of highest priority. The Chorus in 'Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus' was written by Helen Lemmel in 1922 after she had completely lost her ability to see. Yet it describes what it means to have a heavenly vision. We become Jesus Centered. With heavenly eyes, we too must consider the other things that we may have been distracted by, to refocus and fixing our eyes of our hearts on Jesus, asking him to take or to retake his place on the throne of our lives.



**Cherise Holley** is a soldier at Macarthur Salvation Army where there is an ever-expanding congregation both online and in-person. Cherise serves frequently in musical worship ministry. and anywhere else I can. I am Cherise is 19 years old and has a deep passion for social justice, human rights and seeing the love of Jesus painted everywhere in the global community.