**Hope for the World**

***(Part I)***

* These are difficult times for:
  + Individuals
  + Families
  + Local communities
  + Churches
  + Businesses
  + Our nation
  + The world
* When we see problems around us, we often complain about, and blame:
  + Other family members
  + Church, business, and civic and political leaders
* Indeed, in mainstream media, social networking, and blogs, complaining and blaming has become a lucrative cottage industry—entertainment, even
* The very fact that we place blame and complain indicates that we have put the responsibility for, and our hopes for, the solutions to life’s problems on the people around us and on institutions, and not on ourselves and not the Lord
* Psalm 146: 3-9
* Put not your trust in princes, in mortal man, who cannot save…Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth... God remains faithful forever. He executes justice for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. The LORD opens the eyes of the blind...the LORD lifts those who are weighed down; He sustains the fatherless and the widow, but the ways of the wicked He frustrates.
* As Christians we believe (at least intellectually and theologically) that *Jesus* is the hope for the world
  + “Jesus is the Answer”
  + “What would Jesus do?”
* But is it practical to “trust in God alone” and not the people and leaders around us?
  + The Lord, of course, uses people (His hands and feet) to show His mercy when we are suffering physically, emotionally, relationally, financially, and spiritually
* So how does this all really work – His role and our role?
  + Can the Jesus in me and you solve the suffering in Ukraine? In the Israeli-Palestinian crisis?
* Can the Jesus in me and you even solve the problems in our families, among our friends, at our church?
* The “mission verse” of Linda and my first church in 1974
* Col. 1:26-29
* The mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to His 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*.
* Christ *in us* is the true hope of the world (and the hope of “glory”)
* Realizing and acting with the availability and presence of Christ in us is the path to a successful Christian life lived by grace and not law.
  + And this is the hope for solving problems in those around us, and in the world
* Christ, or more precisely the *Spirit* of Christ (who is the *Holy Spirit*) dwells in the human spirit of Christian believers who have let the Spirit into their minds and hearts
  + Believers who have by faith believed in the crucified and resurrected historical Jesus Christ
  + Who have given permission for the Holy Spirit to come and help with their day-to-day decisions
  + And who are willing to obey the Word of God
* The “presence” or “absence” of Christ appreciated in our lives can be hindered by our thinking and teaching.
* The teaching that God must “come” or” fall on us” to get things done can distract from the truth of Christ-in-us
  + God in Christ by the Holy Spirit is *always* present in us
  + He never leaves and becomes unavailable
    - Although we can “leave “Him (as an individual, and as a church)
    - And our rebellion and sin can result in our not experiencing His presence
* The challenge is to become increasingly convinced that:
  + God’s presence and power in us is available and can be used as a resource in all of life’s situations
  + God’s Word in us can transform us into better people
  + That we can “be filled” with the Spirit
    - Either by having our gas tanks filled or topped off with the Holy Spirit every day
* Christ is in those who have allowed the Spirit to change them from being enemies of God, the Word, and the Gospel into supporters and promoters
* Christ in us results in us thinking differently, and acting differently toward the people and the world around us
  + Acting more selflessly, helpfully, and positively
  + Changing from being a *problem* to our family, friends and the world, to being a *solution* for them
* This said, there is also a presence of God in *community*, in church gatherings, in addition to in individuals
  + The “presence” of God is found in the Word preached under anointed teaching, in worship, and in church fellowship where we are growing as disciples
  + It is in community (church) that we learn to sense the presence among us (outside in addition to inside us)
* Matt. 18:20
* “For where two or three gather together in My name, there am I with them.”
* When the presence and activity of Christ is recognized by a group (church) here is increasing power and anointing in the “room” and beyond
* It would be most correct to say that the hope of the world is:
  + Jesus Christ
  + Christ in us individually
  + Christ in His church
* As individual disciples of Jesus, and as church leaders, our mission is to build faith in people so they can understand who Jesus Christ was, is and will be
  + And that this Jesus *is in us* and *with us* 24 hours a day
* Eph. 1:18
* I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the *hope* of His calling, what are the riches of the *glory* of His inheritance in the saints…
* Most of us Christians “know” this in our minds
  + But how consistently do we walk in this in our lives?

* Christ in us is the hope in *all* of the world’s jurisdictions (areas of life under a set of written or unwritten rules under various authorities)
  + In self, families, churches, communities, businesses, nations, the world
* Having Christ in us *individually* can result in the hope of:
  + Forgiveness realized – no guilt; no shame
  + Inner peace; of clearer, sane minds
  + Keeping the laws of God by loving rather than by rule-keeping (our spouses, children, friends)
* Having no fear of death and trusting in eternal life – resulting in more courage in this life
* Overcoming temptations and sin consistently
* Righteous living—being a good person
* Success in family, work, finances, community
* Every moment of life we are given the choice to be “filled’ by the Spirit and live in, by, and with Him in our consciousnesses--in addition to the focus we must place on living our daily lives
  + *Or* we choose *not* to recognize Him and live our lives as if He is no help to us

Eph. 5:18-19

And do not get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit

I Thes. 5:19

Quench not the Spirit

Phil. 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

John 14:16-17

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (*paraklēton)* to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells *with you* and will be *in you.”*

* Greek word: *paraklēton* is also rendered: advocate, comforter, counselor, someone standing beside
* When we recognize Christ’s presence in us and “abide” in Him, we are fruitful and helpful to others
* John 15:5
* "I am the vine. You are the branches. Those who live in me *while I live in them* will produce a lot of fruit. But you can't produce anything without me.”
* When we do not abide in Christ (and do not let Him effectively be in/with us), we tend to only care for ourselves and not be helpful to others (that is, fruitful)
* Examples of someone helpful to us being nearby
  + Troy Boyer in Guatemala
  + Michael Jordan in sports
  + A service dog
* Christ in us is even *better* than Troy or Michael Jordan or a dog “with us”
* Jesus has at His disposal an infinite amount of resources
* We don’t have to go somewhere to get Him
* He is always around

What does the Bible mean by the “hope of *glory*”

* First, what is the “glory of God?”
* God’s glory is the display of His characteristics to other created beings
  + His beauty, His dignity, His honor, His love, His goodness, His creation
* Ps.19:1-4
* The heavens declare the *glory* of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
* In the Old Testament the glory of God was revealed in fire and smoke, earthquakes, to:
  + Moses at the burning bush
  + The Israelites at Mt. Sinai
  + Elijah and Elijah and the chariot of fire
  + Isaiah and Ezekiel in their visions of the throne room of God with bright lights, fire and rainbows
* In the New Testament the *glory* of God was revealed in Christ, the Son of God
* John 1:14
* The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his *glory*, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth.
* Hebrews 1:3
* And He (Christ) is the radiance of His (God’s) *glory* and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power
* After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, the *glory* of God is placed into believers’ spirit as the Holy Spirit
* II Cor. 4:5
* For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give us the Light of the knowledge of the *glory of God* in the face of Christ.
* II Cor. 3:18
* And we who with unveiled faces all *reflect the glory* of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with *intensifying glory*, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit
* Believers receive the Holy Spirit, the “glory” of God, and the *Word of God* into their spirits

Col. 3:16

Let the word of Christ *dwell in you* richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God

* Numbers 14:21
* But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the *glory* of the Lord.
* Habakkuk 2:14
* For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the *glory* of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.
* The Presence of God vs. the Glory of God
  + The presence of God is His influence and kingdom *spiritually discerned* by those who have faith in Him—in their spirits
  + The glory of God is His kingdom *physically seen*—more often by those who do not have faith in Him—perceived with the five physical senses
* Luke 2:8-14
* And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. *An angel*of the Lord appeared to them, and the *glory of the Lord* shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord…Suddenly a great company of the *heavenly host appeared* with the angel, praising God and saying,“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”
* Dan. 10:4-10
* On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen…His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude... …*only I, Daniel, saw the vision*;..
* Dan. 10:4-10 (continued)
* …the men with me did not see it, but a great terror fell upon them, and they ran and hid themselves. So, I was left alone, gazing at this great vision...*I heard the sound of his words*, and as I listened, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, *a hand touched me* and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, “Daniel, you are a man who is highly esteemed...
* God’s glory tends to be revealed to people in the Bible who do not believe in God (or at least do not yet quite believe or understand)
  + When the pre-incarnate (or risen) Christ and holy angels “manifested” in the Bible, they could be seen with physical eyes
  + This tended to occur when something big was about to be revealed to mankind
* Examples:
  + Abraham and the covenant for Israel and the “three men”
  + Moses and the burning bush
  + Daniel and Gabriel
  + Mary and Gabriel
  + Jesus and Saul on the road to Damascus
  + Jesus and John in Revelation
  + We who believe live by faith (the presence of God “sensed” in the spirit), not by sight (the glory seen with eyes and experienced by the other four senses)
* II Cor. 5:7
* …for we walk by faith, not by sight
* Matthew 12:38-39
* Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet *no sign* will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.”
* John 20:29
* Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed? Blessed are those who have *not seen* and yet have believed.”
* Summary: the glory of God is manifested when the Father or the Son, or holy angels are visible to the five senses.
  + In order that the glory of God can be seen by those who do not believe
  + Believers are to be content with presence sensed by our spirits (not our five senses)
* A time is coming when God will show His glory to the everyone on earth: believers and nonbelievers
* Phil. 2:9-11
* Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the *glory* of God the Father.
* God will also reveal His glory to the human rulers of the earth

* Ps. 2:10-12
* Therefore, be wise, O kings; be admonished, O judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in your rebellion, when His wrath ignites in an instant.
* God will reveal His glory to the demonic rulers as demonstrated in Psalm 82 and…
* Col. 2:15
* He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them.
* What is the “hope” of this *present* and *coming* *glory* of God being revealed to the world?
  + God is on His throne and is the source of glory and goodness
  + Christ is at His right hand interceding for the Church
  + The Holy Spirit of God and Christ is actually in the Church, in believers
* Col. 1:26-29
* The mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to His 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*.
* The hope of the world is not in princes or secular political leaders; it is in Christ in us, the hope of glory
* Believers and the Spirit in us are to contribute to the solutions of the world
* I Chron. 7:14
* If my people, who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
* II Chron. 16:9
* For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.
* The context of II Chron. 16
* II Chron. 16:7-10
* At that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and told him, “Because you have relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand…For the eyes of the LORD roam to and fro over all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him. You have acted foolishly in this matter. From now on, therefore, you will be at war.” Asa was angry with the seer and became so enraged over this matter that he put the man in prison.
* In practice: Christ in us is the hope of the present and future glory of God intervening to bring solutions to areas in which we *have authority* (self, family, church, businesses, community, nation, etc.)
  + When we do not use this Spirit-led and Spirit-given authority, the jurisdiction suffers
  + When we use this authority and power *corruptly*, the jurisdiction *really* suffers
* Christ in us is the hope of God’s glory, His goodness, His divine, helpful attributes, being revealed to the non-believing world, impacting and improving the circumstances around us
* Christ-in-us is the hope for:
  + Us personally as we live in the world
  + For our family and community as we serve them
  + Other believers around us as we encourage to have more Christ-in-them through discipleship
  + Non-believers who can *yet* bless the world with Christ-in-them when they are saved through evangelism
* *Kingdom of God* today can be most easily understood as the influence and impact of Christians with Christ and His glory in them affecting their surroundings and circumstances
* God’s kingdom expanding results from
  + More people becoming Christians
  + Those of us who are Christians being faithful to recognize the power of Christ in us and co-work with God to solve the problems around us
* The true purpose of the church and the Kingdom is to prepare the world for Christ’s return
  + Preparing each jurisdiction to be ready
* We are like an ambassadors in a foreign county, representing the U.S.
  + Advocating for our country’s interests
  + Protecting U.S. citizens in the foreign land
  + But also blessing and serving the country they are in (by encouraging democracy)
* II Cor. 5:20
* Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
  + The kingdom of God is advanced by preaching, discipling and evangelism (not by military warfare, political power, manipulation or coercion)
* II Cor. 10:3-5
* For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We tear down arguments and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
* We believers bring Christian influence on our family, in our church, in the civic world
* Virtually everyone, regardless of their ideologies, if given the opportunity, will look for answers to folks who live in integrity and who they trust and respect
* What does Christ in us look like?
  + The fruit of the Spirit (a new life lived for God and others)
  + In contrast to the fruit of the flesh (the old life that is all about self)
* Gal. 5:18-23
* The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
* Gal. 5:22-23
* But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
* As disciples of Jesus, it is our task to:
  + Think and walk in the reality of the Holy Spirit in and with us
  + Learn to sense God’s presence around us in our lives
  + Show God’s goodness and nature (His glory) to the non-believing world by our testimony and lives
  + To be the hope of God’s glory for self, others, local community, and the world
* “Don’t leave home without Him.”
  + This great Resource is available to help us when in doubt, fear, anger, depression, discontentment, temptation
* Next week:
* The consequences of *not* walking in the reality of Christ in us
  + Individually, and as leaders of families, churches, business, nations