

Insights into Fullness of Life in Christ

2.....An Invitation to Live

In the first study, The Mystery of the New Testament, it was outlined how this mystery is actually considered to be the key to life for every believer, that the life of Jesus Christ actually does reside within each believer and that it is from that life that we live and also relate and minister to others. This one mystery it was noted, was separate and distinct from 7 other mysteries in the N.T. which were mentioned, but were not explained and will not be until they unfold in the end times. This one mystery however, expressed by Paul as "Christ in you" and "Christ, who is our life" was mentioned directly no less than 15 times, each mention adding to the explanation of those terms.

It was noted that this mystery was hidden from all, prophets included, until revealed to the Apostle Paul somewhere between A.D. 38 and A.D. 45. Paul's writings reveal that not only was this mystery kept hidden by God until that time, but the mystery was said to contain wisdom, have fellowship, be the mystery of the gospel, of Christ, of God and of His will, but also be the mystery among the gentiles.

It was also noted that for many reasons, this fact, although well documented in scripture is often not known by believers, nor fully realized in life, even if something of it is known from the words of the N.T. This was not considered surprising as this theme is not often taught in the church, nor is it easy to realize in one's life, even if intellectually known, as God's process of making this to be a reality in our lives, brings about various types and degrees of suffering and adversity, which can be confusing.

This study is going to provide some of the teaching that Jesus himself gave on this matter, recorded in John 17 when Jesus prayed His High Priestly prayer, not that long before His crucifixion. The study will also provide mentions of other scriptures from Paul's writings that affirm and confirm this fact that Jesus taught, that He Jesus is in the Father, that the Father is in Him, that Jesus lives in us and that in prospect of His prayer for the disciples, that they might live as one, just as the Father and Jesus were one.

The study will also introduce the idea that adversity, sufferings, trials and persecutions are a normal part of the Christian life that is surrendered to God and are a part of God's process in bringing believers into fullness of life.

So let us proceed with this life giving example from Christ Himself as to what the gospel really means. It really is

An Invitation to Live

No.	Thematic Pt	Developmental Point	Illustrations and linkages
1	Salt Light Spirit Life	<p>Both salt and light are metaphors for the Spirit life of God in our lives. Jesus speaks of the necessity for these in Matthew 5. And know this – without the Spirit fully in our lives we cannot live as God intended.</p> <p>The N.T not only speaks of us being Spirit filled, but also of the Life of Christ within believers, both as the source of their life and the source of their strength to minister life to others.</p> <p>So, in this study we are going to bridge over these natural indicators of salt and light and bring you and Invitation to Live via the Spirit of God.</p>	<p>We will do this by looking at life as God intended it to be – not by works or law but by the Spirit of God.</p> <p>You will see that this will lead to the most incredible revelation that Paul had.</p>
2	Salt, Light The Holy Spirit and life	<p>If we are honest many of us sometimes do not feel that we have any salt left or any light to shine. For me that occurs too. No one is immune. Life in this world is not easy. However, it should be only a temporary state.</p> <p>But for many, lack of salt and light (and Zoe) is a more or less permanent state and they don't know what to do about it. Some are not really aware of the lack and wonder why they struggle with life.</p>	<p>So, whatever your state I am going to bring you hope and an Invitation to Live.</p> <p>For me it is the most exciting thing in the Bible.</p>
3	Jesus prayer for the disciples in John 17	<p>I believe there is a central theme running through the NT. There are many places I could begin but have chosen Jesus prayer for the disciples, from His words before the crucifixion. In these words He revealed the whole purpose of the Gospel.</p> <p>"that all of them may be one, Father, just <u>as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us</u> so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, <u>that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me.</u> May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."</p>	<p>In these verses, the whole purpose of the gospel was revealed.</p> <p>Not only that, but the detail on how it would work (manifest life in believers)</p> <p>Let's take a detailed look at each of those aspects of union</p>
4 a	Union of the Father with the Son Use red and blue folders to show who is in who. Blue folder is The Father – Red folder is Jesus	<p>Jesus said <u>"as you are in me and I am in you"</u> referring again to His Father being in Him, they being one together.</p> <p><i>(In reading this you will need to imagine me merging one folder behind the other to indicate their oneness – <u>First, the blue folder (The Father)</u> being slipped behind <u>the red folder (Jesus)</u> indicating that <u>the Father is in Jesus.</u> Then, you will need to imagine the reverse, where the red folder is slipped behind the blue one – to indicate <u>that Jesus is in the Father</u>)</i> He then concludes that they are one) Notice Jesus said to His Father – <u>"we are one"</u> So Jesus saw Himself as One with the Father – they were of the same Spirit – a union achieved through the Spirit.</p>	<p>In Summary</p> <p>The Father is in Jesus.</p> <p>Jesus is in the Father.</p> <p>Jesus and the Father are one.</p>

4 b	Union of disciples with Father and Son Disciples are grey folders	<p><u>May they also be in us</u> showed Jesus plans for the disciples.</p> <p><i>(This is demonstrated with the folders by slipping a grey folder behind the red and blue folders, indicating that the hope of Jesus that the disciples would be in both Father and Son)</i></p>	<p><i>The disciples will be in Jesus and the Father</i></p>
5	Jesus is in the disciples. Use red and grey folders to show Jesus in the disciples.	<p>Jesus also prayed the words <u>"I in them"</u> indicating that Jesus would be in them. In this part of the verse Jesus connected the disciples with Himself and the Father, the connection being through the Holy Spirit.</p> <p><i>(This is demonstrated by the <u>grey folders – disciples</u> – being merged behind the red folder – Jesus, to indicate that He would be within us)</i></p>	<p>This fits will all the Pauline scriptures that say the life of Jesus is within us.</p> <p><i>Jesus is in the disciples.</i></p>
6	Union of the disciples with the Father and the Son. Union through the Holy Spirit – yellow folder	<p><u>"that they may be one as we are one"</u> Jesus prayed that the disciples would be one together – one in spirit and unity – in the same Spirit in which the Father and Son were in union and unity.</p> <p><i>(This is indicated with the folders by again merging red and blue and also merging two grey folders, then merging the two grey folders behind the red and blue)</i></p> <p><i>Finally, then indicate this union is possible through the Holy Spirit, by merging red, blue and grey behind the yellow, the Holy Spirit.</i></p>	<p><i>The disciples will also be one, as Jesus and the Father are one – all Via the Holy Spirit.</i></p>
7	<p>So what is the extent of the unity or union that we have here?</p> <p><i>What Jesus is saying is that:</i></p>	<p><i>Jesus and the Father are one.</i> <i>The Father is in Jesus.</i> <i>Jesus is in the Father</i> <i>Jesus is in the disciples.</i> <i>The disciples will also be one as the Father and Jesus are one.</i> <i>All via the Holy Spirit –we are all one Spirit</i></p> <p><i>So, Father God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit are all one</i> <i>And – this is the exciting part. Jesus has prayed that the disciples would be brought into this same unity. And because we are disciples that includes us. This implies a divine union, present from the early councils of the trinity.</i></p>	<p><i>So the Father, Son and Spirit were always in unity and that potentially we are also in unity with them ----</i> <i>The Father, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.</i></p> <p><i>Now the question is what made these things possible?</i></p>
8	<i>Union possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.</i>	<p><i>It was by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that these things became possible. There was no other way.</i> <i>It was not just through His spilt blood that this was possible but by His body death – that is what made our sanctification a fact.</i> <i>So it is now possible for anyone to become a believer - to partake of these divine attributes of Jesus & realize the union with Father Son & Spirit.</i></p>	<p><i>And remember His purpose</i></p> <p><i>That the world may know Jesus came – by the world seeing Jesus in us – and that we are new creations in Him!</i></p>

<p>9</p>	<p>Could this be a central theme of the NT?</p> <p>Where else is this union spoken of in the NT?</p>	<p>It is everywhere in the NT – no less than 20 times directly and indirectly is this issue mentioned. (Paul 18 times) It appears to be the main theme Paul taught. Some of these are.</p> <p>Galations 2:20 – it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.</p> <p>2 Corinthians 13:4 - Don't you know this? Jesus Christ is in you!</p> <p>(I tell the story of a young lady who was converted at 14 – Some twenty years later her father noticed the Spirit working in her – and showed her this verse. Ever since then she has grown much more and is a demonstration of the Spirit's power – because she KNEW who she was in Christ)</p> <p>1 Corinthians 3:16 – The Spirit of God dwells in you – you are God's temple</p> <p>1 Corinthians 6:19 – The Holy Spirit is in you.</p> <p>Galations 4:19 – The life of Christ is being formed in you</p> <p>Colossians 3:4 – Christ is my life.</p> <p>John 15:4 – Abide in Me, and I in you.</p>	<p>There are many other references to this theme in the NT.</p> <p>When added to what Jesus said it make a good case for this theme being a major one if not THE major one in the NT.</p> <p>What do you think? As the Toyota advertisement used to say – please consider!</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Temples Vessels (jars of clay) branches explains connection between God and us.</p>	<p>This togetherness of God and man is mentioned in several other places in the NT. Analogies used are: (3 of 6 in NT)</p> <p>1 Cor 3:16 – you are God's temple – in which he dwells</p> <p>2 Cor 4:7 - we are jars of clay – "we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this surpassing power is from God and not from us."</p> <p>John 15:5 Jesus said I am the vine and you are the branches. If we don't remain on the vine we wither.</p> <p>Demonstrate with branch and rooted cutting - with green (alive) and brown (dead) branches.</p>	<p>We tend to think we run the show. But we are only earthen vessels to be filled by Him</p> <p>So - without Him we can do nothing.</p>

<p>11</p>	<p>What Paul wrote in Bible</p> <p>What Paul taught in person.</p> <p>Diversion onto the mystery</p>	<p><i>Apart from the doctrines that Paul explained, much of his writing was done to address specific problems or immediate situations – they were answers to questions and heresies. These were instructions in What to do or not do. We are not given details of what he taught in person, but this recurring theme comes out in his writings. And here is why.</i></p> <p><i>Col 1:25-26</i> I have become its (the church) servant <u>by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness</u>—²⁶the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints....<u>this mystery which is Christ in you.</u></p> <p>Let me just divert onto this mystery for a moment. Paul is telling us that this mystery was not known to any OT prophet. (Yes - The prophets new that the Messiah was to come, but what they did not know was the form in which the Messiah would relate to His people – they probably imagined a King outside of them) OT people were used to having a King to rule them. To have a deity live inside of them was totally new and not known until <u>revealed to Paul around AD 38-45.</u></p>	<p><u>Paul did not write about it till AD 55-58 when he wrote Corinthians, Galations, Ephesians and Colossians.</u></p> <p>So that is why Paul taught NT people WHO they were in Christ, rather than what we should do. Why he told them WHAT to do it was because they had not yet learned to find out themselves from the Spirit of God within them.</p> <p>My point is that we should prefer to teach who we are in Christ and to live out of the Spirit, so we will know what to do from the Spirit, rather than being told what to do.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Is Christ with us? Or In us? Or even more so>>>> Are we as He is in this world?</p>	<p>The Apostle John thought so – He wrote in 1 John 4:17 "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁷In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, <u>because in this world we are like him.</u> Or as the KJV says "<u>because as He is, so are we in this world.</u></p> <p>Remember Martin Luther's words: "<u>It was God's intention to have a race of Christs.</u>" He said that nothing less than this is true holiness and the Gospel in operation.</p>	<p><i>Does this make you think we might have more in common with Jesus Christ than we ever thought?</i></p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Personal experience</p>	<p><i>Since I came back to the Lord 27 years ago, I studied incessantly over the first 20 years. I learned a lot but nothing seemed to help me live the life the way the Bible said it could be. Then I read something that made my spirit leap inside me. Could this be true?!?!?! I sat with someone for many hours – someone who knew these truths and he confirmed with me that these things were indeed true. As I studied over three more years I learned (intellectually) some of the detailed doctrine – the last 4 years the Lord has been teaching me the experience of these things.</i></p>	<p><i>I am still very much a learner. But I am sufficiently on the path to know what God intended and what is possible.</i></p>

14	<p>How does one learn to live this way? God's people do not seem to have considered God's use of adversity in our lives - we need to do that in order to work with God rather than against Him.</p>	<p>How all this is done would take much time to explain – that will come in later studies. Are there consequences and problems – yes- many - perhaps summarized by two scriptures.</p> <p>Romans 5:3-4. - And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but <u>we also rejoice in our sufferings</u>, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because <u>God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit</u>, whom he has given us.</p> <p>Philippians 3:8-10 - I consider everything a loss compared to <u>the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things</u>. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,</p>	<p>One needs to know the cost</p> <p>Salt and light don't come cheap!</p> <p>But the eternal glory is greater - and - it is how God intended we live.</p>
15	<p>Remember what Hannah Whithall Smith said about this life of Christ within.</p>	<p><u>"All the dealings of God with the soul of the believer are in order to bring it into oneness with Himself. This divine union was the glorious purpose in the heart of God for His people before the foundation of the world. It was the mystery hid from ages and generations. It was accomplished in the death (and resurrection) of Christ.</u></p> <p><i>It has been made known by the scriptures; and is realized as an actual experience by many of God's dear children. But not by all. It is true of all, and God has not hidden it or made it hard, but some hearts are too unbelieving. God calls upon all to abandon themselves to Him, that He may work in them all the good pleasure of His will..... God is the possession of even the weakest believer in Christ, so that it is not a new thing to ask for, but only to realize that which you already have."</i></p>	<p>Notice this - only to realize that which you already have. The divine attributes provided us by God are great... Etc etc These scriptures from the word of God really really are.... an Invitation to Live – in the way God always intended.</p> <p><u>So – where or to Whom are you going to seek life for yourself?</u></p>

This is the second in a series of articles to further outline and provide resource for believers to move towards Fullness of Life in Christ.

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Availability. This teaching is for use in one to one teaching or in small groups, by those who know this experience for themselves, or by those open to the Spirit to learn together.