

Reach The World For Jesus Part III

Christ In You

By Denise Bostic

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." (Colossians 1:24-27)

How do you see yourself? Many Christians today are struggling with an identity crisis and see themselves as weak and ineffective in their daily walk or service to the Lord. This is not how God sees you however. Your Father in Heaven desires that you see yourself in the same way that He sees you and that is through the perfection of His Son Jesus, who came to live and die for you. If you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you have also been born of His Spirit and as a result have become God's very own son or daughter and are now part of His family.

Now that we are a part of His family, we have also become partakers of His divine nature and power and have the ability to display God's love and power to the world. (*II Peter 1:4, Romans 5:5, Acts 1:8*) God the Father has made all of this possible by giving us His most precious treasure. He has placed this treasure within His created jars of clay (His people). (*Matthew 5:14-16, II Corinthians 4:6-7*) What is this treasure that now resides in us?

Well, this mysterious treasure had been kept hidden from men prior to the Church age but now, in these last days has been disclosed and given to the saints of God. As we grow in grace and knowledge concerning this treasure that lies within us, we will no longer see ourselves as weak and ineffective. We will no longer see impossibilities but *possibilities* because we will now begin to see everything in a new light. As we seek out this treasure, we will be able to begin to understand, receive and walk in the divine nature, character and power of God because we will realize the power of the One who lies within.

That One who lies within is Christ! In order to live victorious as sons of God and be truly effective as servants of Jesus Christ, we must have a revelation of the Christ who resides on the inside of us. The word Christ is not Jesus' last name, but is His *title* and that title has meaning. Jesus is the Christ (or Messiah, which means the anointed One and His anointing) that is from God. What does this mean to the believer? If you have received Jesus as Savior, you have become born again and have not only received the indwelling Christ (His Person) into your very being, but you have also received His *anointing* or power as well. All believers have the anointing of God's Spirit within them because of the indwelling of *Christ*.

The Apostle John taught this profound truth: "As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit- just as it has taught you, *remain in him*." (*I John 2:27*)

Every believer has received an anointing from Christ to hear from and be taught personally by His Spirit and have the power (or anointing) to serve God in whatever capacity He has purposed. Although we each have a different purpose or anointing, it all works together for the common good of God's Kingdom. (*I Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 12:4-8*)

Although there are some Christians who have received this revelation in varying degrees of what it means to have Christ within them and are manifesting His love and power towards those around them, there are many Christians today that do not yet have a true revelation or understanding of the Christ within *them*. They have yet to tap into HIM- that is His divine Person, nature, character, anointing or power that will help to transform their own lives and the world around them. It is the will of God that His people, the Church, help transform the nations through the power of Christ.

Jesus is the light of the world. Now that He dwells in us we have also become lights in a dark world. (*John 1:1-9, 8:12, Matthew 5:14-16*) We who possess the light of God can draw people to Him; we who possess the power of God can bring glory and honor unto Him in the earth.

It's About Relationship, Not Religion.

Sadly, the reason that many in the Church today do not have a revelation of Christ within them is because they have been taught and conditioned by the religious world to rely on men, denominations or religious institutions instead of their own personal relationships with God. There are many ministers that have been teaching their congregations or followers to look to them (men) instead of to Christ directly, whether by word or example. When believers look to and rely on men rather than Christ it causes them to be spiritually weak and ineffective in their personal lives and service to the Lord. When we look to the Christ who dwells within us however, and allow Him to live through us, we have the necessary spiritual strength to live holy lives and to demonstrate the power of His Spirit to the world by His *grace*.

We cannot use the religion of man as a substitute for our personal relationship with God. This will hinder our personal fellowship, spiritual growth and effectiveness with and for God. What's the difference between religion and relationship? When I speak of religion I am referring to following the rules, regulations, teachings or traditions of men that do not line up with the true intentions of God and His word, nature and character. (*Matthew 15:1-9*)

Relationship has to do with getting to know God personally, communing with Him, hearing His voice, studying His Word, following His Spirit and manifesting His divine nature and fruit. God can speak directly to our spirits or through His Word and show us what *He* wants us to say and do on a daily basis. Jesus said, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." When we follow after the flesh (ours or any one else's) we will be ineffective and our works unprofitable. If we follow after the Spirit however, we will be spiritually effective and producing the true and lasting fruit which comes from God. (*John 6:63, Galatians 6:7-8*)

Christ And The Order Of The New Covenant

Not only is it important for each individual believer to have a revelation of Christ within, but also for the entire Church body as well. For the Church to be a truly effective and powerful force in the earth today, it is first and foremost necessary for the *leadership* to understand the mystery of Christ within and to teach this profound truth to believers so that the Church may be empowered.

In order for the Church to be all that Christ wants us to be, we must also follow the *law of Christ* as given in the New Covenant. As New Testament believers, we are under the law of Christ and His commands must reign supreme over all. (*1 Corinthians 9:19-21*) The Church should not pattern herself after anyone or anything else other than the Person of Christ. It is Him that we must obey and follow as the Head of the Church. (*Colossians 1:18*) A New Covenant has been ratified and put into effect nearly two thousand years ago by the blood sacrifice of Christ. Since this is fact, the Church's operations must be patterned after the order of the New Covenant that has been established by God's very own Son. (*Hebrews 9:11-15*)

Some may think that this truth is commonly understood and practiced throughout the whole Church but this is not always the case, unfortunately. For instance, there have been many ministers or denominations that have *unbiblical* patterns for their leadership which have been based upon the world's way of doing things, such as treating the Church as a democracy (using voting) rather than a theocracy with Christ as Head. Some appoint leadership based upon outward appearances and qualifications rather than appointing leadership that has been ordained of the Lord. Some base their leadership after the Old Covenant/Mosaic Law/Levitical Priesthood pattern of leadership in their Churches rather than basing their leadership upon the divine order that Jesus gave the *New Testament Church*.

Under the New Covenant, Jesus is now our High Priest and He has given ministry gifts to the Church to help equip all believers for the work of the ministry *now that they have been made priests unto God as well.* (Read *Ephesians 4:11-12, Hebrews 7:11-28, I Peter 2: 9-10*) A new order of leadership has been ordained by God under the New Covenant and was set into the Church by Jesus nearly two thousand years ago when it began. The Old Covenant, including its leadership patterns has passed away now that the New Covenant has been instituted and Jesus has been made our eternal High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (*Hebrews 7:11-19, 10:10*) To use any other order would not be using the divine pattern that has already been ordained by God.

In conclusion, the Church must base everything that we do upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ (the Anointed One and His anointing) alone. We should not base what we do after the world or the flesh. We should also not base what we do after the Old Covenant Law, which is no longer in force because it has been fulfilled by Christ and abolished so that the New Covenant could be put into effect. (*Ephesians 2:14-16, Colossians 2:13-17, Hebrews 10:9*)

All Believers Have Direct Access To God

Believers today do not want to place themselves under the Old Covenant, which has been done away in Christ. (*II Corinthians 3:7,11*) The scriptures clearly teach us the difference between the Old and New Covenants. Under the Old Covenant, the people of God (Israel) as a whole did not have their own personal relationships with God. They could not talk directly with God and God did not speak to directly to them. They did not have personal or direct access into the presence of God because Jesus had not shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins; instead they had priests that represented them before God. The common people also could not hear directly from God because they did not have the indwelling of Christ or the Spirit and therefore had to receive a word from God through the priests or prophets of the Old Covenant. This was the way things were *before* the cross. *After* the cross however, many things changed.

Some leadership in the Church today act as if they do not have the understanding of the difference that the cross has made and they treat the saints of God as if they are under the Law of Moses rather than New Testament Grace. All leadership in the New Testament Church should be teaching believers that because of the indwelling of Christ within them that they can go to God personally, hear from Him directly and follow Him wherever He leads them. Leaders that teach their members this are actually helping to spiritually strengthen their local body and equip the saints for works of ministry for God.

There are also some ministers that might give believers the idea or teach them that only the leadership function as "priests" in the House of God and only they can accurately hear the voice of God. Some try to play the role of mediator between the members of their Church and God when there is only one Mediator between God and man and that is Christ. (*I Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24*) New Testament believers do not need a man (priest/Levite) to mediate between them and God (as Moses and the Levites did) because we can now come into the presence of God personally because of the blood sacrifice of Jesus. (*Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-23*)

Any leader in the Church today that truly understands the revelation of *Christ in you* will not try to play the role of mediator between you and God and understand that you have your own personal relationship with Him. Those who don't understand this many times are speaking volumes through their words and actions. Since you can hear from God personally, this also means that you can contribute spiritual things to your own local Church. (Read *I Corinthians 14:26*) Unfortunately, some leaders insinuate to the saints that they cannot hear directly from God by ignoring, rejecting, ridiculing or downplaying anything that a believer may want to contribute to the Church. The source of this attitude does not originate with Christ and His Spirit however but instead comes from the sinful flesh of mankind, which is prideful and stands in opposition to God and His divine will for the Church. (*Romans 8:6-8, Galatians 5: 16-18 James 4:6*) This type leadership is actually promoting wrong teaching, which produces weakness in the Church, and hinders the cause of Christ.

Although all ordained ministers in the New Testament Church have been made priests unto God, *so have all the saints.* All believers can now minister as priests in the House of God and should be able to have the liberty to contribute or share with the Body of Christ what God has given to them without apologies. The leadership should not forbid or stop the saints from being a vital part of their local body but instead *oversee* them by providing a safe, loving environment where there is mature, godly instruction, guidance and correction when needed to help them stay on track spiritually. This type leadership helps to empower and strengthen the Church and aid the cause of Christ.

As we learned previously, all of the saints have direct, personal access to God because of the blood sacrifice of Jesus. They also have the ability to hear from God directly because of the indwelling of Christ and His Spirit. (*John 10:27 and chapters 14 & 16*) When all believers are taught to rely and follow the Christ within them, this makes the Church strong from within and also a strong and effective presence in the world because they are taught reliance in God and not man.

The leadership of the Church should always teach believers that they should look to, listen and follow Christ (the Chief Shepherd of the sheep) first and foremost. (*1 Peter 2:25*) The Lord places godly leadership in the Church for a reason and that should be honored and respected. It is right and good if we listen to and follow our leadership as under-shepherds if they are following Christ. (*1 Corinthians 11:1*) He has given them the responsibility to watch over the souls that He gives into their care. (*Hebrews 13:17*) Should we ever be in circumstances that the leadership is consistently harming believers however by leading them into deceptive or false teaching, idolatry or immorality, believers must always place God first and follow Him instead of that leadership.

The Teacher Within

In this article, I want to focus on certain aspects of the indwelling of Christ or *the anointed One and His anointing* within the believer. First, the anointing of the Holy Spirit abides in you and will teach you all things. (*1 John 2:27, John 14:25-26*) In reading *1 John 2:27*, notice it says, “*You do not need anyone (any man) to teach you...*” This does not mean that we should never let others teach us the word of God or that we cannot learn from others, but that we do not have to be dependent on *men alone* for our source of learning the truth. Only God is the Source of all truth. Whenever someone is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it agrees with the written word this means that God is the Source, whether it comes through your pastor, brother, sister or yourself. When this is the case, we should receive these teachings as coming from God.

Since all saints of God have the ability to hear directly from God through the indwelling of Christ and His Spirit, this means that we can receive teaching directly from Him also. This profound truth is known by some in the body of Christ and they are reaping wonderful benefits from their personal Teacher but unfortunately, there are many that do not yet have the knowledge of this truth because they have not been taught about the purpose and power of Christ within them. They have instead, been taught to only rely on men for their learning, instruction or hearing from God maybe one or two days out of the week when they go to Church.

God intended for us to learn about Him and His Word more than one or two days a week though. God does not want us to be entirely dependent on man for our spiritual food. He wants us to look to Him as our Source. (*Matthew 4:4, 6:11*) This is why He gave us the privilege of being instructed personally by His Spirit every day of the week. God wants us to learn His Word so we that we may grow in grace and knowledge and have His spiritual strength and wisdom imparted to us on a daily basis.

When we understand that God can teach us personally everyday, we can receive personal instruction that is tailor made for our own lives. God can give us exactly what we need and when we need it. He can give us understanding, wisdom, guidance, instruction, direction and so much more if we look to first and foremost to Him. Man can contribute to our spiritual growth as they teach or minister by the Holy Spirit, but they cannot be everything to us, only God is our total Source of everything that we need.

No matter if we are learning from the teaching of others or directly from God, we will need to have revelation knowledge given to us by the Holy Spirit to understand or comprehend what God wants us to know. We always learn better when we receive revelation when it is given to us directly from God. Usually when we receive via someone else, the impact or comprehension may not be quite as powerful. Either way, we all need revelation from God (or have God reveal His hidden truths to us). Man can only teach us, but they cannot help us to understand, only the Spirit can do this. (*1 Corinthians 2: 9-13*)

The Power Within To Help You Personally

Not only will having the indwelling of Christ allow you to be taught personally by the Holy Spirit but also to have the power of Christ available to you. When I say available, I mean that because Christ lives in you, His power is available to you but it is up to you to receive it by faith and exercise it before it will be made manifest. You have the power to live a victorious Christian life and power within you to be released to minister to others with great effectiveness and bring glory to God in the earth today.

The power of Christ resides in you because Christ (the anointed One and His anointing) is dwelling within you. We can follow in the footsteps of Jesus by letting Him work *through us* to continue His ongoing work of spreading the Gospel in the earth today. This is the Lord's will and desire that He has ordained for His Body, the Church. (*Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-20*)

Jesus was constantly teaching and training His followers to do this great work when He walked upon the earth. He taught His disciples that they could say and do what He was doing. He taught by word and deed, making it perfectly clear to His disciples that they were to follow His example and do as He did. He even told them that they would do even greater things than what He did after He went to be with the Father! (*John 14:12*)

If we truly claim to be a follower of Christ, we will also be His *disciples*. What is a disciple and what do they do? A disciple is *one who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another*. [*The American Heritage Dictionary*] Some brethren have only gone so far as to embrace the teachings of Christ but have not yet gotten to the point of assisting Him in spreading His teachings to others! If we have already embraced Christ and His cause, we should also help to spread the message of the Gospel and its teachings and then we will truly be His disciples. We should realize that it's not enough for us to accept this good news for ourselves alone but we must unselfishly share it with others so that they may receive its temporal and eternal benefits as well!

We all need to understand that because the life of Christ is within us that we can have His power working effectually in our lives, whether in our personal lives or service to God. Within any given area that we lack understanding, that part of the life and power of Christ will be of no value to us until we receive revelation knowledge of that particular area. Also, if we are following after something other than Christ, He cannot be truly effective in our lives. (*Galatians 5:2*) To help you understand the power of Christ within you, we will use the life of Jesus as an example.

Jesus Christ forgave you of all of your sins. Now you are forgiven and Christ is in you. (*Colossians 2:13-14, I John 2:12*)

Jesus Christ is the Righteousness One. Now you are righteous because Christ is in you. (*I Corinthians 1:30*)

Jesus Christ obtained the victory over sin and death. Now you always have victory because Christ is in you. (*Romans 8:1-4, I Corinthians 15:55-57, II Corinthians 2:14*)

Jesus Christ conquered sin, death and hell. Now you are more than a conqueror because Christ is in you. (*Romans 8:37-39, Colossians 2:15*)

Jesus Christ is holy. Now you are holy because Christ is in you. (*Acts 3:14, Romans 11:16, I Peter 1:15-16, I Peter 2:5-10, Revelation 4:8*)

Jesus Christ is our salvation. Now you have salvation because Christ is in you. (*Psalms 27:1, Luke 1:69, 2:30, 3:6, Acts 4:12, Hebrews 2:10, 9:28*)

Jesus Christ is our Healer. Now you are healed by His stripes because Christ (the Healer) is in you. (*Exodus 15:26, Psalm 103:3, Luke 4:18, 23, Acts 4:30*)

Jesus Christ is our Provider. Now you have provision because Christ (the Provider) is in you. (*Philippians 4:19*)

Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. Now you have eternal life and the promise of the resurrection because Christ is in you. (*John 11:25-26*)

This will give you some idea of the One that lies within you to help you in your personal life. When we understand that we possess all of these things because we have *Him* in us, it helps us to see ourselves in an entirely different light! The biggest mistake that a lot of Christians make is that they are looking at their abilities or inabilities instead of to Christ and His power. Brethren, all of us must not look at our weaknesses, inabilities or even to our fleshly abilities but to Christ and Him alone. We must know assuredly that we cannot obtain anything in the Spirit by the efforts of our own flesh. We have been crucified with Christ and now we must let Him live in us and then we (and others) truly can benefit from His life and power. (*Galatians 2:20*)

The Power Upon You To Minister To Others

The divine life of Christ in you will enable you to live in godly power in your personal life but will also help you to witness to others in the power of the Spirit. Jesus explains in *Acts 1:8*. He told His disciples:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes *on you...*” (NIV)

“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost comes *upon you...*”(KJV)

The Holy Spirit not only indwells you but will also *come upon you* when you are baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. John the Baptist came preaching repentance of sins and baptized with water but told his hearers to be looking for the One coming after Him that would give another type of baptism.

John said, “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (*Matthew 3:11*)

Jesus of course began doing this starting on the day of Pentecost at the inception of the Church and continues to this day so that His followers may witness of Him with power. (*Acts 2:1-4*) Not only will the Holy Spirit come upon us to minister to others with signs following but also will fill us so much that we will be have rivers of living water flowing out of us (our bellies or innermost being). This living water consists of all of the good things that have been imparted to us from God the Father and the Son and we, in turn, can impart these same things to others by walking in the fruit and power of the Spirit. (*Read John 7:37-39, John 16:12-15, Mark 16:15-20, Galatians 5:22-25 for more understanding*).

Everything that you and I need to minister to others in effectual power rests upon us and resides in us. All we must do is seek God through prayer, listen and obey His divine instructions in order to be the instruments within His hands to minister the Gospel of Christ to others so that they might hear, see, believe and receive.

As you tap into the power of Christ within you by spending personal time with Him, you will come to learn and know more and more of God’s nature, character and ways. As you study His word and receive revelation knowledge from Him, you can also come to learn of the spiritual tools that He has given the body of Christ and how to be equipped to use them. If your Church offers training, equipping or discipleship programs or meetings, this is also a great way to accelerate your learning and get a more “hands on” approach to ministry. If your Church does not have anything available, then you can check out opportunities for training through other Churches and/or Ministries that hold conferences, seminars or schools of the Spirit for the express purpose of equipping the saints for works of service. (*Ephesians 4:11-12*)

Whether we are being taught within the midst of the Church or personally by the Holy Spirit, we all need to cultivate our own personal relationship with God, learn to hear His voice and obey His Spirit so we can go where He wants us to go, say what He wants us to say and do what He wants us to do! God wants us to serve Him in complete trust and God does not want His children to fear or worry about anything but instead wants us to believe that He has already given us everything that we need to minister to others by His power. As we walk by faith in God, He will manifest His mighty power!

Always remember, you are who God says you are and you can do what God says you can do because Christ is in you! When we read God’s Word we need to personalize what we study. When we do this, we find that when we act upon that Word, that God is watching over it to perform it. (*Jeremiah 1:12*) It’s not up to us to perform the Word, we only have to speak it forth by faith and allow God to back it up with His power. This is what Jesus knew and demonstrated when He walked in His earthly ministry. He only did and said what His Father told Him to. He followed the example of His Father and carried out His commands as the Spirit led him. He never doubted that the Father would perform His Word. He stepped out in boldness to do God’s divine work and to bring the Father glory. (*John 5:16-30*) We need to have that same simplicity in Christ.

Jesus kept His total dependence upon the Father at all times and knew His divine will because He had a close personal relationship with Him. It can be the same with us. The more time that we spend with someone, the more we get to know him or her. It is the same in our relationship with God. The more time we spend with Him, the more we get to know His character, ways and desires. The more time that we spend getting to know God, the more that His love and power can manifest in our lives. We should not let Christ in us lie dormant by ignoring Him or not using all of those wonderful things that He has given us through our divine inheritance. We should instead receive all that He wants to give us and do through us.

Gifts And Callings

This includes His gifts and callings that He has upon our lives. Every believer who has Christ in them also has been given a ministry of some kind and has been given spiritual gifts by God to accomplish their divine calling. It is good to not be ignorant of these gifts but to learn all we can about them in order to be effective for God. (*I Corinthians 12:1*) We can grow in maturity as we learn about and exercise these gifts when we minister to others.

Because of the indwelling Christ, we have His anointing within us to minister to others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some will have ministry gifts from Christ to reach the world but also to serve the Church, by helping her to mature and be equipped for works of service, usually called the five-fold ministry. (*Ephesians 4:11-15*) Some will have gifts of the Spirit to help minister to the body of Christ to help build her up through edification, exhortation and encouragement. Some will have gifts especially for leading souls to Christ. There are different gifts-mixes and callings for individual members as God wills and everyone will be used in different ways and for doing good but all comes from the same Source, which is God. (*I Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12:3-8*)

Through Christ in you, you have the ability and power within you to release these gifts by the anointing that has been given to you by God. These gifts need to be discovered (as you seek God), cultivated (through learning) and exercised (by ministering to others) before anyone can benefit from them. These gifts can only be released as you walk in the Spirit and deny your flesh. The apostle Paul understood that this was the key to the power of Christ manifesting in his life, both personally and as a minister of the Gospel. He died to self in order that Christ (the Anointed One and His anointing) might live and manifest through Him.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (*Galatians 2:20*)

Sometimes God will ask us to do things that might be difficult for our flesh or that will be a great sacrifice for us. This is what I mean about dying to our fleshly man. If we deny our own flesh and walk in the Spirit instead, God can give us the anointing, boldness and everything else necessary to accomplish His will. With men (the flesh) the tasks will be impossible, but with Christ in you, all things are possible!

God wants to reveal Himself to the world and He does this through His very own people. Christ in you will manifest powerfully as you yield to Him and believe His Word. Ask God to help you be a useful vessel in the hands of the Master. (*II Timothy 2:20-21*) As you trust and obey Him by stepping out in everything that He wants you to do, you will begin to see His ability and forget your inability. You will realize that in your weakness, He is made strong and will manifest His power mightily on your behalf. You will no longer see yourself weak as a kitten, but will realize that there is a Lion on the inside of you. You will no longer be ineffective because you will be relying on the effectiveness of Christ within you!