

Colossians012129-042411  
Bridge of Hope  
April 24, 2011

## “The Call of Hope”

We have been talking about the call of hope over the last couple of weeks. First we talked about The Call of Hope as we shared that God is extending another call for this family to find their hope in Him. Jesus is our hope! And last week on Palm Sunday we started a look at The Hope of Glory. We began in Colossians and then went through several passages from the book of Romans. What we discovered is that Christ in you is the hope of glory. Yeah, it is Jesus Christ living in you through a personal relationship He has with you.

What we discovered is that Christ in you is about living life in the new way Jesus said to live. It is a life that responds to the call of hope. Jesus called His disciples to live in a hope found in Him. It is the same kind of life the apostles called the early church believers to live; a life that was different from what they had lived before, a life directed by hope found in Christ.

Today we want to continue our look at Colossians 1:21-29 as we discover not only the Hope of Glory as it relates to you as an individual, but also to how it relates to the you in community with other believers. What we want to do is help each of us discover the unique call Jesus extended to all His disciple to the Life of Hope. On this Easter Sunday we are going to talk about how this call to hope can be lived out in an every day kind of way.

Let's take a look at our text once again and then go to work from there. We read in

**Colossians 1:21-29** (NIV) *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

*Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

*We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

It is interesting that Paul said it is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory. The word we translate as “in you” also carries this context of “among you.” And with the idea of among you is a component of community. In other words, the Hope of Glory is not only about Christ in you as an individual, but also is about Christ among you as a community of believers.

The Life of Hope then is best seen when it is being lived out with other people who love and serve Jesus Christ. When we, as the family of God can understand that we are made to live in community, we understand how that community communicates much about the Hope of Glory, Jesus. The death and resurrection was about much more than you as an individual person becoming His child or follower. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was also about the founding of a family, a community of believers through whom Jesus would reveal Himself to the world. What is really supposed to make Christians different is the way we live in relationship to one another. It is Christ among us that gives us our unique identity.

Let's take the next few moments to talk about this in terms of what Paul was thinking when writing to the church in Colossi.

**THE LIFE OF HOPE** is about the **CHRIST AMONG YOU – THE COMMUNITY.**

**It is the hope of glory expressed and lived through community with other disciples of Jesus Christ.**

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN TERMS OF THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS TO SAY “CHRIST AMONG YOU?”**
  - Again the best way to answer this question it to do what we did with Christ in you in terms of you as an individual, we simply tell the story from the scripture itself.
  - Ephesians is a great book for explaining what the thought Christ in you as the Messianic Community actually means.
  - We are going to skip through some passages through this book, so if you really want to understand this you will need to go home and read the book of Ephesians.
  - Ephesians is about the creation or development of a people who are neither Jew or Gentile, they are Christians. And this group was called to a life of hope that was different from the way the others around them lived.
  
- **THE CHURCH – CHRIST’S BODY**

**Ephesians 1:22-23 (NLT)** *God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And **the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.***

  - Christ among us means we are the body of Christ and we should reflect Him in the way we live.
  - This means that Jesus is the head over everything and this reality benefits the church, it makes this community unique and different because He fills us with Himself.
  - The community reflects Him best when we are together.
  - Christ in our Community is about Jesus being among us as much as His being in us.
  
- **THE CHURCH – DISPLAYS GOD**

**Ephesians 3:10 (NLT)** *God's purpose in all this was **to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.***

  - Christ among us means that it was God’s intent to use us to show His wisdom.
  - A wisdom that is intended to be displayed to the rulers and authorities beyond this natural world. Did you get that? How we live in community impacts the spiritual world around us.

- **THE CHURCH – HEALTHY & GROWING**

**Ephesians 4:1-8, 11-16** (NLT) *Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg **you to lead** a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.*

*However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. . . . Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

- Christ among us is about the life we live as a group and living it worthy of the calling we have received, the calling to be His likeness so that others want to know Him as well.
- What it means is things like unity, peace, forgiveness and patience; they are evident in the way we talk about one another and treat each other.
- Christ in our Community tells us He has placed some of Himself in each one of us and we need each other so that we can know and experience all of God.
- This means we love one another enough to speak the truth to each another in love.
- It means we as a group grow to be more and more like Jesus because each part is learning to do what Jesus gave them to do.
- Christ in our Community is about helping each other grow to be mature, healthy, and full of love.

- **THE CHURCH – IMITATORS OF GOD**

**Ephesians 4:21-5:2** (NLT) *Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

- Take notice that the language Paul uses in describing the new creation is all about how we live in relationship with one another.

*So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.*

*If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*

- Christ among us means when people look at us and see how we interact with one another, they see the new nature in us that is created to be like Jesus.
- It means we stop using the foul language of saying things that are hurtful and destructive or abusive because it grieves the Holy Spirit when we do.
- This is about being void of things like bitterness, rage, anger and slander and replacing it with kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness all because it is the way Jesus has treated us.

*And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

*Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

- Christ in our Community is living a life filled with love as we follow the example of Christ as He offered Himself as a sacrifice for us.

- **THE CHURCH – FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Ephesians 5:15-21 (NLT) So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

- Again, Paul describes Christ among us in the language of how we interrelate with one another instead of how we stand as an individual in Christ.
- Christ among us means we live carefully so that we are not foolish, but making the most of each opportunity that comes.
- It is about being thoughtful and considerate, what you do impacts the body of Christ, this is what the Lord's will is, to be thoughtful and considerate.
- This is about us being filled with the Holy Spirit and showing who we are by encouraging one another through the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Yeah, we need to sing and encourage one another through praise for Jesus.
- We, as His community express a thankful and appreciative heart for the people He places in our lives. They help us. They grow us.
- Christ in our Community is about submission to one another because we reverence Jesus through the way we live in regard to each another.

- **When we talk about being called to the Life of Hope we are really talking about the transformation of a group of people called the Church, the Messianic Community, as we see Christ in and among us.**

- **As we are changed, sanctified (made holy), and being conformed into the likeness of Jesus the hope of glory is seen best in us!**

Conclusion: On this Easter Sunday we call you to experience and express the Life of Hope. This life is seen best in how you love one another. It is found when we discover how Christ among you as a community best reflects the glory of God and tells the world that Jesus really is alive.

We are created to live in community with other people, we are like this because we are made to be like Jesus. And so the image of God cannot be fully borne out in one person alone, it takes each of us coming together in His love to reveal who God is. Being in Christ means being in Christ with others who are also in Christ. This is my identity; it is our identity. The Church is the body of Christ and we should not live disembodied as Christians. The life of hope is best lived when we live it with other people who love and serve Jesus. Jesus is the hope of glory and He is best revealed when Christ among you is seen. On this day of celebration where we remember the resurrection of our Lord, let us consider how we may encourage and spur one another to love and good deeds! On this Easter Sunday let us set our hearts to be the Church that is alive and vibrate with Christ among you. Let us determine to reflect the glory of God the best way that we can, together in Him.

Happy Easter!

As we close we want to invite you to be part of this community called Bridge of Hope. It starts by being a part of the Church which happens when we become disciples of Jesus. We encourage you to take the next step and begin a walk with Christ in you so that Christ can be among you.