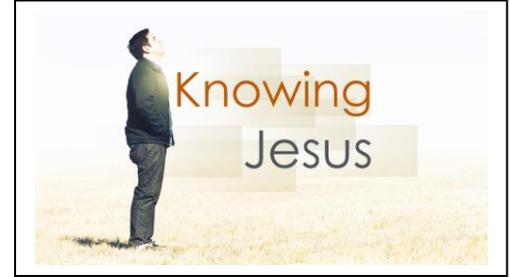


'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' - Knowing Jesus More! July 26th, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,

"To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27 (NIV)



"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains." Colossians 4:2-3 (NIV)

When was the last time you opened an article and just enjoyed a laugh? I must admit that few things actually cause me to laugh these days. I hate watching the media and news. I hate the political climate and considerable inconsistency of our times. But When I started reading the opening lines of an article entitled "Upside-Down World" by Tim Lovelace, I couldn't help but relate and chuckle. He writes, "At the writing of this article, we are still on statewide lockdown. Everyone's experiences and feelings are unique. I feel as though I am 16 years old again; my hair is much longer, I don't have a job, gasoline is very cheap, but I'm not allowed to go anywhere... I've been grounded!" Can you relate?

Who would have thought that this year of 2020 would find ourselves grinding to a halt as a nation and world, to experience what is happening during this pandemic? As I was praying with local pastors this week we all had to stop and ask ourselves, "What is God trying to teach us as a church and God's



people? He's taken away all the programs, the regular gathering, church as a norm has been changed." There is one word that seems to be used most often to describe the days in which we are living... the adjective of the moment is "unprecedented." You hear and read this word everywhere. It has many definitions, including: never done or known before, unparalleled, abnormal, unknown and unusual.

As I move about I feel the need to ask people how they are coping and in what they are hoping.

Why? Because of the key verse we are looking at today in our message from Colossians 1:27: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is more and more in these last days that I keep thinking, "I wish Christ would come soon." And then I am reminded that the only hope we have is actually already inside us as believers, that would be- "Christ living in me" already. Paul said, "I have been

crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. 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" (Galatians 2:20). These are "unprecedented times." But what should we do?

However, there are several other words that mean "unprecedented." I love this list of synonyms found in the thesaurus: "fantastic, miraculous, unrivaled, marvelous, new, and remarkable." As Christians, the history of our faith has been recorded and reminds us why we believe what we believe. Knowing how our God has always had a plan and has never lost a battle gives us confidence that, in good times or bad times, His purpose will always be fulfilled. When we do have questions and may be unsure how to pray for a situation, even then we can rely on how Jesus taught us to pray, "... Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

So let me take a moment and just concentrate on this most wonderful "mystery" that Paul also speaks of in this context. The idea of mystery is something that if God had not shown it to us, we would never have known it or imagined it. So I want us to understand the aspect of "Christ in me!" We shall see it as the secret, the key, and the hope of all our "unprecedented" times.

1. "Christ in me" is the whole secret of life! There are several passages that remind us that salvation is about "Christ living and coming in me."

"If Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:10 NIV)

We know that Jesus saved us to bring us into a new life of freedom and expansion. The Bible calls us "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). God has sent His very presence to live inside us, the way His majesty once filled the tabernacle in Old Testament times. He is not just somewhere out there in the heavenly realms; He is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

That is all rather astounding, I admit, to think that the same God who created the universe now lives inside each Christian. Yet this was God's plan from the beginning. He always intended to display Himself in more than just the starry sky, the rushing waterfall, or the soaring mountain range. He meant to dwell in the hearts of His redeemed people.

We have followed the progression of God walking with man, and dwelling with man and today we finally come to the mystery of God dwelling in man. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19) "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (Colossians 1:27) That's it! "Christ in you!"

I am sure that the men and women of the Old Testament could not have understood that God would dwell in us. During the last days of Jesus on earth, He tried to prepare the disciples for what was about to come. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:1-17) Enoch walked with God. Moses talked with God as He dwelled in the tabernacle. Men and women walked and talked with Jesus, the Son of God, as He lived on this earth. But we have an even greater blessing. When we trust in Jesus to be our Savior, then the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our Comforter. What an amazing God we serve!

Too many of us fail to grasp this. We look in the mirror and see ourselves as terribly ordinary. Yet, because of the Holy Spirit's presence inside, we are remarkable people. In the workplace, in the supermarket, or on the street, believers in Christ may look like anyone else, but in fact we are living temples of God Almighty. We are people of "unprecedented" secrets and that is Christ can and wants to live in us and help us live.

That is why we have new spiritual instincts after coming to Christ. We may not even be fully aware of them, and yet we catch ourselves spontaneously praising the Lord or longing for closer fellowship with Him. This is all the work of God's Spirit dwelling within us, who "testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom. 8:16).

2. "Christ in me" is the whole key of life! Now, I've got something to tell you about this and it's very important: One day, I was having this wonderful fellowship with the Lord about the amazing things that the prophets did in the Old Testament and the amazing abilities that He gave to His children. As I cogitated on these things, looking through the Scriptures, I pondered, "What does God want? What's His plan? If we were to ask Him for anything, what should we ask for?" Some people lament how they've done everything they know to do, yet their lives are still at variance with the realities of God's Word. They ask such questions as, "What more should I do to prosper?" "What more should I do to be healed?" They're faced with these and other questions in their lives for which they seek answers.

Then, the Lord said to me, "Whatever good thing you could ever desire is nothing compared to the 'one thing needful,' which you already have: Christ in you!" Christ in you covers everything; it's the biggest thing we received from God. It's "unprecedented" for our lives. Our recognition and acknowledgement of this truth will stop our hunger and desire for anything else; we'll virtually find it foolish asking God for anything else. Then it became more real to me that Christ in us is the whole key to our living life. If Christ is in us, then does that make a difference on the decisions we make? Does it make a difference on

the choices and things we entertain ourselves with?

If we can only accept that Christ has taken up His residence in the quarters of our hearts, it'll change our lives. Everything that He gives, is in Him. Everything that He is, is in Him. Remember, the fullness of the Godhead—the totality of divinity—bodily dwells in Christ Jesus; and we're complete in Him. If this is true, then what else do we want? This is “unprecedented” living!

That's why Paul said, “All things are yours”; the world is yours (1 Corinthians 3:21-22). Once you have this consciousness, the world becomes so small to you. Your boldness becomes so strong; you'll have no fear of the future, no fear of darkness, failure or lack; because in Him, you have, and you've overcome all things; you're more than a conqueror. Blessed be His Name forever!

3. “Christ in me” is the whole hope for life!

The word "hope" in the Bible is a much stronger word than the way we use it today. We may say that we hope it doesn't rain, but "hope" in the Bible is a sure thing. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;" (Hebrews 6:19) An example is the "hope", actually assurance, that Christ will return according to the Scriptures. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;" (Titus 2:13) The Apostle Paul admonishes us in I Corinthians 10:31 to do all things to the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." God dwells in us, that is the mystery; to help us live a Christian life, that is the purpose. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

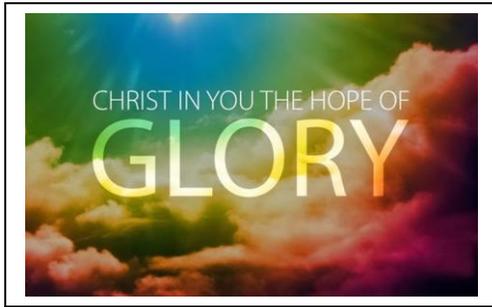
The essence of Christianity is “Christ in you”; that's the power and the glory of Christianity. When some people say, “Christ is in me,” they're merely repeating a religious cliché; they haven't grasped the power and import of that statement. Everything Jesus came to accomplish was aimed at Christ being in you. Christ in you is everything.

Jesus didn't just come to save us from sin; He saved us from sin for a purpose! Saving us from sin was a means to an end: to make each one of us God's living tabernacle, in such a way that we become one with Him. This is the ultimate aim of Christianity. It's an extraordinary thinking; it reveals the excellence of our God's mentality! It's like the mixture of a house and its owner. How can one even contemplate that, and eventually carry it out? How can one bring a house together with its owner, and make them one?

But our God did! He didn't just make us His house, He made us one with Himself. Together, we're one divine creation, for the Bible says, “...he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17).

God's ultimate purpose was to reproduce Himself in us, and He's achieved it through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He didn't just want to have kids; His idea was to reproduce Himself and have "associates of the God-kind."

Many people during this pandemic are isolated and experiencing loneliness like



never before. Some are extremely fearful or sad, and when they look to the Internet, they are given many different kinds of advice to help them in their loneliness. When Paul wrote to the believers in Colosse, he warned them, "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments" (Col. 2:4). And again, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual

forces of this world rather than on Christ" (Col 2:8). The Gnostic heresy was infiltrating their thinking. It wasn't coming at them like an easy-to-spot wrong teaching. Its error had a sense of desire. They were not careful to be seeing the "undercurrents" of things in their daily lives. When we watch the political movements, the pandemic reports, the currency shortage, the mounting racial tensions, we must not think that those things are not real, but see below the surface. There are spiritual forces that are at work today that will fool us. We must be careful to not just look to science, or government, or trust ourselves, we must be willing to hope and go to God's Word.

I want to thank you all, prayer warriors of PCBC, who have been praying for God to move in mighty ways across the globe and in this 611 corridor. We are not yet out of the woods. God is indeed able to "move mountains", open doors and radically change hearts. Pray that true "revival" happens in our community and lives. We are more than members of a church. We are "His Church," and we have an enormous opportunity right now, like never before in our lifetime. These are unprecedented times, and we have unprecedented hope! Ladies and gentlemen, hope IS CHRIST! He IS the hope of all the ages. He IS our Savior! This kind of hope becomes like a blowtorch where God's love melts the coldness of all hurt, disappointments, betrayal, loss, and every false expectation and brings with Himself a true lasting hope that keeps us afloat in spite of momentary misery. So if you have been running low on hope, know there is only one permanent cure- place your ultimate hope today and every day in Christ Jesus! And nothing brings ultimate hope like knowing our hope is in Him.

Charles Spurgeon said this: ***"Be not content with Christian people talking to you, or preachers preaching to you, or the Bible being read to you, or prayers being offered for you. Anything short of Jesus will leave you***

short of salvation. You have to reach Christ, and touch Christ, and nothing short of this will serve your turn. The mystery is having Christ Himself!" (Christ in You, #1720, pg. 1). We often get thinking more about the benefits of heaven, or peace, or happiness, and think more about gaining those things. But we must very pointedly "have Christ!" Don't try to gain any hope. Get Jesus!

But when you look at your life, with the things happening, it may not seem like you're anything close to what God ever intended. That's why He wants you to focus on His Word and see that your priestly life has begun; your royal life has begun. The Holy Spirit in you is the assurance, the guarantee, and the realization of your glorious life. Hallelujah!

Will you pray with me?

"Dear heavenly Father, You do hear us when we pray. You have provided an Advocate and Intercessor in heaven for us. We cannot come to You unless Your Holy Spirit gives us the desire and helps us while we plead for Jesus to become the Lord and Master of our lives. He is everything to us. More than all we find in Him. Forgive us for looking outside of Jesus for anything, because we have a perfect righteousness and sure hope in Christ. Thank You for the treasure You've deposited in our spirits when Christ became our Living Savior and the truth of the secret to life became: "Christ lives in us, the hope of glory!" O Savior, reveal Yourself anew; teach us a little more; help us to go a little deeper into the divine mysteries. May we grip You and grasp You. May we draw from You the nourishment for our spirits today. Forgive us for any wanderings during these days. Keep us attuned to undercurrents that would dilute our commitment to obey You, Jesus. If we have forgotten You, forgive us. You do not forget us. Help us in the future to live only in You, to speak, and even to think, only in union with our living Head. Take away from us all life that is contrary to the life of Christ. Give us stronger faith! Our great concern is to grow in grace and become like our Master. We struggle and struggle, but how small is our progress. Lord, help us in which we have felt defeated. Now, look in great mercy on those who are unconverted. Lord, save them! Oh, that some of the most callous and hardened might be softened by the touch of Your Spirit this very day. God, bless our country. God, bless this neighborhood. Save us from this age of intellectual pride. Give us the spirit of simple faith in Christ, for we desire His glory. Christ is in us, and His life in us makes us victorious forever, in Jesus' Name. Amen."

**Praying we find the key to "unprecedented" hope,
Pastor Corvin <><**

Quote: A story about our riches in Christ: A tax collector one day came to a poor minister in order to assess the value of his property and to determine the amount of his taxes.

"I am a rich man," said the minister.

The official quickly sharpened his pencil and asked intently, "Well, what do you own?"

The pastor replied, "I am the possessor of a Savior who earned for me everlasting life and who has prepared a place for me in the Eternal City."

"What else?"

"I have a brave, pious wife, and Solomon says, 'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.'"

"What else?"

"Healthy and obedient children."

"What else?"

"A merry heart which enables me to pass through life joyfully."

"What else?"

"That is all," replied the minister.

The official closed his book, took his hat and said, "You are indeed a rich man, sir, but your property is not subject to taxation."—The King's Business.

Story again about riches of Heaven:

James W—, British financier and reputed millionaire, who had owned a yacht and racing stud, entertained royalty, and had made as much as three million dollars in one day, died by his own hand, practically a ruined man.

Before he brought his life to a close he wrote a letter which was published in the British press, and laid bare the truth without any false coloring, of what this world really is.

He had tasted all that this life could give and now records his verdict in the truest sermon ever preached by mortal man. Hear what he says:

"On the last day of my life, before my eyes, my brain unwinds the film of the past. In quick succession episode after episode unwinds, and I can now judge that life today is nothing but a cauldron of greed, lust, and power. Gone are the nice feelings and contentment, and in their place is a roaring hectic existence."

He draws aside the curtain and shows us the world in its true character. "I have known," he says, "to have all you desire and to have thousands waiting to eat out of your hand. From this it must be agreed," he adds, "that I am entitled to an opinion on life."—Gospel Herald.

