

Monday, December 29, 2008

The mystery has been revealed.

I love that. We looked this weekend at the truth of the fact that the mystery is the message of the gospel. It is the truth that God loved us so much, He came down in the person of Jesus and took on flesh and died in our place.

Can you imagine living before that happened?

We understand Genesis 3:15 and 12:3 much differently because of when and where we live. We are able to see with greater clarity the truths that have been foretold.

The revelation of the mystery of the gospel comes as Christ lived among us as the visual expression of the thoughts of God. That is what is meant by Him being the Word (John 1).

Because of the gospel we have opportunities. The first and most important is to enter into a restored relationship with God.

Have you taken advantage of that opportunity?

Do you know for sure that Jesus Christ is the Savior of your life personally?

Have you placed your trust in Him alone?

Is Christ in you?

It is not enough to know about the mystery, you must have taken action on your knowledge. It is about relationship. If you have been around Calvary long, you have heard that before. Have you entered into a real and genuine and personal relationship with Almighty God through Christ? If not, then you have failed the test (2 Corinthians 13:5) and Christ is not in you and you are going it alone.

That is not God's best for your life. God longs for your relationship with Him to be restored so that He is there in every moment for you. He knows those things that you have done that have missed His mark and He longs for you to take advantage of the opportunity to have those things forgiven and to begin a brand new life with Him--rebirth!

It is not possible for you to please Him any other way (Romans 8:8).

Christ came to reveal the truth that God loves us and he demonstrated that by living a perfect life and dying in our place.

That only applies to you as you accept the offer as your own.

Is Christ in you?

If you are not sure--be sure. Read 1 John 5:11-12.

Do you know that you have eternal life? Read John 5:13. God has revealed the mystery so that you may know that you have eternal life and so that you may know that Christ is in you and so that you may pass the test!

Talk to Him. If you already know--thank Him and tell others, if you do not know--ask Him to come into your life. Confess your sins and turn from your old ways. Live a life of new birth taking advantage of the opportunity presented to you. If this raises any questions for you or you are not sure--call me today.

Family Discussion Question:

Do we each know that we have eternal life?

Tuesday, December 30, 2008

Would you please read our text from this week? Colossians 1:25-2:3. In verse 29 of chapter 1, Paul says that he struggles with all the energy of Christ that is working powerfully in him.

What do you think that means? How can I be sure that I am struggling with the power of Christ instead of my own power?

In Colossians 4:17 Paul tells Archippus to see to it that he completes the work he has received in the Lord.

In Ephesians 2:10 Paul says that we are each given work to do that God has prepared in advance.

In 1 Corinthians 15:58 Paul says to give yourself fully to the work of the Lord because that labor is not in vain.

You may remember that Christ tells us to place our burdens on Him and place His yoke upon us (Matthew 11:28-29).

It is there that He tells us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

So...

How are you struggling? What is your labor like?

Has this been a year of struggle for you? Have you been struggling in the Lord?

The truth is that we can get easily distracted from that. We get wrapped up in the temporary needs that can overwhelm us. We work hard and never seem to get ahead.

We are living in an interesting time. A new president with a new party and new ideas and a financial situation that is very unstable. Jobs are hard to come by and it is beginning to feel that there may be some pretty significant changes in what we have come to expect as normal.

So how do we struggle in that environment and that culture?

In a temporary world that is constantly changing it is nice to know that we can focus on labor for a Lord who does not change (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17).

Does your labor have an eternal purpose?

We have been placed here for a purpose and that purpose is eternal. While we are here we are given temporary things to do, but to bring glory to God and to be true to our purpose we need to do those things with an eternal mindset.

The magnificent mystery is that as you have trusted Him, Christ is in you (Colossians 1:27).

Are you continually aware of His presence? What if He stepped out for a while? Would you be aware that He was gone?

In order to struggle with His energy, you need to know He is there. You have to see His hand on the plow. You have to pull with Him in the direction He is going.

What direction is He going? What is His work? (John 4:34-38)

Family Discussion Question:

Are we struggling with His power in us as reapers of the harvest?

Wednesday, December 31, 2008

The last day of the year. Remember that we will have a potluck tonight at 5, a service at 6:30 and a contemporary service at 11 followed by a meal at 12!

Can you remember the last day of last year? I find that isn't always that easy to do. I have a slight advantage because I was able to look back at the Digging Deeper I wrote for last December 31st and it reminded me of where I was and what I was thinking. Are you a person who journals?

Do you take the time to record your thoughts each day or each week? It will help you to see those areas that God has worked in your life.

Do you recall our verses from this year? Take a moment to look them up in your Bible.

Psalm 46:10; Isaiah 45:22; Psalm 51:10,12

In what ways do you know God better today than you did one year ago? If we are on a journey in our relationship with Him then we should have experienced His presence in new ways in our lives and we should have come to new realizations of who He is as He has revealed Himself to us. It is good to take a moment and think that through. Write some things down. Perhaps take the time to answer these questions:

- 1) What were some specific needs in my life that God met this year? (How was I still before God?)
- 2) What were some hard things that God helped me through?
- 3) What new things did I learn about God's character?
- 4) How did I find myself closer to God by serving Him?
- 5) What things did I ask God to help me decide? How did He answer?
- 6) In what ways did God use me to help someone get closer to Him this year?
- 7) In what ways am I more of a worshipper of God now than I was at the beginning of the year?
- 8) What were some specific ways that God proved Himself worthy of my praise and trust?

No one knows what 2009 holds for us, but we know that God is faithful and that He will be with us (Matthew 28:20, Deuteronomy 31:6). Reviewing how God has been faithful in the past will allow you to stand strong in faith in the future.

Thank you, Father, for Your steadfast hand in our lives this year!

Family Discussion Question:

How do we know God better?

Thursday, January 1, 2009

First day of a new year. Have any resolutions?

If yesterday was a day of review, today is a day of goals.

What will you do with this year?

What does God have in mind for you? Can you hear His voice?

He has promised several things that we should consider before setting goals or listing resolutions.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 1:1-3, Matthew 6:33, Psalm 37:4,
Psalm 127:1, Psalm 145:17-19, 2 Corinthians 9:8, 1 Peter 5:7

As you look over these verses and as you pray over them what do you hear God saying?

Let's take the time to answer a few questions today. If you have never done this before, if you add it with yesterday's observations, you will have the beginning of a journal!

- 1) What can I do this year with what I learned about God last year?
- 2) What new steps do I need to take to know God even more?
- 3) What specific steps can I take to bring honor and glory to God in my work or school?
- 4) Is there a habit that I have that keeps me from experiencing God's best? What steps do I need to take to allow Him to change that in my life?
- 5) Is there an area of service that God is leading me to get involved in? What steps do I need to take to get started in that service?
- 6) Is there a person or persons that God is leading me to tell about Him?

Perhaps there are other things that God is saying to you. Know that God has marvelous plans for you for '09! He has gone ahead and prepared incredible things for you to do, no matter what your circumstance.

More than anything else, be sure that God is much more concerned about why you are doing what you are doing than He is with what you are doing (Psalm 51:16-17). God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). His eyes are searching over the whole earth to strengthen those who are fully committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9).

So what is your desire for this New Year? Set your heart on things above (Matthew 6:19-21) and set your goals with an eternal mindset and get ready to see how God works through you!

Family Discussion Question:

What does God have for us this year?

Friday, January 2, 2009

The gift that keeps on giving.

Remember that phrase for the advertisements a few years ago? As I recall, it was referring to diamonds as being a gift that continually gives. I am not sure that anyone knows exactly what that means as it more than likely means different things to different people.

But, as we think of this phrase in light of the magnificent mystery, I think we will see just one more truth that can help us in this New Year.

Part of the "gift" of the magnificent mystery is the Holy Spirit indwelling us (Ephesians 1:13).

This is the gift to us that truly keeps on giving. How?

Please read Galatians 5:16-26 with me.

As I read this passage, I am overtaken by the contrast. There is a difference between one who has the Spirit of God and one who does not. It is clear from this passage.

Which of the lists identify you?

Do you see that if you have the gift of the Spirit that He keeps on working in your life? That is what the meaning is behind the fruit of the Spirit. When you are in tune with Christ in your life in the Person of the Holy Spirit you will reflect Him--His nature.

We have been the recipients of some beautiful moons in recent weeks. A couple of weeks ago there was a full moon that was 14 percent bigger in our sky and 30 percent brighter than some other full moons during the year. It glowed brightly and illuminated the darkness of the night--but without any of its own light. It reflected the light of the sun.

How can we brightly reflect the light of the Son? By allowing His nature and His character to shine from us. We can illuminate the darkness of a world that is not seeking God by revealing the light of the truth that there is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control that is supernaturally bursting out of us.

That is the gift that keeps on giving. Are you reflecting these attributes of God in your life? Just as the moon cannot produce light you cannot produce these attributes--they are the attributes of God in you because of the Spirit in you.

When your life is at the darkest moment will you allow this light to shine? When you encounter darkness in your world will you let this light reflect from you?

I look forward to those nights that the moon floods the darkness of night with the light of the day. Do people look forward to when you appear on the scene because you are bringing the light of the Son to their darkness? Let the gift keep giving through you. Be in the light, bear the light.

Family Discussion Question:

Are we reflecting the light of God in our lives?



Pastor Chuck Cervenka

December 29, 2008 - January 2, 2009



Hidden... **The**
Magnificent
Mystery
treasure
REVEALED
(the **OPPORTUNITY** factor)
Christ in you!

A Disciplemaking Tool
DIGGING
DEEPER

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