

Windows into the Gospel

Ken Walker October 31st 2010 - Knoxfield Church of Christ, Melbourne Australia

Imagine with me if you please that this large plastic ball, represents the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (A John 3:16 overview if you like) As I remove the shutters from each window, you will see that they have something written on the window, reflecting what is inside the ball. Today we are going to look at some of the precious aspects of the Gospel.

One of these windows may provide a spark of life that opens your understanding, even if you are already a believer. Most of us will remember our first flicker of light was the beginning of our interest in spiritual things. I well remember first ray of light – In 1979, Bishop Fulton Sheen, from New York, said that Christ's substitutionary death made it possible for any man or woman to restore their lives to what God originally intended. That really hit me – that Jesus had suffered for me.

We now all need that continued revelation in our daily lives and I pray that some may receive more out of this wonderful Gospel. If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, (or not sure you are) then I am going to invite you to look through these windows with me, to look at some of the incredible aspects of the gospel. For you believers, what we will look at here may provide a much deeper understanding. During this time (and after) all of you can rely on the fact that the Spirit of God knows how to speak what He wants you to know. So listen (to Him) to catch what might be for you. What is inside this Gospel ball is life-changing.

There are deep mysteries here. Point to E.G. How was it that when Jesus was on the cross, we were also? How is that the life of the God who created the universe, can also live within us? How is it that God can form the life of His Son within us? Explain that to the scientific mind!! These are many deep mysteries, profound, yet simple enough to be known by a child. Pause. *I am a little surprised to be standing here today. However, the workings of the Spirit of God that David experiences, has led to steps of faith and trust by him. It's the type that needs to be commonplace in our lives. As Oswald Chambers wrote in a recent devotion, "this looks mad, but I am going to venture out on Thy Word".*

As always, in any study or sermon, the Spirit of God is my guide and your teacher.

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Here is an example of one of the Window (No 5 – Christ is your Life.)

A graphics of the seven windows of the Gospel, discussed in this sermon, is available in a separate file, which you can download if you wish.



Point	This window says:	The scripture says:	Development, illustrations, linkages
1	What's the most well know verse in the Bible?	<i>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.</i>	When we speak of the Gospel we tend to think of John 3:16. This verses says (Read verse John 3:16) That is a great summary of what God has done through Jesus Christ. However, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a multi-faceted gem and there are just so many aspects it. So let's look into the first of these windows.
2	Window 1 Jesus Christ is alive! Acts 2:22-24	<i>Peter told us: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. (Acts 2:22-24)</i>	This window says ---- Jesus is alive!!!! We tend to forget that – and the world does not believe it – but it is one of the foundations of our faith – JESUS IS ALIVE. <u>The resurrected Christ is all powerful in His glorified body.</u> No other religion can make this claim, BUT AS CHRISTIANS - WE CAN!! And we do claim it, except when we forget. As Paul actually said - without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we might as well eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Moreover, if Christ was not raised, then our faith and our preaching are worthless. But we know He was raised – Read Acts 2:22-24 When we visited the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, we noticed over the tomb opening was a sign – “He is not here – He is risen”. On that our hope rests. So that's the first window. Let's look at the second window, which is equally amazing.
3	Window 2 So are we alive! Jesus has given life to our mortal bodies	<i>The previous window said Jesus is alive. This window says that SO ARE WE!</i> <i>Read the scripture - Romans 8:11 "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,</i> <i>He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you".</i>	The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, also raised us. Life from the Spirit of God is given to our mortal bodies – and notice what it says – THROUGH THE SPIRIT <u>THAT DWELLS IN YOU.</u> That happened to us when we committed our life to Christ; when we were regenerated by that same Spirit of God. And if we don't fly away at the rapture of the saints and we do die and are buried on this earth, then we will again be raised at the resurrection of the saints. That's an iron clad guarantee, better than any life assurance policy you can buy on earth. The next window is special to me.

<p>4</p>	<p>Window 3</p> <p>Jesus Christ is in you (if you are a believer)</p> <p>2 Corinthians 13:5</p>	<p><i>"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. <u>Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?</u>—unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified".</i></p> <p><i>We are going to come back to this theme – Jesus Christ is in you – soon.</i></p>	<p>My daughter made her confession of faith at a Christian camp when she was 14. She told me later that she thought she would try it to see if it worked.</p> <p>Some years later, I could see the Spirit of God operating within her – I had noticed this over a period of months. One day when leaving I asked her to get her Bible, and to look up 2 Corinthians 13:5. We read the verse which says. <i>Read Verse</i> Not fully understanding she said - So?</p> <p>So I said to her, "Did you not know that Jesus Christ is living in you"? I see the Spirit of God living in you. She said, "Oh" And I left. However, as the weeks passed, the work of the Spirit was magnified and she got to recognize Him for herself. The point of the story is that WHEN SHE WAS TOLD THE TRUTH, she began to believe for herself. AND THE TRUTH SET HER FREE.</p> <p>A great window don't you think. "Do you now know that Jesus Christ is in you"? Unless of course you do not believe. But if you do believe, He is in you.</p> <p>You could meditate on that verse and if you are regenerate, that truth will also set you free. However, Paul warns that if you are not saved, you cannot know this truth that makes you free.</p> <p>Which leads us now to window No 4</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Window 4</p> <p>Jesus Christ lives His life in and through us!</p> <p>Galations 2:20</p>	<p><i>"I have been crucified with Christ; <u>it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;</u> and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me".</i></p>	<p>This window is probably my favorite verse in the Bible. This one says it all!</p> <p>IT IS NO LONGER YOU WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST WHO LIVES IN YOU. Why is that?</p> <p>Because you have been crucified with Christ. When Christ died, you died. Sure this is a mystery-but one I have believed for a long time. You were crucified – Christ now lives in you.</p> <p>It is on that basis we come to window No 5</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>Window 5</p> <p>Christ is our life!</p> <p>Colossians 3:4</p> <p>"When Christ (who is our life) appears, then you also will appear with Him".</p>	<p><i>Finally, Paul gets to the ultimate point in our relationship with Christ. Read Verse Although these 4 words are a parenthesis, they are some of the most important words in the NT.</i></p> <p><i>Jesus Christ is our life – remember we have been crucified with Christ and it is His life that can reign in us. Sometimes we can miss the truth of the NT because we can't believe that it could be so simple and true. (particularly if we assess it based on our behaviour – judging yourself on your behaviour is foolish – judge by what God has said)</i></p> <p><i>It does take time to understand, to absorb and we need to have the Lord affirm it for us. But if He has not yet done that, the statement is still true – because it is affirmed by the rest of scripture, particularly in Paul's writings. But now, let's reflect a little more on this mystery. (Link to next point and Window 6) Paul refers 14 times, in various ways, to The Mystery of the Gospel. So there is a mystery!! – All these aspects of the Gospel are distinct elements of this mystery, which will click together in window No 6</i></p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Window 6</p> <p>The mystery is explained</p> <p>Paul explains it for us in Colossians 1:24-27</p> <p>Paul writes</p> <p><i>"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for</i></p>	<p><i><u>you, to fulfill (preach) the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.</u></i></p> <p><i>To them (and us) <u>God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: <u>which is Christ in you, the hope of glory</u></u>".</i></p> <p><i>Continue here</i></p> <p><i>To understand this sixth window, it is easier to understand when shortened to the essential words.</i></p> <p><i>Let me explain.</i></p> <p><i>Paul became a minister to preach the Word of God; i.e. the mystery...which is Christ in you.</i></p>	<p>So Paul is saying that the Word of God is the mystery that he preached; and that mystery is Christ in you. A profound statement Isn't it amazing?! The very God who created the universe, is the very same God whose presence lives within each regenerate believer.</p> <p>Notice that Paul said that this mystery was hidden, until it was revealed to him just after A.D. 40. Let me explain. Yes, the O.T prophets knew that there was a Messiah to come and that we would have a new heart, but they did not know that this Messiah, this God, would be a Life and a Spirit contained within our physical beings. <i>(They were used to a God up there, or a representative of God in human form, but not to the idea of an invisible presence, living within them)</i> That is what Paul meant when he said it had been hidden until revealed to Him.</p> <p>These windows to the gospel we have looked at today, teach quite clearly that the Spirit and the life of Christ dwells within us, which has made us into the new creations that we are. That is what real Christianity is to me, because that is what the Bible says – and found to be true in practice. Jesus Christ has provided His life to us, because we have given back to Him, the life that He gave us in the first place. Is that not the wonder of wonders!?!?!?</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>Pastor David's references to Oneness and Christ being formed in us</p>	<p>Over the past year or more, David has often referred to John 17 where Jesus said we would be ONE with the Father and with Him – the issue of Oneness in John 17 and Paul saying that he prayed for the Galatians, that the life of Christ might be formed in them. These are just other ways of expressing this unity with the Godhead that we have looked at this morning.</p> <p>Look again at this ball – this Gospel</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>What's at the centre of this Gospel (ball)?</p> <p>Just a Cross! (and it's empty)</p> <p>And</p> <p>An empty tomb!</p> <p>For He is risen</p>	<p>Our eyes are a little dimmed and we cannot fully see this cross or the glory it has produced.</p> <p><i>READ Scriptures 1 Cor 1:18</i></p> <p><i>Paul does not mince His words</i></p> <p><i>"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God".</i></p>	<p>NOTICE "...to us who are being saved, this cross is the power of God".</p> <p>Without this Cross, this world would have been subject to more of God's wrath long ago. I have often pondered that, over all the generations since Christ, whether civilization would have been destroyed by the evil of men, if indeed Christ had failed in His mission.</p> <p>But Jesus was victorious and so are we! We live because of Him! How great should be our thankfulness!</p> <p>So exactly what did the cross achieve?</p>

10

So - what did the cross achieve for us?

Window 7

Forgiveness for sins AND Resurrection Life

Why did Jesus Christ die? And what was the significance of His resurrection?

We are all familiar with the fact that He died that our sins might be forgiven. He paid the price and His blood was shed that we might be cleansed. Matt 26:28

He also died so that He could be resurrected to also provide us with new life. There was an exchange of lives. First - How did we get to lose our old life? Paul tells us: *Romans 6:5 "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that -*

Paul tells us. Romans 6:6 "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin".

It is sometimes important to use the KJV so the Greek meanings of some words can be examined. In this case the meaning of the words Old Man is important. It means the old nature from Adam, which was corrupted by his sin. See unit 10 in this series for more on that point.

SO For he who has died has been freed from sin". Romans 6:7 : (that's Christ and us both) Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, So, Paul can then say - reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So that's how we lost our old life -

How did we get our new life? We know we have new life because.. *Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, Paul writes "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So, because we participated in the crucifixion, we also participated in the resurrection - to give us this new life we have talked about*

So Paul can say.. Romans 8:11 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Jesus took our old life (bringing it to death on the cross) and out of His resurrection came new life for us. Paul tells us we are saved by His life - in other words, out of the resurrection of Jesus. (*Romans 5:10*)

Remember, that Jesus said that He was the bread that came down from heaven to give life to the world - John 6:33 We were now free from the nature of wrath, as we would have been judged by God.

<p>11</p>	<p>Here is an illustration of Paul's theology</p>	<p>Imagine you are a house. When you were built, you were built over a huge rat's nest – when you were born you were born with sin in your foundations. You can blame your parents if you like, but eventually it goes right back to Adam</p> <p>Adam was created in the image of God, as was Eve. However, their offspring were not created in God's image but in the image of Adam. This is explained when Seth was born – That Seth was born in the likeness and image of Adam, not God's. This also must have applied to Cain and Able, both being born after the Fall, so born into corruption. Genesis 5 tells that story.</p> <p>You don't like rats, so an exterminator get rid of the rats in your house – and the rats go, but because the foundations are huge breeding ground, they come back. So the house has to be demolished! So Jesus comes along and God arranges for the demolishing of your house. (Your life)</p> <p>But He also destroyed the foundation, hammers a cross into the ground and makes new foundations, based on the word of truth. Then He built a new house – a new creation – which is what YOU are. No more rats because the nest is gone. No more sin from Adam's Fall, because Jesus death killed it off.</p> <p>We do get the odd rat from neighbours, or from your flesh, or pride of life, or allowing the world into your house. Thank God such sins can be put under the blood by confession and repentance. Your new house is well fitted out, with all sorts of spiritual protections like angles, and warning bells like the Spirit of God, and with spots where God is especially present and the whole house glows with the light of God.</p> <p>No rat's nest from Adam's Fall, but a new creation from Jesus resurrection and our re-birth.</p> <p>That was God's plan. That's what God has done.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Is there anything that can get in the way of living this way?</p>	<p><i>Many things can operate against us</i></p> <p><i>The main one definitely is, not knowing the truths that the scriptures speaks on these things. I would urge you to meditate on these things until the Lord presses His revelation button for you.</i></p> <p><i>If we don't know these things by the revelation of the Spirit, we will try to live by the law, by self-effort and by works – which will never (NEVER) give us the Christian life that God intended! So we need to meditate on these things and wait on God for Him to make it real in our lives.</i></p> <p><i>There are many other things in life that will oppose us. Paul entices us with this statement - that we are not our own, as we were bought at a price – to glorify God in our bodies and in your Spirit, which are God's.</i></p> <p>So have I said to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ?</p>

<p>13</p>	<p>I want to proclaim to you my brothers and sisters in Christ?</p>	<p>1 JESUS IS ALIVE! 2 SO ARE YOU! 3 JESUS CHRIST IS IN YOU! 4 IT IS NO LONGER YOU WHO LIVE! – BUT CHRIST who lives in you!!!</p> <p>5 CHRIST IS YOUR LIFE. Your old life has gone and Jesus Christ provides His life for you. You are new creations!</p> <p>6 THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED. Paul says that the Word of God is the mystery that he preached; and that mystery is Christ in you.</p> <p>7 THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR NEW LIFE</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Summing up</p>	<p>Imagine a large archery target where you aim your arrow at the center of the target, the little red dot in the middle. Today the Lord has led me to aim at the very center of the gospel. It is the heart of it, the backbone on which all else hangs. (Jesus died to enable forgiveness of sins – and to give you a new life NOW) However, there are still other aspects of the Gospel within that red dot, just as there are other windows in this Gospel ball. PAUSE But for now, go in faith and in the Power of God. From some other scriptures, you may see some things that don't quite seem to fit. But they will, as scripture is used to interpret scripture. And using the KJV and a Greek dictionary on the really important helps to get it right.</p>
	<p>Prayer</p>	<p><i>"Father, before the beginning of time, in the eternal counsels, you were aware of all these things. You established the Hebrew people as your own and put them through wonderful though troubled times – and One - Jesus, was born in perfection, came, taught, suffered and died as the center of your plan.</i></p> <p><i>He established a Kingdom that has no end, and, wonder of wonders we were a part of it, that in some incredible way, the life and Spirit of your Son, might be ours forever. We thank you, that as we are now formed in a special unity with you, Jesus and the Spirit. I pray that you will help each of us, to go on in You, knowing that we walk in intimacy together and forever</i></p> <p><i>We seek the blessing of your supernatural revelation, of the mercy that flows from the sharing in the sufferings of Christ and the power of our resurrection that enables all things.</i></p> <p><i>May this be so for all your people here who have listened to your Gospel...</i></p> <p><i>In Jesus Name Amen"</i></p>