

The Sound of *Many Waters*

Many Waters is a weekly article written by Ron Cipic, lead pastor of Grand River Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. To comment or ask a question about this piece, write to Pastor Ron at pastors@grandriverchurch.org. Related Scripture verses for further study are cited at the end of this piece.

"The Mystery In A Nutshell"

"This mystery has been kept in the dark a long time, but now it's out in the open. God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this. Christ is in you, therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message. We preach Christ, warning people not to add to the Message. We teach in a spirit of profound common sense so that we can bring each person to maturity. To be mature is to be basic. Christ! No more, no less. That's what I'm working so hard at day after day, year after year, doing my best with the energy God so generously gives me."

~ Col. 1:26-29 (The Message)

Many Christians look high and low, far and wide for "keys" to living the successful Christian life. They read books. They chase after "anointed" speakers. They even watch Christian T.V. (That might very well be an oxymoron.) They long for "more" hoping that they can discover an informational or experiential secret that will somehow unlock the meaning of life. In some ways, they are like the Gnostics of old. And the question must be asked: where is Christ in all this?

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, makes it clear that the essence of Christian living is Christ living in the believer, not people trying to find Christ or even trying to imitate Him. Inhabitation has

always been God's plan, not in a building, not in the heavenlies, but in a Body. This is what He "predestined" or "predetermined" before the creation of the world. He has always planned to "move in," to live in man. This is extreme intimacy. This is exactly where the God of love intends to live.

While Satan's plan was and is to separate man from God, just as he is separate, God's plan was and is to make man one with Him in an unexplainable, unfathomable way. This plan is so simple and so supernatural. No man would come up with it. No man can make it happen. No man can figure out exactly how it works. It is completely achieved by God's grace and His grace alone. In it, the righteousness of God, not man, is revealed. So why should we try to add to what He has already done? We can't. We should simply believe it and receive it.

To those who have tried religion and found it lacking in every way, this is very good news. It is the gospel of grace. Christ didn't come to initiate a game of "hide and seek." He came so we could know Him face-to-face, heart-to-heart. His death on the Cross not only produced forgiveness of sin, but it set us free from an independent, orphan spirit that would find contentment in a life apart from Him. He recreated a heart open to inhabitation, and now He's moved in.

The Apostle Paul wrote of this life when He said: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." The good news is, we do have the Spirit of Christ in us. It's time to stop seeking without He who already lives within. *RC*

Study Verses: Col. 1:19-29; Jn. 17:20-26; and Ro. 8:9-17.

April 13, 2007