Christology is usually divided into two main topics:

1) the person of Christ and 2) the work of Christ.

1) the basic parameters defined by the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Creed –

2) Jesus Christ was fully human (like us in all respects, except for sin) and fully divine (the second person of the Trinity).

3 )His divinity connects human beings to the very being of God - God knows what it is like to be human and God responds to us out of that complete knowledge/experience.

4) His humanity shows us what perfected human life would be like - fully connected to God and loving without reservation all neighbors.

5) Why it is necessary to hold both of these claims becomes clear only when one considers the work of Christ.

6) The second person of the Trinity is the living Christ, whose Spirit (the Holy Spirit) is active in the world and through human communities, particularly the Christian church. This is the one who will come again at the completion of time.

Considering Jesus simply as a human example of how to live is not considered (technically) to be a Christology because it does not require that he be both human and divine.

2) the work of Jesus Christ is what he did/does that saves or redeems humans and the whole creation.

How does Jesus Christ save/redeem? Options include:

a) becoming human, that is, being born as the fully human fully divine one, broke the power of sin and changed the possibility for life thereafter. This can be thought of either morally (Jesus as example of perfect humanity) or cosmically (the old powers are broken and the new, full creation is being brought into being). Incarnational emphasis

b) dying as atonement for sin - paying the "price" that God's justice must require (as we conceive God's justice) and thereby settling the debt owed to God that we are unable to pay because we are already sinners. This involves an internal transaction within God, played out within human history.

c) dying as atonement for sin - standing in our place, so God sees Christ's perfection, including his perfect sacrifice, when God looks at us. This is relational, but it does not change our actual condition - we are still sinners. (Wesley was not fond of this view; he saw our actual condition and possibility being changed by Christ's sacrifice)

d) dying and rising in absolute trust of God's power to disrupt what the world attempts. It changes the condition of human life. Here it is the resurrection worked by God that is the emphasis. This is the parallel at the end of Jesus' life to the breaking of the powers of the cosmos at Jesus' birth.