Christ In You

Colossians 1:26-27 *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:* 27 *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:

Intro
I’ve read this passage of scripture many times, I’ve even preached from it, but this week I was struck by it in a fresh and challenging way.

• There is a principle here that is absolutely fundamental to what it means to be an Apostolic, Book of Acts, church.
  o As a matter of fact, I believe that, in whatever way that we fall short of the mark of being the church that He has called us to be,
    ▪ this is where we miss the mark.
• If we ever really grasp this,
  o if we ever truly manifest the intent of this verse and so many others just like it in the New Testament,
  o then we will, indeed, be the church that He has called us to be
    ▪ and we will, without a doubt, have an incredible impact upon our city!
• To that end, let us look a little closer at this familiar passage of scripture.

For the sake of brevity we are jumping right into the middle of a discourse by Paul.

• He starts this passage out by talking about a mystery.
  o In our minds a mystery is something that is unknown and that must be solved.
• Paul, however, uses the word mystery to describe certain revelations that can only be obtained from God
  o – it’s a knowledge, an understanding, that he has gained in God.
• In other words, the mystery has been exposed,
  o through the anointing of God, Paul has caught a glimpse into the deep things of God
    ▪ and has gleaned an understanding of some mysteries that have puzzled men of God through the ages.
• Because he has received a revelation of the truth behind the mystery,
  o when Paul talks about mysteries, which he does often,
  o he imparts to us the revelation that is contained in the mystery.
• For instance, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul talks about the mystery of iniquity.
  o And he reveals to us what the mystery is:
    ▪ *That a man would try to proclaim himself to be God.*
• Then in 1 Timothy chapter 3, he talks about the mystery of Godliness, which is just the opposite.
  o The great mystery of Godliness is that *God became a man.*
• However here, in the first chapter of Colossians he is talking about the mystery of the ages,
  o which is the church
  o and that mystery is defined as Christ in you!

Under the inspiration of God,
• Paul looked upon the church and realized that this living, breathing thing called the church was the mystery of the ages,
  o the thing that the prophets inquired after and searched diligently to understand,
  o the thing that angels desired to look into.
• And, as he beheld the church in all of its wonderful glory
  o the light of revelation dawnd within him
  o and he conceptualized the great mystery of the church in a single phrase –
    ▪ Christ in us!
  o This is the thing that we simply must understand.
    ▪ This is the concept that lies at the very center of what it means to be the church.
  • Christ in us.
• As I pondered this passage of scripture this week I began to wonder if we really truly realize what that means.
  o What does it mean to have Christ in us?

Paul told the Romans, in Romans 8:10-11,
• And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.  11
  o But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
• So the indwelling spirit of God, the gift of the Holy Ghost, that’s what is meant by Christ in us.
  o But the problem is, I think, that we oversimplify the matter.
• We understand that you must be filled with the Holy Ghost
  o and we major on that point but, all too often, we neglect what it really means to be filled with the Holy Ghost.
• Paul went on to say, in the next verse:
  o Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
  o For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
  o For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
• This Holy Ghost filled life is a life of surrender to God.
  o We are not debtors to the flesh, therefore we are not to live after the flesh.
    ▪ The flesh once held us in bondage and the spiritual man was dead.
  o But when we came to God at an altar,
    ▪ we crucified the flesh,
we took our old man and nailed him to the old rugged cross,
  • because that’s what it takes to be filled with the Holy Ghost.
    o God will not fill a man until he has emptied himself of himself.
    • A man has to come to an altar and literally pour himself out in order for God to fill him with His spirit.

The problem is that, after crucifying the flesh, we all too often turn back to it and embrace it again after that we have been filled with the Holy Ghost.

• This is what Paul is warning the Romans of.
  o We don’t owe any debt to the flesh,
  o and we don’t live after the flesh
  o because if you live after the flesh, the spirit dies.
• But if you, through the indwelling spirit, put the deeds of the flesh to death,
  o you will live.
    ▪ This is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:31, I die daily.
• Because the essential element of the Christian life is Christ in us
  o – and if we embrace again the deeds of the flesh,
  o if we begin to live again after the flesh as if we owed some debt to the flesh,
    ▪ then we fail to be the people that He has called us to be.
• In failing to exemplify what is meant by “Christ in us”,
  o we fail to be the church!
• Remember, Paul said in Galatians 2:20,
  o “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live…”
    ▪ We’ve got that part down.
    ▪ We understand that.
• But he goes on to say,
  o “…yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
  o and the life which I now live in the flesh
  o I live by the faith of the Son of God,
  o who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
• This is what we need, we must learn what it means to have Christ living in us.
  o We must live, in the flesh but not after the flesh.
    ▪ Rather we must live by the faith of Jesus Christ.
      • This is the key to being the church.
      • This is the principle that we must grasp today.

The Oil Lamp
Let’s come at it from another angle for a moment:

• The Holy Ghost, in scripture, is likened to the oil in an oil lamp.
  o You will remember the story:
    ▪ 10 virgins, all were chaste,
    ▪ all were arrayed as the members of the wedding party
    (they looked the part)
    ▪ but 5 of them had no oil in their lamps.
• Have you ever considered how tragic it is to have a lamp with no oil in it?
  o An oil lamp without any oil in it is still an oil lamp but it will not work like it was made to work.
    ▪ It has no power to light the darkness,
    ▪ it has no real value.
• You can set it on a shelf somewhere and admire its beauty.
  o But, that’s not what a lamp was made for.
    ▪ Lamps were made to give off light
    ▪ and a lamp without oil has no ability to give off light.
• The point of the parable is not the importance of lamp oil,
  o the point of the parable is that God is as imperative to us as the oil is to the lamp!

If you separate a man from God, he’s still a man, he still looks like a man.
• But without God in his life he no longer acts like he was made to act.
  o He no longer lives like he was made to live.
    ▪ Man was made for communion and fellowship with God.
    ▪ Man was made for the glory of God.
• However when sin entered the Garden of Eden, man was separated from God and made subject to his flesh.
  o What you end up with is a man that is made in the image of God but no longer lives the way God made him to live.
    ▪ Now he lives after the flesh and is subject to the flesh.
• Instead of bringing glory to God, he seeks glory for himself.
  o He is puffed up in vain imaginations and deceived by a self-centered morality that considers his own will and his own standard over God.
    ▪ He’s a man, but he doesn’t work like a man was supposed to work.
• The only thing you can do for an oil lamp that doesn’t have any oil in it is put oil in it.
  o That’s the only way you can get it to work like it was made to work!
• The only thing that you can do for a man that doesn’t have God in his life is to put God in him.
  o It takes oil in the lamp for the lamp to work and it takes God inside of a man for the man to be what God made him to be.
  o That’s the only way for a man to begin to behave as man is supposed to behave.
• That’s what it means to be a Christian.
  o It takes Christ in us for us to be what we were made to be.
  o If we are going to bring glory to God,
    ▪ if we are going to have an impact upon our world,
    ▪ if we are going to be the church that he has called us to be,
    ▪ then we must have Christ in us!

The problem is that we are, by human nature, self-centered.
• And we think that salvation is all about us.
We think that Jesus Christ died on a cross to get **us out of Hell and into Heaven.**

- But that’s not the case at all:
  - Jesus died on a cross to get **God out of heaven and into us.**
- That’s what it means to have Christ in us!
  - God has saved us so that he could live in us and through us.
    - God saved us so that He could be on location in our world.
- God filled you with the Holy Ghost so that he could make his presence known in your life!
  - God has made you a part of his church so that He could fill your life and cause you to fulfill the role for which he created you!

I come to this pulpit this afternoon stirred in my spirit.

- We need a change!
  - We need a change in our lives.
    - We need a change in our hearts.
      - We need a change in the way we view our lives.
- We desperately need to be reawakened to what it means to be filled with the Holy Ghost.
  - We need a fresh understanding of what it means to have Christ in us –
    - God on location in our lives
      - 7 days of every week,
      - 24 hours of every day,
      - 60 minutes of every hour,
      - 60 seconds of every minute,
      - every moment of our lives,
    - Christ in us!
- What this world needs is a church that embodies the mystery of the ages.
  - What this church desperately needs is a people that are consumed with the hope of glory.
  - What this world needs is for the church to be the church,
    - for spirit filled, spirit led, men and women to live out the this grand concept
      - – Christ in us!
- We need it. The world needs it. And this church needs it.
  - We must become consumed with Christ.
    - We must learn to yield our lives to him,
    - to actually allow God to be on location in our lives!
- So that everyone you come into contact with,
  - everyone you spend time with,
  - everyone that is around you for any length of time
    - begins to recognize that God is in residence in your life.
- Paul said that God would make the riches of the glory of this mystery known among the Gentiles,
  - that God would reveal the great mystery of the church.
    - How? By Christ in you! That’s how!
New Creature
Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:17

- “...If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
- A new creature. Old things are passed away.
  - All things are become new.
- The problem is that, over time, we allow the old things to begin to creep back in
  - until there exists some kind of time-share between the old things and the new.
    - My friend, it was never meant to be that way.
- Because the problem with that is that the longer that condition exists,
  - more and more of your life becomes the property of the old things
    - until the flesh wrests control away from the spirit.
      - And we cease to be what God made us to be.
- Like the pig that is washed clean but then returns to wallowing in the mud,
  - we regress from the victorious, spirit-filled life,
    - back to a life that is dominated by the cares and affairs of the fleshly man.
- When that happens, the oil is expended from the lamp
  - and the lamp ceases to do its job!
    - We quit being the church!
- We become the salt that has lost its savor,
  - the light that is hidden under the bushel of our flesh.
    - And we fail our God
      - and, in failing him, we fail our world.
- The world needs God.
  - But the only way God is going to reach out to the world is through us.

Let me tell you what we need.
- From the pulpit to the pew, we desperately need to fall on our face before God and pour our lives upon an altar.
  - We need to go back to the cross and empty ourselves of ourselves and cry out to Him – make me a new creature!
    - We need to truly learn what it means to have Christ in us.
- We must not be satisfied with anything less than Christ inside of us leading us, directing our lives, and controlling our every footstep.
  - To have Christ in you requires that you lose your identity in Christ!
    - We need to pray, Lord hide me in you!
    - Let my flesh be swallowed by your glory.
    - Let the man that I am, with all of its weaknesses and frailties be lost in the cross of Calvary that you may be manifest in my life!
      - We MUST have Christ in Us!
      - We must let God be God in our lives.
When you put the oil into the lamp, the lamp is still the same lamp that it was before the oil.

- Only, now it has the power to light the dark.
- Watch this though, the power comes from the oil and not the lamp.
  - We don’t put oil in the lamp so that the lamp can, of its own ability produce light.
    - We put oil in the lamp so that the oil can be oil in the lamp
    - and the oil, in the lamp, produces the light – causing the lamp to fulfill its purpose.

When the Holy Ghost comes into your life, you are still flesh.

- Only, now you have the light of the world living inside of you.
  - The light comes from Christ in you!
- The power, the anointing, the ability to impact your world comes not from your own ability or talent or knowledge, it comes from Christ in you.
  - Just like with the lamp,
  - God didn’t fill you with his spirit so that you could live for him in your own power and ability.
- God filled you with his spirit so that God could be God in your life.
  - God filled you with his spirit because anything of any eternal good in your life is going to come from Him and not from you.
    - It is Christ in you that cause you to fulfill God’s purpose for your life – Christ in you makes you a new creature in Christ!

Oh, how it must break the heart of God when we struggle to accomplish spiritual things in our flesh.

- How it must sadden God when we try to operate within the realm of the church based upon our own ability and talents instead of allowing Christ in us to work in our lives.
  - The church will never be the church that God has called it to be as long as it relies on flesh.
    - The church is supposed to be spirit filled, spirit led, and spirit anointed.
      - We must be that kind of church!

Close
In the final chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul addresses a certain segment of the church that has been seduced by sinful men and has begun to question, in 2 Cor. 13:3, if Christ is really speaking through Paul.

- According to Paul they asked for evidence, no less, that Christ was speaking in him.
  - Paul’s response reveals much.
- He doesn’t rise up, in himself, and say,
  - “Well of course Christ speaks through me, I’m special.
  - I’m God’s anointed.
  - I am an apostle of Christ and I speak by his sole authority!
How dare you question God’s anointing on my life?”

Instead, he turns the question back to them.

Saying, in verse 5,

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you…?”

In other words, if you want the answer, examine your selves,

find the proof in your own lives because,

if you are in the faith, you will discover that Jesus Christ is in you too

and, if you will allow Him, he will speak through you as well!

This concept of Christ in you is not something that is reserved for the super spiritual.

This is not something that is reserved for the elite in the church.

This is the normal condition of the spirit filled believer.

Jesus Christ resides in you

and, if you don’t quench the spirit,

if you don’t stifle his leading in your life,

he will make himself manifest in your life.

I believe this afternoon that we would be served well if we would follow Paul’s admonition and examine ourselves,

examine our lives,

and we discover anything less that Christ living in us,

let us go back to the cross,

let us fall before his presence

and let us pray until we are filled fresh with his purpose,

his anointing and his direction for our lives!

Christ in us!

We need that more than we need anything else…”