



ter. **“We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another”** (2 Cor. 3:18). Practically it means we think as Christ thought, say what Christ said, and do what Christ did. [See also, John 15:1-8; 17:26; Rom. 8:10,29; Eph. 3:19; 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 2:6,24,27,28; 3:24; 4:16]

us” (1 John 4:12). Amazingly we are the ones who now make known the invisible God! How? We reflect the character Christ revealed to us.

Therefore Christ vitally lives in us when we carefully follow His will, **“He who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him”** (1 John 3:24). This requires a continuous pursuit of His charac-

This is the purpose of our existence! We are created to display the image of our Creator, but sin marred that portrait beyond recognition. However, through Jesus Christ the sin is removed, eternal life is restored, and we learn, like teetering toddlers, to once again walk like our Father. May we **“be filled with all the fullness of God”** (Eph. 3:19).

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**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**

ISSUE

17.4

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 25,
2015



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

“Christ Lives in Me”

By Tim Jennings

Can you summarize the purpose of the Bible story in just three words? Paul did. He said it is all about “Christ in you.” The purpose of the gospel is captured in this powerfully pithy statement, **“God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”** (Col. 1:27). Christ living in us is the grand goal of God’s redemptive work. Our salvation hinges on the reality of Christ living in us. It is why Paul described his personal ambition by saying, **“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”** (Gal. 2:20).

God living in His people is a major Biblical theme, but what does it mean? The Biblical teaching on this subject differs significantly from the mystic concept that each person is a god and will ultimately be absorbed into the full essence of the divine. In the Bible a human is not a God, and people maintain their personality throughout eternity. In addition, the passages that talk about “God living in us” do not always require a literal understanding, as though we are like a Russian nested doll with God residing inside one of the layers.

Creation

To understand the importance of God living in us we must return to the account of creation. When God first contemplated the formation of humanity He said, **“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...so God created man in His own image”** (Gen. 1:26, 27). The purpose of our humanity is to bear the divine image! However, sin entered and spoiled the picture. Pain and death snuffed out life and rebellion replaced righteousness. God’s



beautiful self-portrait on the canvas of humanity was soiled by sinful hands.

Then one day the Artist Himself entered our humanity, and for the first time we saw the image of God in flawless clarity. His grace and truth revealed the divine nature as never before, because He was the “exact image” of God in the flesh (John 1:14,17-18; Heb. 1:3). Jesus was the perfect expression of God’s original portrait of humanity. The purpose of God’s redemptive work is to make us look like Him – Christ in you!

Fellowship

The stains of sin and death must first be removed from our lives before the divine image can shine through. How this is accomplished is the message of the gospel. Jesus removed the ugliness of sin and death by His atoning sacrifice and glorious resurrection. As a result, humanity is able to reflect God’s image.

This is possible because fellowship with God is restored. In fact, many of the passages that talk about “Christ living in us” emphasize the reality of our fellowship with Him. For example, Jesus said, **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me”** (John 15:4). Jesus is emphasizing the necessity of our relationship with Him, not a supernatural indwelling.

Similarly, John wrote in his first letter, **“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God”** (1

John 4:15). The acceptance and application of the gospel places a person in fellowship with God. The phrase, “God abides in him” describes the intimacy of that relationship in much the same way as the phrase **“in Christ”** does hundreds of times in the New Testament. [See also, John 6:56; 14:20; 17:20,21,23; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:22; 3:17; Col. 3:11; 2 Cor. 6:16; 13:5; 1 John 3:24; 4:13]

The wonderful truth is this: If “Christ lives in me” that means I have fellowship with God! I belong to Him. I bear His image. He made me sinless through the blood of the cross. He gave me eternal life through the power of the empty tomb (Rom. 6:1-6). “Christ lives in me” is all about my identity! I’m no longer a flawed sculpture cast out with the rejects of humanity. My Redeemer remade me into His image.

Formation

I must then increasingly reflect Christ’s character in my life. This requires a vigorous, lifelong pursuit to know Jesus. Thankfully, the New Testament record contains the very **“mind of Christ”** (1 Cor. 2:16). In God’s revelation I discover how Jesus thought and acted, and these truths become the template of my life until Christ is formed in me (Gal. 4:19).



A significant number of the “God lives in me” passages describe the formation of Christ’s character in His followers. A startling example is found in 1 John 4:12 which begins, **“No one has seen God at any time.”** This is a clear reference to the same phrase at the beginning of John’s gospel (John 1:18). However in the gospel it is Jesus who made the “unseen God” known, but to our astonishment the statement in John’s letter reads, **“No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in**