



Life Group Study Notes

“Covenant of Blessing: Christ In You, The Hope of Glory”

Ps. Bruce Fidler - May 15, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What's one thing you are hoping to happen this week (or month)?
- If you had to travel for a long time, who would you pick to care for your important personal matters?
- Why are little children so captivated when they first realize they are seeing their image in a mirror?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Hope is precious. It is food for the soul, giving us strength and courage for our journey. It's not good to live without hope, to be crushed in spirit and despairing of life. Or to live with vain hope, which eventually only disappoints and wounds. Even many Christians have falsely hoped they would be spared from pain and suffering in this life. This isn't true in a world in which sin still bears its marks in our lives and in the creation around us, sometimes as old wounds not yet healed, and sometimes as new wounds freshly inflicted.

The Bible teaches that God offers us hope. Not just hope for this life, but especially hope for life beyond this life. This hope is not merely the hope of immortality, but of a quality of life, of being and doing and relating that is so superior and fulfilling to what we know now that we have difficulty imagining what it will be like. This hope is what permeates the apostle Paul's writings including his letter to the Christians in Colossae, and it is this hope that can encourage us today.

COLOSSIANS 1:13–27 teaches us the following truths (among others):

- The Son of God is the glorious creator!
- The Son of God is also the glorious redeemer!
- The Son of God not only created us and reconciled us to the Father. He intends to present us holy and blameless and above reproach to the Father.

Towards the end of this passage, Paul writes (ESV): *(I) became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the (nations) are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

WHAT IS THIS HOPE OF GLORY?

- It centers on God recovering, restoring, and fulfilling his original design and purpose for humanity and this creation.

GENESIS 1:26–28 (ESV) *Then God said, “Let us make man in our **image**, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own **image**, in the **image** of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them.*

- **Divine images** were understood in the Ancient Near East to possess the following qualities:
 - **Embodiment of the divine life**
 - **“Animated” by the divine breath/spirit**
 - **Manifestation of the divine presence & glory**
 - **Mediation of the divine mind & will**

God’s intention was to fill the earth with his glory through his living image! But this image was marred through the Great Rebellion when original humanity rejected God’s authority and sought to live independent of our Creator. Our ensuing human condition was permanently corrupted, so that we have all become sinful, incapable of restoring God’s image to its original beauty within us. No amount of self-effort, including religion, will succeed.

But the Son of God came into this world, joined himself to human nature, lived a perfect obedient life of devotion to the Father, went to the cross and bore our sins in his body unto death. He paid the full, just penalty for our sin, so that the holy justice of God was completely satisfied. Three days later he rose from the grave, proving his identity and verifying God’s acceptance of his sufferings as the full payment for our sins. God’s favor now rests upon everyone who acknowledges their sin and guilt before God, who accepts God’s appointed Savior, Jesus Christ as the legitimate Lord of their lives, and who turns from all false idols to worship, serve, and obey the true God. Through the gifts of his Son and of his Spirit, God promises to restore his image in us, and to fill a renewed earth with his glory through his living image.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:49 (ESV) *Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.* ROMANS 8:29 (ESV) *For those whom (God) foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* COLOSSIANS 3:9–10 (ESV) *(Y)ou have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.* EPHESIANS 4:23–24 (ESV) *(You were taught in Christ) to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY is God’s promise that one day we will be fully conformed into the image of his Son, which means we will together embody God’s life, be animated by the fulness of God’s Spirit, fully manifest God’s presence and glory, and mediate God’s mind and will to one another and the creation around us. All of this will take place in our resurrected bodies on a renewed earth when Jesus returns to this world. Then the whole earth will finally be filled with the glory of God through his living image.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- In light of this, how should you live?
- How are you preparing for glory?
- Who are you bringing with you?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to fill your heart with hope through a greater understanding of his promise of glory.
- Ask God to increase your sanctification as preparation for his greater glory.
- Ask God to make you more effective in bringing others to the hope of the Gospel.