

NOTES

- That barrier has several factors
 1. God's holiness
 - God is perfectly righteous
 - God is perfectly just
 2. Man's sinfulness
 - We have **imputed** sin – we have been charged with Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12)
 - We have **inherited** sin – we have inherited Adam's sin nature ((Eph. 2:1-3)
 - We have **individual** sin – we commit sins because we're sinful (Rom. 3:23)
 3. Sin's penalty
 - God's perfect justice requires that He punish sin
 - His holiness and our sinfulness demand it
 - Man has a debt to pay
 - But the debt is too high for man to pay

"For the wages of sin is death" – Rom. 6:23

4. Spiritual death
 - Man has no spiritual life or spiritual capacity
 - Man is dead in his trespasses and sins

"When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" – Colossians 2:13 NASB

"Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins." – Ephesians 2:1 NLT

- Man can't save himself because he has no life, no resource

5. Unrighteousness
 - Our efforts at meeting God's standard don't measure up

"When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags."
– Isaiah 64:6 NLT

NEXT STEPS



WEEK 7

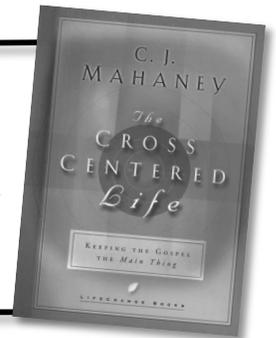
...keep your eye on what you're doing; accept the hard times along with the good;
keep the Message alive; do a thorough job as God's servant.

— 2 TIMOTHY 4:5 (MSG)

Over the next few weeks we are going to be concentrating on the meaning of the gospel or the good news of Jesus Christ. Do we really understand it? If not, then how can we fully believe it? Is it more than just forgiveness of sins and a guarantee of heaven? Could it be bigger, better, broader and more beneficial than that? Our NEXT STEPS this week are designed to help you wrestle with these questions and come up with Biblically-based answers. As always, don't take this journey alone. Challenge a friend to go along with you!

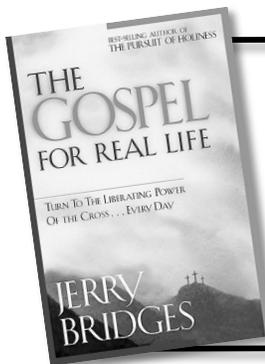
1. READ "THE CROSS CENTERED LIFE" BY C. J. MAHANEY

Sometimes the most important truths are the easiest to forget. It's time to get back to the starting point of the Christian life - the cross of Christ. Jesus' work on your behalf must be the central motivation for your life and faith - the *main thing*. Available in the church bookstore.



2. READ "THE GOSPEL FOR REAL LIFE" BY JERRY BRIDGES

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the door to eternal life, but what difference does it make once we're inside God's kingdom? Jerry Bridges says the gospel is the very lifeblood of our walk with God day by day. It is the key to our salvation, for sure, but it is also the power for our daily progress in holiness. Revel in God's acceptance of you and participate in His grace as a daily reality. Available in the church bookstore.



3. READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES

Here are some more sermons and articles you can read at your leisure. Remember, this is NOT assigned reading. They are simply designed to spur you on your walk and to help you think biblically and spiritually.

- *The Gravy Train Gospel* by Charles Colson
- *What Are We Going To Be?* by Frederick Buechner
- *What Did Jesus Accomplish on the Cross?* by Mark Driscoll
- *Christ In You* by C. H. Spurgeon

4. READ, STUDY, AND MEDITATE ON ROMANS 3:9-31

Spend a few minutes each day and read over this passage multiple times. Write down anything that jumps out at you. What does it tell you that could make the good news even better news? Write down all the things that Jesus has done for you that is part of the gospel message?

5. LISTEN TO TWO MESSAGES BY MARK DRISCOLL

These are two extremely powerful messages that unpack the "great jewel of our faith" – the atoning work of Jesus Christ. It will give you a greater view of the gospel than you ever had before.



The Gravy Train Gospel

by Charles Colson

Historian Will Durant said, “There is no humorist like history.” Recently I picked up a copy of the *Washington Post* and read an article pointing to the irony of today’s events. It was entitled “The Revolution Surrenders: From Freedom Train to Gravy Train,” written by Charles Krauthammer. He was commenting on the fact that Bobby Seale—one of the radicals of the sixties—has now released a cookbook and a video entitled *Barbequeing with Bobby*. He has become the Jane Fonda of the Weber Grill. There have been other transformations. Jerry Rubin is now running a brokerage house. Dick Gregory, the antiwar civil rights activist, is conducting nutritional weight loss and business opportunity seminars.

Krauthammer pointed out, however, that at the same time the yuppies of the sixties were becoming members of the new establishment, the old establishment was going the other way. He pointed out that Bob McNamara, former secretary of defense, McGeorge Bundy, the national security adviser, architects of the Vietnam War, are now leaders in the new peace movement. The former pinstriped boardroom types who represented all that the radicals of the sixties were revolting against are now themselves becoming radicals in the eighties. Then Krauthammer says the prime example of the trend is Charles Colson, who “follows the trail of spirituality from Nixon to prison to religion.” Krauthammer concluded by saying he could understand how yesterday’s yuppies could become today’s yuppies, and yesterday’s reactionaries today’s radicals, but he confessed “I can’t figure Colson out at all.” Apparently my transformation was just too radical.

It’s an amazing commentary upon our culture that we can understand a shift in values from radicals to establishmentarians, but we can’t understand a conversion to Jesus Christ. I should be the simplest of all people to understand. I am what I am because of what Jesus Christ has done in my life. But I suppose if one doesn’t believe in a Converter, one can hardly believe in a conversion. But one part of the label I will gladly accept--the word *radical*. We have lost that word. We’ve lost its meaning. The word derives from the Greek word *radix*, meaning the root. A radical is one who goes to the root of the matter. And the root of the matter in this or any other generation is the revelation of God himself through the person of Jesus Christ. I will take the label “radical.” Nonetheless I share Krauthammer’s sense of the irony.

Durant is right—there’s no humorist like history. A decade or so ago had I stood on this platform, I would have been the epitome of the establishment giving a graduation address to graduating radicals. Today you’re part of the new yuppie establishment, and I stand here today as a radical. It’s something of that dramatic role reversal and conflict in values that I want to speak to today. Yuppies, as most of you know, are simply aging hippies transformed by \$20 haircuts and upper middle class values. This baby boomer generation has assumed such significance in American life that *Newsweek* put on the cover “The Year of the Yuppy.”

Let’s take a look at the values Yuppies embrace. They are thoroughly convinced money is the root of all good--so much so, the editor of *Money* magazine wrote that money has become the number-one obsession of Americans, “the new sex.” (There goes any future baby boom.) One frank young yuppie quoted in *Newsweek* said she could be comfortable with \$200,000 a year. *Newsweek* said yuppies have acquired a new plane of consciousness: “transcendental acquisition.” One student who was going to be a social worker upon graduating said, “I realized that I would have to make a

commitment to being poor to be a social worker, so eventually I was able to shed the notion that to prove to everybody that I was a good person I had to parade around as a social worker.” The honesty would be admirable if it weren’t so appalling. *Newsweek* had a picture of one college graduate fondling a bottle of Perrier Jouet and saying “This is our substitute for children.” It all defines a mentality of a people who define themselves by what they own.

I had a firsthand look at this phenomenon recently when I went to rent a compact car. I was three deep in line behind a man who was insisting he had to rent a black Lincoln Continental. I don’t think he was going to a funeral. The woman at the counter was being very accommodating. She found a dark gray one and a dark blue one. He said, “No, I must have a black car. I’m going to a party tonight where everybody will be driving black cars. I must have a black Lincoln Continental.” My impatience was growing, but I restrained myself, and he found out there was no black car anywhere to be found, and he finally took a dark blue one after we’d waited ten minutes. As he turned around, his T-shirt put the whole event in context. It said: “The one who dies with the most toys wins.” What a tragic commentary on life. Is that the object of life?

The pursuit of material happiness has even dampened the sexual revolution. Brooke Shields explained that she is remaining a virgin because “Like me, there are plenty of college girls who do not want to be bogged down in demanding involvement. We are more concerned about getting ahead.” The yuppies made up an unusual amalgam in American politics last year. Their political profile melds economic conservatism with social libertarianism. One young lawyer, in a chilling comment for anyone who weeps for the clinical murder of unborn children, said, “The social program that Reagan is talking about is really scary because abortion is part of our lives.”

There does seem to be some continuing interest in war and peace, but the slogans of the eighties have taken a new twist. The T-shirts today say “Nuclear war? What about my career?” What are we to make of all this? On one hand, it’s good that young Americans are rediscovering the values of hard work and have abandoned the social utopianism that fueled the 1960s. But on the other hand, there’s the grotesque self-centeredness. The result is a lie, a promise of meaning to life which it simply cannot provide. I know. I grew up in the Depression years, the grandson of immigrants. I can remember thinking, *If I could ever get to college, that would be my security*. I dreamed of the day that I could get my degree. No one in my family had ever done it, and I thought that would surely bring me security.

Then I went on to the Marine Corps and the Korean War, and I remember when those bars were pinned on, and I thought, *That will be my security: a lieutenant in the Marines*. Then I worked for a doctorate of law at night and went through law school and started a law firm. I thought, *That will be my security, my meaning, my purpose in life*. And then on to a successful law firm and to money and prestige and then to the office next to the President of the United States as the special counsel. *Surely I’ll find security in those things*. But when I left the White House in 1972, I never felt less secure, emptier, in my entire life. You see I discovered the great paradox of life. Jesus said, “He who would lose his life for my sake will find it,” and that’s a great truth because it wasn’t until those things of the world that I thought would give me security were gone, and I was in a prison cell with all of that behind me, that I discovered the only security and meaning and identity that one ever knows, and that’s in a relationship to the living God through Jesus Christ. There is no other security. It’s all bankrupt, empty. All mirrors and illusion. The world is telling us that we can find fulfillment in things. And it’s a fraud.

The great paradox also is that every time I walk into a prison and see the faces of men or women who have been transformed by the power of the living God, I realize that the thing God has chosen to use in my life, paradoxical though this will seem, is none of the successes, achievements, degrees, awards, honors, cases I won before the Supreme Court—that's not what God's using in my life. What God is using in my life to touch the lives of literally thousands of other people is the fact that I was a convict and went to prison. My great defeat. The only thing in my life I didn't succeed in.

The kingdom of God is the kingdom of paradox. God does not demand our achievement; he demands our obedience. He does not demand our success; he demands us, the whole of our lives, because what really matters is what a sovereign God chooses to do through you, not so much what you do. Oh yes, work hard, excel. Do the very best you can in life. Do everything to the honor and glory of God in excellence because the Bible commands it. But don't believe that's the measure of your life. The measure is your obedience to Jesus Christ and how he then works through you. American culture, which believes success is all that matters, simply cannot comprehend this great truth. This is where the true radical, Jesus Christ, confronts the American establishment today. If those of us who follow Christ are called radical because we confront the obsessive materialism and bankrupt idealism of American life today, glory in the title of radical.

Now I know many of you are sitting here thinking, *This is Eastern Nazarene College. This is a Christian institution. What in the world is Colson doing preaching to the choir?* You all know yuppyism is bankrupt. Sure. But just because you're Christian, don't think you are immune from the blandishments of power, success, prominence, money, materialism. You're not. You turn on a Christian television station today, and you will see the yuppyized gospel telling you that all you have to do is worship God and he'll give you everything you want in a material way. How many times do you turn on a Christian television program and hear a message about repentance, conviction of sin, and the desire to serve God out of gratitude for what he's done in our lives, not for what he can do for us? All too seldom. CBS, at a National Religious Broadcasters convention this year, interviewed a man who said about Christian television, "Well the main thing is just to create an image. You've got to present a product that's a little bit more appealing than the others." He was speaking of preaching the gospel. Don't tell me Christians are not in danger of transforming the gospel into a what's-in-it-for-me message.

Don't buy into the values of our culture.

What must we do? Four things. First, use the minds that God has given you to be discerning. Challenge all the presuppositions of American culture. Don't buy them. Think about them and say, "Maybe they're so and maybe they're not so," and do the same with all the comfortable cliches you hear passed around in the Christian world. Stop and think: Are they the whole gospel of God as presented in the Bible, or is it just something that we Christians have used? Check those prepackaged simple solutions, the political and economic agendas labeled by their zealous promoters as Christian. Maybe they are. Maybe they're just a prop for somebody's vested interest. Then let's be honest with ourselves.

C.S. Lewis was once asked, "Which of the world's great religions would bring the greatest happiness to its followers?" C.S. Lewis replied without hesitation: "While it lasts, the religion of worshiping oneself is the best. I have an elderly acquaintance who has lived the life of unbroken selfishness and self-admiration from the earliest years and he is more or less, I regret to say, one of the happiest men I know. I haven't always been a Christian. I didn't go to religion to make me

happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want religion to make you really comfortable, I certainly do not recommend Christianity.” What refreshing honesty! Can you imagine if we put that on television today—”Don’t come be a Christian because it’s going to make you feel good. Come be a Christian because it’s truth, and it may convict you, and it may turn your life upside down, and it may be very uncomfortable.” My gracious, you could hear television sets turning off all over America. But that’s true. Be discerning. Nothing is more radical than to go to the root, to the Word of God, for the solutions for the problems that beset modern man.

Allow God’s Word to radicalize your life.

When I first became a Christian, I took this Book, and as a lawyer I decided to see if it were true. I read this Book cover to cover three times. I was looking for that one verse of Scripture, the only verse I could quote from memory: “God helps those who help themselves.” I went through three times. I tried two translations. Amazingly, I couldn’t find it. As a matter of fact, I found exactly the reverse. “ ‘Is not that what it means to know me,’ declares the Lord. ‘To do justice and righteousness to plead the cause of the afflicted and the needy.’ “ But I made a study of this Book because I was really concerned. Could this Book really be the Word of God? I started to read everything I could get my hands on. I don’t have time today to take you through it, but I believe today, as a result of reading everything I could and listening to all the scholars I could, I came to the conclusion, intellectually and by faith, that this book is the inerrant, inspired Word of God, and you can live and trust your life under its authority and nothing else. Be careful.

I was speaking recently before a state legislature in a western state where they’re very conservative. Someone said afterwards, “Chuck Colson? He was that Nixon Republican, that conservative. He certainly has become a radical. Prison must have radicalized him.” They love to say prison radicalized me. The secular world can understand that. I say, “No! Prison didn’t radicalize me. I walked out of that prison; I wanted to put it behind me. I never wanted to see the inside of a prison again. What radicalized me was reading this Book. And I believed it.” This Book will radicalize your life. I dare you. Try it.

Live a life of true holiness.

The central tenet of the Christian faith is this: God, a holy God, says “You shall be holy because I am holy.” So we must go out of our homes and our businesses, wherever we are, and live in this world as a holy people. Every time I mention holiness, people start getting uncomfortable. They say, “You’re not preaching, Colson, you’re meddling. That’s smoking and drinking and all those things.” Well that’s part of it. That’s piety. I’m not talking about rules. Holiness is, as Mother Teresa puts it, “conforming to the character of God.” Accepting the will of God. If our God is a God who demands justice, we’re a people who demand justice. If our God cares for the poor and the needy and the downtrodden and the suffering, we care for them. A nation that will sell the poor for a pair of shoes stands in judgment by God, and we are a people who take that message into a materialistic, yuppyized world. Yes that’s radical. That’s what we’re called to.

John Wesley, one of the great models for my life, once said there is no holiness but social holiness. To turn Christianity into a solitary religion is to destroy it. It was Wesley’s understanding of this great truth of the Christian faith that led him to begin the campaign against slavery. One of his disciples, William Wilberforce, a young member of Parliament, went off and led the campaign against the culture of the day for 20 years to abolish slavery. They went out and abolished the most barbaric practice man has known in modern times. It means we go into this culture in which we live.

In Prison Fellowship, we see daily the witness of holy people making a difference in the lives of others. We take inmates out of prison. We work them into the community. They live in the homes of volunteers. Recently in Washington, D.C., we went into a city block with a group of inmates, every day coming down to study their Bibles in the morning and every day rebuilding a home of a poor family. Four blocks away, you could see the Capitol, where they were debating all the laws to help the poor, but in the shadow of the Capitol these poor people were living with no one caring about them as individuals. And so a group of convicts came up and restored their home, and it sits today like a gleaming jewel on that street, and the neighbors are beginning to fix up their homes. Why? Because it's brought back a sense of community, because God's people are sharing of themselves to help others in need. That's holiness.

Jefferson City, Missouri: state capital and also the place where the penitentiary is. For years 6,500 inmates were there, and when their families used to come to visit, they had no place to stay. Most of them would drive from Kansas City or St. Louis, and they would sleep in their cars or under park benches. Our volunteers saw that and got together and bought an old home-\$46,000. They raised the money from twelve churches. Volunteers fixed up the house, opened it four years ago, and named it Agape House. Ten thousand women have stayed there for \$3 a night. They get a Bible, a place to stay, a clean bed, a day-care center for their children so they can visit their husbands in prison. And one of the neatest things is it's run by a former Southern Baptist missionary and a Catholic sister.

A woman was sitting in the house one night feeling despondent. Sherry lived on the underside of life. Had been in prison herself. Was there visiting her husband. Never been in church. You're not going to get the Sherrys of this world in our churches, but they would come and stay in Agape House. One night Sherry was sitting there tapping on the Bible she had been given, and she said, "I don't know if there is a God, but if there is, he must be something like the two women who run this house." That's the witness of a holy people. It isn't enough to go sit in sanctuaries and listen to wonderful sermons and to lift your hands to praise God on Sunday morning. Get your hands dirty helping those around you, and you will make the invisible kingdom of God manifest in our midst. That's what we're called to.

Live a changed life out of thankfulness to God.

Christians are called not only to believe but to repent, to be a different people. In gratitude to God for his grace in our lives, we are to be changed, to do what God commands. I could give you some wonderful quotes out of the history of the church, but maybe the best illustration I know is a recent one.

A housewife from New Hampshire, Cathleen Webb, accepted Christ into her life, and she walked into her pastor's office one day and said, "I feel wonderful that I'm a Christian. God has blessed me with a wonderful husband and two children, but I have a sin I've never confessed." She had falsely accused Gary Dotson of rape. The pastor said, "The only thing you can do to repent is to want to be changed, to confess, and to make right what you have done wrong." In today's yuppyized gospel, all God has to do is come into our lives. We don't have to do anything. Cathy Webb knew better. She knew she had to confess. The world has not understood her. The judge said, "I don't know why Cathy Webb came in and gave the testimony she did." The governor of Illinois said, "I don't believe her, but I'm going to set Gary Dotson free anyway" (which has to win some award for sophistry in modern times). The whole world disbelieves. Every place I've been with Christians

lately I've said, "Do you believe Cathy Webb?" And they've said, "We'll have to wait and see." We're so used to seeing the prosperity gospel, the gospel of ease and comfort, that when we see the real thing, we can't recognize it.

That's the real thing: I'm not going to take the grace of God in my life for granted. Out of gratitude to God, I'm going to change, go out and live it. Cathy Webb had a beautiful statement on ABC's "Nightline" when asked why she did it: "Because the Lord would not let me alone." I could boil my whole message down to one simple phrase. I pray for your life that the Lord will not "let you alone." That he will force you to be a different people. That he will make you instruments of holiness, yes, in this yuppyized culture.

My final warning: If you are committed to radical Christianity in direct opposition to a culture consumed with self, your course is not without peril. We've just commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the Holocaust, vividly reminding us of the horror that man can inflict upon his fellow man. To me, it was sad that no mention was made that there were some Germans, particularly the German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who refused to go along with the spirit of the times. He said no to Hitler, and he paid with his life. To be radical in a yuppyized culture may not cost you your life. Maybe it'll cost you your job.

A judge in Indiana, who refused to send a man back to prison who had already done his prison time, said, "If I have to choose between God and man, I must choose God." But I will tell you one thing, if your Christian commitment does not put you in direct opposition of the values of this culture, if you don't have to make those kind of choices between God and man, if you do not feel that this culture is making you make some hard choices, check your Christian commitment, because it's inevitable in the value system of this culture, that your Christian commitment is going to put you on a collision course. If it doesn't, you better wonder if God's really at work in your life.

May you leave today not just as men and women who have had some do's and don'ts—mostly don'ts—drummed into their heads, but as men and women committed to obedient Christian living. Take your stand on the holy Word of God, and in whatever vocation you enter, pursue it with excellence to the glory of God to make a difference for him in an age which glories in what Scripture calls sin. "Gird your mind. Keep sober in spirit. Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourself in all of your behavior because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" "

Charles Colson is the president and founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries. He is also an active speaker and prolific book author.

What Are We Going to Be?

by Frederick Buechner

“Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief. Doctor, lawyer, merchant chief.” Or, if you’re feeling especially pugnacious, sometimes “Indian chief.” Well, that’s how the old rhyme went when I was a little kid, anyway. You used it when you were counting the cherry pits on your plate, or the petals on a daisy, or the buttons on your shirt. And the one you ended up counting was, of course, the one you ended up being: maybe rich or maybe poor, standing on a street corner with a tin cup in your hand, maybe a career in organized crime. Who knows? What in the world—what in heaven’s name—were you going to be when you grew up?

It wasn’t just another question; it was the great question. Everything I want to say to you today is based on the assumption that it’s the great question still. What are you going to be? What am I going to be?

I’ll turn sixty-two this summer, God help me, but I think of it still as a question that’s wide open. I hope it’s wide open, for God’s sake, literally. What do you suppose we’re going to be, you and I, when we—if we—grow up?

You shouldn’t take that altogether sitting down, of course. Sixty-two or thirty-two or eighty-two or a-hundred-and-two or twenty-two—whatever you happen to be, whatever we happen to be—surely we’ve got our growing up behind us. We’ve come many a long mile; we’ve thought many a long thought; we’ve taken on a lot of hair-raising responsibilities. We’ve made (at least what we’d like to think of as) lots of mature decisions; we’ve weathered many a crisis. Everybody in this church has weathered many a crisis. Surely the question is rather, “What are we now, and how well are we doing at it?” If not doctors, lawyers, merchant chiefs, we are whatever we are. Computer analysts (I don’t know what that is, but there must be one out there), business women, school teachers, artists, ministers even. Or maybe some of us are retired; maybe our job is just to find a way to fill the time. In any case, we don’t have to count the cherry pits on our plate to find out what we’re going to end up being, because for better or worse, the die’s already been cast. We simply get on with being it; that’s what life is all about.

What does Scripture say we should be?

But then maybe we have to listen, and I mean listen back even further than the rhymes of our childhood—thousands of years further back than that. A thick cloud gathers on the mountain, as the Book of Exodus describes it; there are flickers of lightning, jagged, dangerous; the clap of thunder shakes the earth, sets the leaves—the trees—trembling a little bit, maybe even sets you and me trembling a little bit. We have our wits about us, when suddenly the great ram’s-horn shofar sounds, and out of the darkness, out of the mystery, out of some cavernous part of who we are, the voice of God calls out, “Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people. *Segullah*, my precious ones, my darlings—ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.”

Then thousands of years later, but still thousands of years back, there’s another voice to listen to, which is the voice of an old man dictating a letter. Peter—probably the best friend Jesus had—Peter himself says, “Put away all malice, all guile, insincerity, and envy, and all slander. Like newborn babes long for the pure spiritual, that by it you may grow up to salvation, for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.”

So the question is, “What are we going to be? What are we going to *be* when we grow up?” Not “What are we going to *do*, or keep on doing?” Not “What profession are we going to follow? What niche are we going to choose for ourselves?” but “What are we going to *be*—inside our skins and with each other?” That’s the question the whole Ten Commandments delivered at Sinai are an answer to. That’s the question the old saint tries to answer in his letter from Rome.

God calls us to holiness.

Holy!

That’s what we’re going to be, if God gets his way. It’s *wildly* unreasonable, because it makes a shambles of all our reasonable ambitions to be this or to be that.

Holy. It’s not really a human possibility at all, because holiness is Godness, and only God makes holiness possible. And yet being holy is what growing up in the full sense means, according to Saint Peter, anyway: *Grow up* means *to be holy*. No matter how old we are, how much we’ve achieved or failed to achieve or dream of achieving, we’re not really grown up until this extraordinary thing happens. Holiness is what is to happen.

Are we going to be rich, poor, beggars, thieves, or in the case of most of us, a little bit of each? Who knows? In the long run, who even cares? Only one thing is really worth caring about, and it’s this: “You shall be a holy nation.”

Well, if you know anything at all about the Bible, you know that Israel herself was never very much good at it. God knows, he above all. It’s what most of the Old Testament is mostly about. Israel didn’t want to be a holy nation; Israel wanted to be a nation like everybody else—like Egypt, like Syria—just the way she does today. She wanted clout. She wanted a place in the sun. She wanted security. It was her own way she wanted, not God’s way. When the prophets got after her for it, she got rid of the prophets.

We can’t really blame Israel very much for that, because you don’t need me to remind you that of course we are in that respect Israel. Who *wants* to be holy? The very word has fallen into disrepute: “Holier than thou.” “Holy Joe.” “Holy mess.” Words get in such awful straits, the way we use them.

And yet, we have our moments, I think. Every once in a while, it seems to me, we actually long to be what out of darkness and mystery we are called to be. We have moments when we hunger for holiness even though we’d never dream of using the word. There come moments, I think, even in the midst of our cynicism and our worldliness and our childishness—maybe especially then—when there’s something about holiness when we see it, as we all have. There’s something about the saints of the earth that bowls us over a little bit when we run into them, that every once in a while stops us dead in our tracks.

Illustration: I hope you remember the movie a few years back called *Gandhi*. I remember going to see it when it first came out. We were the usual kind of Saturday night movie crowd, restless, sitting there waiting for the lights to dim, with popcorn and soda pop, and girl friends and boy friends, and your legs draped over the seat in front of you, and so on. By the time the movie came to a close, if you can remember it with the flames of Gandhi’s funeral pyre filling

the whole great screen, there was not a sound or movement in that whole theater, and we filed out of there—teenagers and senior citizens, and blacks and whites, and swingers and squares, and God knows what—in as deep and telling a silence (Saturday night! Movie theater!) as anything I think I've ever heard or been part of. Peter said something about "tasting the kindness of the Lord," and we'd all tasted it in that shopping-mall theater. In the life of that little, bandy-legged bespectacled Indian, with his spinning wheel and his bare feet, and whatever it was he had in him in the way of selfless passion for peace and a passionate opposition to every form of violence, we'd all of us tasted something that at least for a few moments in that most improbable place made every kind of life except for his kind of life seem empty. We'd seen in his life something that, at least for the moment, I think every one of us longed for, the way in a foreign country you can sometimes long for home.

Can a nation be holy, the way a person can be holy?

"Holy *nation*." Can a nation be holy, the way a person can be holy? It's hard to imagine it; it's marvelous to imagine it; it breaks your heart to imagine it: a holy nation. Maybe some *element* of a nation, some remnant or root of a nation. "A shoot coming forth from the stump of Jesse," Isaiah says, "that with righteousness shall judge the poor and decide with equity the meek of the earth"—description of a holy nation.

I think of the eighteenth-century men and women who founded this nation, United States of America. How they dreamed just such a high and holy dream for us and gave their first settlements over on these shores names to match that holy dream. Those first settlements—what are they called? *New Haven, New Hope*—names that can bring tears to your eyes if you think about what they mean or what they once meant. *Providence, Concord, Salem*, which is *Shalom*, the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Marvelous dreams, marvelous names, and dreams like that die hard, and please God, there's still some echo of them in the air around us.

But the way things have turned out for this nation and the nations in general! The meek of the earth that Isaiah speaks of are scared stiff of the power we have to blow the earth to smithereens a hundred times over. They shudder with terror; I do. And maybe that's the way it inevitably is with all nations. They're so huge, and they're so complex, and they're so (by definition) concerned above all things with their own self-interest, that they have no eye for holiness. How can a nation have an eye for holiness, of all things? No ears to hear the great command to be saints; no heart to break. The thought of what this world could be—the friends we could be as nations, the common problems we could help each other to solve as nations, all the human anguish we could join together to heal as nations!

Of course, you and I, we're the eyes, and we're the ears and the heart. It's to us that Peter writes his letter. "Put away all guile, insincerity, envy, and slander." No shofar, no ram's horn, has to sound; what Peter charges us with is as quiet as the scratching of a pen on paper. It's as familiar as the sight of our own faces in the mirror. We've always known what was wrong with us: the malice in us, even at our most civilized; the way we focus on the worst in the people we know, our insincerity; our phoniness; the masks we wear that we do our real business behind; the envy, the way other people's luck stings like wasps; and all slander, all the ways we have of putting each other down, of making such caricatures of each other that we treat each other like caricatures, even when we love each other. All that infantile nonsense and nastiness—"Put it away!" Peter says. "Before nations can be holy, you've got to be holy. Grow up to salvation! For Christ's sake, grow up," he says.

People at my stage of the game—for us isn't it a little bit too late? Young people—for them isn't it a little bit too early?

I don't think so. There'd be no point in talking about it if I thought that. I think it's never too late; I think it's never too early to grow up, to be holy. We already tasted it, Peter says; we tasted the kindness of the Lord—that's such a haunting thought. I think you can even see the kindness of the Lord in our eyes sometimes. Just the way sometimes you can see something more than animal in an animal's eyes, I think you can sometimes see something more than human even in your eyes and my eyes. I think we belong to holiness, even when we're not even sure it exists. And it's because we belong to holiness, and we recognize it when we see it, and feel it in the air about us, that everybody left that crowded Florida shopping-mall theater in such unearthly silence. And it's because we know something about holiness that it's hard not to be haunted by a photograph I hope you've seen somewhere or another, of the only things that Gandhi is supposed to have owned at his death—his glasses and his watch, sandals, a bowl and a spoon, and a book of songs. What does any of us own to match such richness as that?

We start being holy by being generous and kind.

We know in our hearts, children as we are, not only that it's more blessed to give than to receive, but that it's also more fun. I mean the kind of holy fun that wells up in the eyes of the saints like tears, the kind of blessed fun in which we lose ourselves and at the same time start to grow up into the selves we were created to become.

Illustration: Henry James—you didn't expect me to mention *him* particularly—when Henry James, the great old fuddy-duddy and American novelist, was saying good-by once to his young nephew, Billy, son of his brother William, he said something the boy never forgot. Of all the fancy, labyrinthine, impenetrable things that fancy, labyrinthine, impenetrable old novelist could have said, what he did say to Billy, or Willie as he called him, is this: “Willie, there are three things that are important in human life. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind.”

In the unlikely event that anybody should ever ask you what the preacher said on this particular day, I'd be happy to settle for that: Be kind. That's what in my own labyrinthine and impenetrable way I try to say, anyway. Be kind, because though kindness isn't the same thing as holiness by a long shot, kindness is very close to holiness, I think. It's one of the doors that holiness enters the world through, enters us through. Not just gently kind but sometimes fiercely kind. Be kind enough to other people to listen, beneath the words they speak, for that usually unspoken hunger for holiness, which I think is part of even the unlikeliest of us. Because by listening to it, cherishing it, maybe we can help to bring something like holiness to birth both in them and in ourselves.

And be kind to this nation of ours by remembering that New Haven, New Hope, Shalom, are the names not just of our oldest towns but of our holiest dreams, which most of the time I'm convinced are threatened by the madness of no enemy without as much as they're threatened by our own madness.

And “the kindness of the Lord,” Peter's phrase—that, of course, ultimately is the kindness, the holiness, the sainthood, the sanity we're all of us called to, so that by God's grace we may grow up to salvation at last.

Consider the lilies. Consider the sounds in the air in this church at this moment—the silence, the cough, the light through the windows, the color of the walls, the sense we have of each other’s presence, the feeling in the air among all of us here, one way or another, basically, secretly, preciously to give each other our love, and to give God our love. This kind moment itself is a door that holiness enters through. So may it enter you and may it enter me, to the world’s saving and to our saving.

Frederick Buechner is a renowned author of fiction and non-fiction whose books include Godric, Now and Then, and The Alphabet of Grace.

(c) Frederick Buechner
Preaching Today Tape #56
www.PreachingTodaySermons.com
A resource of Christianity Today International

What Did Jesus Accomplish on the Cross?

Vintage Jesus, week 3

October 22, 2006

Pastor Mark Driscoll

... this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

— 1 John 4:10 (ESV)

Having established that Jesus Christ is the only God in the first week of this series, and that He was also fully human in the second week of this series, we will now examine what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross.

Crucifixion was invented by the Persians around 500 BC, perfected by the Romans in the days of Jesus, and not outlawed until the Emperor Constantine, who ruled Rome in the fourth century AD. In the days of Jesus, crucifixion was reserved for the most horrendous criminals and even the worst Romans were beheaded rather than crucified.

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus called crucifixion “the most wretched of deaths.” The ancient Greek philosopher Cicero asked that decent Roman citizens not even speak of the cross because it was too disgraceful a subject for decent people.

Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, Nazi soldiers crucified Jews at Dachau by running bayonets and knives through their legs, shoulders, throats, and testicles. Under the leadership of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge also performed crucifixions in Cambodia. Today, crucifixion continues in Sudan and online with the multiplayer video game called *Roma Victor*.

Perhaps most peculiar is the fact that the symbol for Jesus, the most famous symbol in all of history, is the cross. Beginning with the church father Tertullian, early Christians made the sign of the cross over their bodies and adorned their necks and homes with crosses to celebrate the brutal death of Jesus. In our day, the equivalent would be an AIDS-infected drug needle or used condom becoming the world’s most beloved symbol, adorning homes, churches, and bodies.

How can Christians celebrate the crucifixion of Jesus as good news—the best news they have ever heard? To answer this question we must move from the historical fact of Jesus’ death to the theological meaning of that fact. To accomplish this we must examine the most succinct summary of the gospel in Scripture: “that Christ died *for* our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3b–4, emphasis added). Here the word “for” in theological terms means Jesus’ death was substitutionary, or vicarious, and in our place solely for our benefit and without benefit for Himself. Scripture repeatedly stresses this point, which theologians call *penal substitution*:

- Isaiah 53:12 . . . *he [Jesus] poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*
- Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

- 1 Peter 3:18 *For Christ died **for** sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*
- 1 John 2:2 *He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice **for** our sins . . .*

To better understand this good news we must turn to the Old Testament, which prepared people for the coming of Jesus. Among the central events in the Old Testament is the act of atonement, including the annual celebration of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), according to the regulations of the book of Leviticus. On that day, two healthy goats without defect would be chosen; they were fit to represent sinless perfection. The high priest, acting as the representative and mediator between the sinful people and their holy God, would take one goat and lay his hands on the animal while confessing the sins of the people. He would then slaughter that goat, which acted as a substitute for the sinners who rightly deserved a violent, bloody death for their many sins.

The slaughter of this goat shows what the Bible calls *propitiation*, or turning the outpouring of God's wrath (which is mentioned more than 600 times in Scripture) on Jesus instead of us. He substituted Himself in our place as both our High Priest and the "lamb of God" to pay the penalty for our sins as evidence of His great love for both God's holiness and us sinners (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Scripture speaks of both God's wrath and Jesus' propitiation in many places, including the following:

- Romans 5:9 . . . *we [are] saved from God's **wrath** through him [Jesus]!*
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10 . . . *Jesus, who rescues us from the coming **wrath**.*
- Romans 3:23–25 (ESV) . . . *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith.*
- Hebrews 2:17 (ESV) *Therefore he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.*
- 1 John 2:2 (ESV) *He [Jesus] is the **propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*
- 1 John 4:10 (ESV) . . . *this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.*

The second goat, called the scapegoat, would then be sent away to run freely into the wilderness away from the sinners, symbolically taking their sins with it. All of this foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ, our High Priest (who mediates between unholy people and their holy God), sinless substitute (who died a bloody death in our place for our sins), and the scapegoat (who takes our sins away to be remembered by God no more).

Only by rightly understanding the function of the two goats is the atonement fully appreciated. Although there were two goats, there was only one slaughter for the propitiation of sin. The second goat was sent away with sin, showing the cleansing expiation from sin. This is spoken of throughout Scripture, in addition to many references to God's people wearing white:

- Leviticus 16:30 "*. . . on this day atonement will be made for you, to **cleanse** you. Then, before the LORD, you will be **clean** from all your sins.*"

- Jeremiah 33:8 *“I will **cleanse** them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.”*
- Zechariah 13:1 *“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to **cleanse** them from sin and impurity.”*
- 1 John 1:7–9 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, **purifies** us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and **purify** us from all unrighteousness.*

In summary, Jesus has taken away sin through the cross so that we can be forgiven, reconciled to God and people, and enabled to live a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit. This new life is patterned after the life of Jesus because we have been cleansed from our sins and made new. Therefore, the answer to the question, “What did Jesus accomplish on the cross?” is that Jesus has loved us, forgiven us, cleansed us, changed us, and chosen to be with us forever.

Next week: Did Jesus rise from death?

CHRIST IN YOU
NO. 1720

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
Colossians 1:27.

THE Gospel is the grand secret—the mystery of mysteries! It was hidden from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown and the chosen people, who saw something of it, only perceived it dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It remained a mystery which wit could not guess nor invention unravel—and it would have forever have continued a secret had not God, in His infinite mercy, been pleased to reveal it by the Holy Spirit. In a still deeper sense it is even yet a hidden thing unless the Spirit of God has revealed it to us *individually*, for the revelation of the Gospel in the Word of God does not, of itself, instruct men unto eternal life. The light is clear enough, but it avails nothing till the eyes are opened. Each separate individual must have Christ revealed to him and in him by the work of the Holy Spirit, or else he will remain in darkness even in the midst of the Gospel day.

Blessed and happy are they to whom the Lord has laid open the Divine secret which Prophets and kings could not discover—which even angels desired to look into! Brethren, we live in a time when the Gospel is clearly revealed in the Word of God and when that Word has its faithful preachers lovingly to press home its teachings. Let us take care that we do not despise the mystery which has now become a household word. Let not the commonness of the blessing cause us to undervalue it. You remember how, in the wilderness, the Israelites fed upon angels’ food until they had enjoyed it so long, so constantly and so abundantly that in their wicked discontent they called it, “light bread”? I fear that many in these times are gorged with the Gospel like those who eat too much honey. They even venture to call the heavenly Word of God, “common-place,” and talk us if it were not only, “the old, old story,” but a stale story, too.

Are not many hungering after novelties, longing for things original and startling, thirsting after the spiritual dram-drinking of sensational preaching, dissatisfied with Christ Crucified, though He is the Bread which came down from Heaven? For us, let us keep clear of this folly! Let us rest content with the old food, praying from day to day, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” May it never happen to us as unto the Jews of the Apostolic times who utterly refused the Word of Life, so that the Truth of God became to them a stumbling-block and those who preached it were compelled to turn to the Gentiles! If we despise the heavenly message, we cannot expect to fare better than they did! Let us not incur the danger of refusing Him that speaks from Heaven! If there is life, rejoice in it! If there is light, walk in it! If there is love, rest in it. If the Lord God Almighty has, at last, set open the treasures of His Grace and put eternal bliss within your reach, stretch out the hand of faith and be enriched! Turn not your backs upon your God, your Savior, for in so doing you will turn your backs on eternal life and Heaven! God grant that none of you may do this.

In our text we have, in a few words, that great mystery with which Heaven did labor us in travail; that mystery which is to transform this poor world into new heavens and a new earth. We have it, I say, all in a nutshell in the seven words of our text—the riches of the glory of this mystery may, here, be seen set out to open view—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” By the assistance of the Divine Spirit, I shall speak upon this mystery in three ways—The *essence* of it is “Christ.” The *sweetness* of it is “Christ in you.” And the outlook of it is “the hope of glory.” The words read like a whole body of divinity condensed into a line,—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

I. The eternal mystery of the Gospel—THE ESSENCE OF IT IS CHRIST. I hardly know what is the antecedent to the word, “which,” here—whether it is, “mystery,” or, “riches,” or, “glory.” And I do not greatly care to examine which it may be. Any one of the three words will be suitable and all three will fit best of all. If it is “the mystery,” Christ is that mystery—“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” If it is the word, “glory,” beyond all question our Lord Jesus wears a “glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace

and truth.” Is He not “the brightness of the Father’s glory”? If we take the word, “riches,” you have often heard of “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Oh, the riches of the Grace of God which it has pleased the Father to impart unto us in Christ Jesus! Christ is the “mystery,” the “riches” *and* the “glory.” He is all this and, blessed be His name, He is all this among us poor Gentiles who at first were like dogs, scarcely accounted worthy to eat the crumbs from under the children’s table! And yet we are now admitted into the children’s place and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Riches of glory among the Gentiles would have sounded like a mockery in the first ages and yet the language is most proper at this day, for all things are ours in Christ Jesus the Lord!

The essence of this mystery is Christ, Himself. In these days certain would-be wise men are laboriously attempting to constitute a church without Christ and to set forth a salvation without a Savior. But their Babel building is as a bowing wall and a tottering fence. The center of the blessed mystery of the Gospel is Christ, Himself, in His Person. What a wonderful conception it was that the infinite God should take upon Himself the nature of man! It never would have occurred to men that such a condescension would be thought of! Even now that it has been done, it is a great mystery of our faith. God and man in one Person is the wonder of Heaven, earth and Hell! Well might David exclaim, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?”

The first thought of the Incarnation was born in the unsearchably wise mind of God. It needed Omnipotent Omniscience to suggest the idea of, “Immanuel, God With Us.” Think of it! The Infinite an infant; the Ancient of days a child; the Ever-Blessed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! The idea is original, astounding, Divine! Oh, that this blending of the two natures should ever have taken place! Brothers and Sisters, the heart of the Gospel throbs in the Truth of God! The Son of the Highest was born at Bethlehem and at His birth, before He had worked a deed of righteousness or shed a drop of blood, the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men,” for they knew that the Incarnation had, within itself, a wealth of good things for men!

When the Lord, Himself, took our manhood, it meant inconceivable benediction to the human race! “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,” and in that Child and Son we find our salvation! God in our nature can mean for us nothing but joy. How favored is our race in this respect! What other creature did the Lord thus espouse? We know that He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He took upon Him human nature, and now the next being in the universe to God is man, he who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death is the day crowned with glory and honor, and made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovah’s hands.

This is, indeed, the Gospel! Do not sinners begin to hope? Is there one in your nature who is “Light of lights, very God of very God,” and do you not perceive that this must mean good for you? Does not the “Word made flesh” dwelling among men awaken hope in your bosoms and lead you to believe that you may yet be saved? Certainly the fact of there being such an union between God and man is the delight of every regenerated mind! Our Lord’s Person is, at this day, constituted in the same manner. He is *still* God and Man! He can still sympathize with our manhood to the fullest, for He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! And yet He can help us without limit, seeing He is equal with the Father. Though manifestly Divine, yet Jesus is none the less Human! Though truly Man, He is none the less Divine—and this is a door of hope to us, a fountain of consolation which never ceases to flow!

When we think of our Lord, we remember with His Person the glorious work which He undertook and finished on our behalf. Being found in fashion as Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He took upon Himself the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, because we had failed in our service and could not be saved unless Another did suit and service on our behalf. The Heir of all things girded Himself to be among as One that serves! What service His was! How arduous! How humble! How heavy! How all-consuming! His was a life of grief and humiliation, followed by a death of agony and scorn. Up to the Cross He carried all our load. And on the Cross He bore, that we might bear, His Father’s righteous wrath!

Oh, what has Christ *not* done for us? He cast our sins into the depths of the sea. He has taken the cup which we ought to have drunk forever and He has drained it dry and left not a dreg behind! He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. And now He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness and gone up to His Father’s Throne within the veil, bearing His Divine oblation and making everything right and safe for us, that, by-and-by, we may follow Him and be with Him where He is! Oh yes, Brothers and Sisters,

Christ's Person and finished work are the pillars of our hope! I cannot think of what He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will yet do, without saying, "He is all my salvation and all my desire."

My Brethren, every one of our Lord's offices is a well-spring of comfort. Is He Prophet, Priest and King? Is He Friend? Is He Brother? Is He Husband? Is He Head? Every way and everywhere we lean the weight of our soul's great business upon Him and He is our All in All! Besides, there is this sweet thought, that He is our Representative. Know you not that of old He was our Covenant Head and stood for us in the great transactions of eternity? Like as the first Adam headed up the race and stood for us—alas, I must correct myself—*fell* for us, and we fell in him, so now has the second Adam taken up within Himself all His people and stood for them and kept for them the covenant. So that now it is ordered in all things and sure, and every blessing of it is infallibly secured to all the seed. Believers must and shall possess the covenanted inheritance because Jesus represents them and, on their behalf, has taken possession of the estate of God!

Whatever Christ is, His people are in Him. They were crucified in Him; they were dead in Him; they were buried in Him; they are risen in Him! In Him they live eternally, in Him they sit gloriously at the right hand of God, "who has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In Him we are "accepted in the Beloved," both now and forever! And this, I say, is the essence of the whole Gospel. He that preaches Christ preaches the Gospel! He who does not preach Christ, preaches not the Gospel. It is no more possible for there to be a Gospel without Christ than a day without the sun, or a river without water, or a living man without a head, or a quickened human body without a soul! No, Christ Himself is the life, soul, substance and *essence* of the mystery of the Gospel of God. Christ, Himself, I say again, and no other!

I have been trying to think what we would do if our Lord were gone. Suppose that a man has heard of a great physician who understands his complaint? He has traveled a great many miles to see this celebrated doctor. But when he gets to the door they tell him that he is out. "Well," he says, "then I must wait till he is in." "You need not wait," they reply, "his assistant is at home." The suffering man, who has been often disappointed, answers, "I do not care about his assistant. I want to see the man, himself—mine is a desperate case, but I have heard that this physician has cured the like. I must, therefore, see *him*. No assistants for me." "Well," they say, "he is out, but there are his books. You can see his books." "Thank you," he says, "I cannot be content with his books. I need the living man and nothing less. It is to him that I must speak and from him I will receive instructions."

"Do you see that cabinet?" "Yes." "It is full of his medicines." The sick man answers, "I dare say they are very good, but they are of no use to me without the doctor. I want their owner to prescribe for me, or I shall die of my disease." "But see," cries one, "here is a person who has been cured by him, a man of great experience, who has been present at many remarkable operations. Go into the inquiry room with him and he will tell you all about the mode of cure." The afflicted man answers, "I am much obliged to you, but all your talk only makes me long the more to see the doctor. I came to see *him*, and I am not going to be put off with anything else. I must see the man, himself, for myself. He has made my disease a specialty. He knows how to handle my case and I will stay till I see him."

Now, dear Friends, if you are seeking Christ, imitate this sick man or else you will miss the mark altogether! Never be put off with books, or conversations. 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. Picture the case of the prodigal son when he went home. Suppose, when he reached the house, the elder brother had come to meet him? I must make a supposition that the elder brother had sweetened himself and made himself amiable—and then I hear him say, "Come in, Brother. Welcome home!"

But I see the returning one stand there with tears in his eyes and I hear him lament, "I want to see my father. I must tell him that I have sinned and done evil in his sight." An old servant whispers, "Master John, I am glad to see you back. Be happy, for all the servants are rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice. It is true your father will not see you, but he has ordered the fatted calf to be killed for you. And here is the best robe, and a ring, and shoes for your feet, and we are told to put them on you." All this would not content the poor penitent! I think I hear him cry—"I do not despise anything my father gives me, for I am not worthy to be as his hired servant. But what is all this unless I see his face and know that he forgives me? There is no taste in the feast, no glitter in the ring, no fitness in the shoes, no beauty in the robe unless I can see my father and can be reconciled to him."

Do you not see that in the case of the prodigal son the great matter was to get his head into his father's bosom and there to sob out, "Father, I have sinned"? The one thing necessary was the kiss of free forgiveness, the touch of those dear, warm, loving lips, which said, "My dear child, I love you and your faults are blotted out." That was the thing that gave his soul rest and perfect peace! And this is the mystery we come to preach to you—God Himself drawing near to you in Christ Jesus and forgiving you all your trespasses. We are not content to preach unless Jesus Himself is the theme. We do not set before you something *about* Christ, nor something that *belongs* to Christ, nor something *proclaimed* by Christ, nor somebody that has *known* Christ, nor some truth which extols Christ! No, we preach Christ Crucified!

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord! And we say to you, never be content till you clasp the Savior in your arms as Simeon did in the Temple. That venerable saint did not pray to depart in peace while he only *saw* the Child in Mary's bosom! But when he had taken the dear One into his own arms, then he said, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace." A personal grasp of a *personal* Christ, even though we only know Him as an Infant, fills the heart to the fullest, but nothing else will do it! I go a little farther. As it must be Christ Himself, and none other, it must also be Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ *gives*.

I was thinking, the other day, how different Christ is from all the friends and helpers that we have. They bring us good things, but Jesus gives us *Himself*. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, but He Himself is made of God all these things to us! Hence we can never do without Him. When very ill, you are pleased to see the doctor, but when you are getting well you say to yourself, "I shall be glad to see the back of the good man, for that will be a sure sign that I am off the sick list." Ah, but when Jesus heals a soul, he wants to see Jesus more than ever! Our longing for the constant company of our Lord is the sign that we are getting well! He who longs for Jesus to abide with Him, forever, is healed of his plague! We never outgrow Christ—we only grow to hunger more and more!

If you eat a meal you lose your appetite, but if you feed upon Christ, you hunger and thirst still more after Him. This insatiable desire after Him is not a painful hunger, but a heavenly, pleasant hunger which grows upon you the more its cravings are gratified. The man who has little of Christ can do with little of Christ. But he that gets more of Christ pines for a yet fuller supply. Suppose a wise man were to instruct you? You would learn all he had to teach and then say, "Let him go on and teach somebody else." But when Jesus teaches, we discover so much of our own ignorance that we would gladly keep Him as our life-tutor! When our Lord taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He opened the Scriptures and He opened their minds until their hearts burned within them! What next? Shall the Divine teacher pass on? No, no! They constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us; it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." The more He taught them, the more they wished to be taught!

This is *always* the way with Christ—He is growingly dear, increasingly necessary! Oh my Brothers and Sisters, you cannot do without Him! If you have your foot upon the threshold of pure gold and your finger on the latch of the gate of pearl, you now need Christ more than ever! I feel persuaded that you are of Rutherford's mind, when he cried to have his heart enlarged till it was as big as Heaven, that he might hold all Christ within it—and then he felt that even then it was too narrow a space for the boundless love of Jesus, since the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him! And so he cried out for a heart as large as *seven* heavens, that he might entertain the Well-Beloved. Truly, I am content with what God has given me in all points, except that I long for more of Christ! I could sit down happy if I knew that my portion in the house and in the field would never grow—but I am famished to have more of my Lord!

The more we are filled within of Christ, the more we feel our own natural emptiness! The more we know of Him, the more we long to know Him! Paul, writing to the Philippians, when he had been a Christian for many years, yet says, "That I may know Him." Oh, Paul, do you not know Christ yet? "Yes," he says, "and no." For he knew the love of Christ, but felt that it surpassed all knowledge. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full"—this is not our case in one respect, and yet it is in another, for all the streams of Grace and love and blessedness flow into our souls and we are full—yet, being full, we are longing for more! Not Your gifts, Lord, but Yourself! You, You are the desire of our hearts! Christ alone is enough.

Mark this. Nothing must be placed with Christ as if it were necessary to Him. Some hold a candle to the sun by preaching Christ *and* man's philosophy, or their own priestcraft. When the blessed rain comes fresh from Heaven, they would gladly perfume it with their own dainty extract of fancy. As for God's blessed air, fresh from the eternal hills, they dream that it cannot be right unless by scientific experiments they load it with their own smoke and clouds! Come, clear

out, let us see the sun! We do not need your rush lights. Away with your gauges and your fineries! Let the clear sunlight enter! Let the holy water drop from Heaven! We want not your scented essences. Out of the way and let the fresh air blow about us. There is nothing like it for the health and strength of the soul! We rejoice in Christ and nothing else but Christ! Christ and no priestcraft! Christ and no philosophy! Christ and no modern thought! Christ and no human perfection! Christ, the whole of Christ, and nothing else but Christ—here lies the mystery of the Gospel of the Grace of God!

Brethren, what else but Christ can satisfy the justice of God? Look around you when a sense of sin is on you and the dread tribunal is before your eyes—what can you bring, by way of expiation, but Christ? What can you bring *with* Christ? What dare you associate with His blood and merits? Oh, my God, nothing will content You but Your Son, Your Son, alone! What else can quiet conscience? Some professors have consciences as good as new, for they have never been used. But he that has once had his conscience thoroughly exercised and pressed upon with all the weight of sin till he has felt as if it were better for him not to be than to be guilty before God—that man acknowledges that nothing but Christ will ever quiet his agonized heart!

See the bleeding Lamb and you will be pacified! See the exalted Lord pleading His righteousness before the Throne of God and conscience is even as a weaned child—and all the storm within the spirit is hushed into a great calm. What else will do to live with but Christ? I do not find, in times of pain and depression of spirit, that I can keep up upon anything but my Lord. The mind can feed at other times on pretty kickshaws and fine confectionery such as certain divines serve out in the form of orations and essays and the like, but when you are sorely sick, your soul abhors all manner of earthly meat and nothing will stay in the stomach but the Bread of Heaven, even the blessed Christ of God! Think also, when you come to die, what else will do but Christ? Oh, I have seen men die with Heaven in their eyes, the eternal Godhead seeming to transfigure them because they rejoiced in Christ! But a deathbed without Christ—it is the darkening twilight of eternal night! It is the gloomy cave which forms the entrance of the land of darkness.

Do not venture on life or death without Jesus, I implore you. “None but Christ, none but Christ”—this has been the martyr’s cry amidst the fire—let it be ours in life and death.

II. Secondly, we are to consider THE SWEETNESS OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU. This is a grand advance. I know that there are a great many fishermen here, this morning, and I heartily welcome them. When you are out at sea you like to know that there are plenty of fish in the sea all round your boats. It is a fine thing to get in among the great shoals of fish. Yes, but there is one thing better than that! Fish in the sea are good, but the fish in the boat are the fish for you! Once get them in the net, or better still, safe into the vessel, and you are glad. Now Christ in Heaven—Christ free to poor sinners is precious—but Christ here in the heart is most precious of all! Here is the marrow and fatness. Christ on board the vessel brings safety and calm. Christ in your house, Christ in your heart, Christ in you—that is the cream of the matter, the honey of the honeycomb!

Gold is valuable, but men think more of a pound in their pockets than of huge ingots in the bank vault. A loaf of bread is a fine thing, but if we could not eat it, and so get it within us, we might die of starvation. A medicine may be a noble cure, but if it is always kept in the vial and we never take a draught from it, what good will it do us? Christ is best known when He is Christ *in* you. Let us talk about that a little. Christ *in* you—that is, first, Christ accepted by faith. Is it not a wonderful thing that Christ Jesus should ever enter into a man? Yes, but I will tell you something more wonderful, and that is, that He should enter in by so narrow an opening as our little faith! There is the sun—I do not know how many thousands of times the sun is bigger than the earth, and yet the sun can come into a little room or a close cell—and what is more, the sun can get in through a chink!

When the shutters have been closed I have known him come in through a little round hole in them. So Christ can come in through a little faith—a mere chink of confidence. If you are such a poor Believer that you can hardly think of assurance or confidence, yet if you trust the Lord, as surely as the sun comes in by a narrow crack, so will Christ come into your soul by the smallest opening of true faith! How wise it will be on your part, when you see your Lord’s sunny face shining through the lattices, to say, “I am not going to be satisfied with these mere glints and gleams, I would rather walk in the light of His Countenance. Pull up those blinds! Let the heavenly sun shine in and let me rejoice in its glory.” Grow in faith and enlarge your receiving power till you take in Christ into your inmost soul by the Holy Spirit, for it is Christ in you by faith that becomes the hope of glory.

By Christ in you we mean Christ possessed. You see, nothing is so much a man's own as that which is within him. Do you tell me that a certain slice of bread is not mine and that I have no right to it? But I have eaten it and you may bring a lawsuit against me about that bread if you like, but you cannot get it away from me! That question is settled—that which I have eaten is mine. In this case, possession is not only nine points of the law, but *all* the points. When a man gets Christ into Him, the devil himself cannot win a suit against him to recover Christ, for that matter is settled beyond question. Christ in you is yours, indeed! Men may question whether an acre of land or a house belongs to me, but the meat I ate yesterday is not a case of property which Chancery or any other court can alter. So, when the Believer has Christ in him, the Law has no more to say! The enclosure made by faith carries its own title deeds within it.

It means, too, Christ experienced in all His power. There may be a valuable medicine that works like magic to expel a man's pains and cure his diseases, but it is of no efficacy till it is within him! When it commences to purify his blood and to strengthen his frame, he is in a fair way to know it without depending upon the witness of others. Get Christ in you curing your sin, Christ in you filling your soul with love to virtue and holiness, bathing your heart in comfort and refining it with heavenly inspirations—then will you know the Lord! Christ *believed* in, Christ *possessed*, Christ *experienced*, Christ *in you*—this is worth a world! Moreover, Christ in us is Christ reigning. It reminds me of Mr. Bunyan's picture of Mansoul, when the Prince Immanuel laid siege to it and Diabolus, from within the city, strove to keep Him out.

It was a hard time for Mansoul, then, but, at last, the battering rams had broken down the gates and the silver trumpets sounded and the Prince's captains entered! Then the Prince, Himself, did ride down the city's streets, while liberated citizens welcomed Him with all their hearts, hung out all their streamers and made the Church towers ring again! The bells rang out merry peals, for the King, Himself, was come. Up to the castle of the heart, He rode in triumph and took His royal throne to be henceforth the sole lord and king of the city. Christ in you is a right royal word! Christ swaying His scepter from the center of your being, over every power and faculty, desire and resolve, bringing every thought into captivity to Himself—oh, this is glory begun and the sure pledge of Heaven!

Oh for more of the imperial sovereignty of Jesus! It is our liberty to be absolutely under His sway. Yes, and then Christ in you is Christ *filling* you. It is wonderful, when Christ once enters into a soul, how, by degrees, He occupies the whole of it. Did you ever hear the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing else but weeds, till at last he met with a strange foreign flower of singular vitality? The story is that he sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden and left it to work its own sweet way. He slept and rose and knew not how the seed was growing till one day he opened the gate and saw a scene which astounded him. He knew that the seed would produce a dainty flower and he looked for it. But he had little dreamed that the plant would cover the whole garden! So it was—the flower had exterminated every weed, till, as he looked from one end to the other—from wall to wall he could see nothing but the fair colors of that rare plant and smell nothing but its delicious perfume.

Christ is that plant of renown! If He is sown in the soil of your soul, He will gradually eat out the roots of all evil weeds and poisonous plants, till over all your nature there shall be Christ in you! God grant we may realize the picture in our own hearts, and then we shall be in Paradise! It may sound strange to add that Christ in you transfigures the man till he becomes like Christ, Himself. You thrust a bar of cold, black iron into the fire and keep it there till the fire enters into it. Look, the iron is like fire, itself—he that feels it will know no difference. The fire has permeated the iron and made it a fiery mass. I should like to have seen that bush in Horeb before which Moses took off his shoes. When it was all ablaze it seemed no longer a bush, but a mass of fire, a furnace of pure flame. The fire had transfigured the bush. So it is with us when Christ enters into us—He elevates us to a nobler state, even as Paul said—“I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”

Jesus sanctifies us wholly—spirit, soul, and body—and takes us to dwell with Him in the perfect state above. Christ in you—how can I explain it? We are the little graft and He is the strong and living stem. We are laid to Him, bound to Him, sealed to Him—and when there is nothing between the new shoot and the old tree, at last the sap flows into the graft and graft and the tree are one! You know right well how Christ enters into us and becomes our life. Christ in you means power in you. A strong man armed keeps his house till a stronger than he comes—and when the stronger enters, the first tenant is ejected by the power of the new comer and kept out by the same means. We were without strength till Christ came, but now we war with principalities and powers and win the victory. Christ in you! Oh, what bliss! What joy! The Bridegroom is with us and we cannot fast! The King is with us and we are glad!

When King Charles went to live at Newmarket, it is said that a most poverty-stricken village became a wealthy place. Truly, when Christ comes to dwell in our hearts, our spiritual poverty suddenly turns to blessed wealth. Christ in you! What a wonder it is that He should deign to come under our roof! Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in. See the honor which His entrance brings with it! He glorifies the place where His foot rests even for a moment. If Jesus does but enter into your heart, His court comes within Him—honor, glory, immortality, Heaven and all other Divine things follow where He leads. “Oh,” says one, “I wish He would come and dwell in me.” Then, be humble, for He loves to dwell with him that is humble and of a contrite spirit.

Next, be clean, for if they must be clean that bear God’s vessels, much more they that have Christ, Himself, in them. Next, be empty, for Christ will not live amid the lumber of self, pride and carnal sufficiency. Learn abundantly to rejoice in Christ, for he who welcomes Christ will have Him always for a guest. Jesus never tarries where He is not desired. If His welcome is worn out, away He goes. Oh, desire and delight in Him! Hunger and thirst after Him, for Christ delights to dwell with an eager people, a hungry people, a people who value Him and cannot be happy without Him. Surely I have said enough to make you feel that the sweetness of true godliness lies in having Christ in you.

III. Thirdly, we are to consider that the **OUTLOOK OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.** Last Sunday morning, as best I could in my feebleness, I spoke to you about the time when this earthly house of our tabernacle shall be dissolved, when we shall find that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But this morning’s text goes a little further—it speaks of glory which is a hope for soul as well as body. Why glory! Glory? Surely that belongs only to God. To Him alone be glory! Yes, but Christ has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.”

And He also says, “And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them.” Think of it! Glory for us poor creatures! Glory for you, Sister! Glory for me! It seems a strange thing that a sinner should ever have anything to do with glory when he deserves nothing but shame. We are neither kings nor princes, what have we to do with *glory*? Yet glory is to be our dwelling, glory our light, glory our crown, glory our song! The Lord will not be content to give us less than glory. Grace is very sweet, but might we not be content to swim forever in a sea of Grace? But no, our Lord “will give Grace *and* glory.”—

*“All needful Grace will God bestow,
And crown that Grace with glory, too.”*

We shall have glorified bodies, glorious companions, a glorious reward and glorious rest!

But how do we know that we shall have glory? Why, first, He that has come to live in our hearts and reigns as our bosom’s Lord, makes us glorious by His coming! His rest is glorious—the place of His feet is glorious—He must mean some great thing towards us, or He would never dwell in us. I saw a line carriage stopping, the other day, at a very humble hovel, and I thought to myself—“that carriage is not stopping there to collect rent, or to borrow a broom.” Oh, no, that lady, yonder, is calling round and visiting the poor, and I doubt not she has taken in some nourishment to an invalid. I hope it was so. And I am sure my Lord Jesus Christ’s carriage never stops at my door to get anything out of me! Whenever He comes, He brings countless blessings with Him. Such a one as He is, God over all, blessed forever—it cannot be that He took our nature, unless with high designs of unsearchable love!

Thus we nourish large expectations upon the food of solid reason. I am sure our Lord Jesus would never have done so much if He had not meant to manifest the immeasurable breadth and length of a love which is beyond imagining. What He has done, already, surprises me even to amazement. I think nothing can appear strange or hard to believe, let Him do what He may in the future. If the Scriptures tell me my Lord is going to fill me with His own glory and to set me at His own right hand, I believe it. He who went to the Cross for me will never be ashamed of me. He who gave me Himself will give me all Heaven and more! He that opened His very heart to find blood and water to wash me in—how shall He keep back even His *kingdom* from me?

O sweet Lord Jesus, You are, indeed, to us the hope, the pledge, the guarantee of glory! Friend, do you not feel that Christ in you is the dawn of Heaven? Besides this, Christ is He that has entered into covenant with God to bring His people home to glory. He has pledged Himself to bring every sheep of His flock safe to His Father’s right hand and He will keep His engagement, for He never failed one Covenant promise yet. Moreover, this we do know, that the Christ who is come to live with us will never be separated from us. If He had not meant to stay, He would not have entered our heart at

all. There was nothing to tempt Him to come, and if, in Sovereign Grace, He deigned to live in the poor cottage of our nature, then, Brothers and Sisters, He knew what He was doing. He had counted the cost, He had foreseen all the evil that would be in us and about us, and when He came, He came with the intent to stay.

Someone asked another, the other day, “What persuasion are you of?” And the answer was, “I am persuaded that neither life, nor death nor things present, nor things to come shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Are not you of that persuasion, Brother? If so, you can see how Christ in you is the hope of glory. Why, look, Sirs, Christ in you is glory! Did we not show that just now? “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!” You have Heaven in having Christ, for Christ is the biggest part of Heaven! Is not Christ the *soul* of Heaven, and having Him you have glory? What is more, having gotten Christ, Christ’s glory and your glory are wrapped up together.

If Christ were to lose you, it would be a great loss to you, but a greater loss to Him. If I can perish with Christ in me, I shall certainly be a fearful loser, but so will He, for where is His honor, where His glory if a Believer perishes? His glory is gone if one soul that trusts in Him is ever cast away. Comfort yourselves with this word—Christ in you means you in glory, as surely as God lives! There is no question about that! Go your ways and rejoice in Christ Jesus and let men see who it is that lives in you! Let Jesus speak through your mouth, weep through your eyes and smile through your face! Let Him work with your hands and walk within your feet, and be tender with your heart. Let Him seek sinners through you! Let Him comfort saints through you until the day breaks and the shadows flee away!

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307