

The Key to Hidden Treasure

Colossians 2:1-5

Last week we looked at the end of Colossians chapter 1 where Paul outlines how distinctive the message that he preached was. He had not had opportunity to meet them and he wanted to express how different his message was to those who were trying to lead them away from what they had first believed.

Paul's message was distinctive and different from the two streams of error that represented the religion of the churches in Colosse and Laodicea. It was only to God's people the church that God had revealed the mystery, the secret, which was His mind and His will for them and for the human race.

That secret was aimed at everyone, was a message that could reconcile people to God and was one that brought people into relationship with God rather than being a system of religion that guaranteed neither.

What was the mystery, the secret? Actually in the totality of the passage on Paul's mission at the end of the first chapter and these few verses at the beginning of chapter two defines it. Paul describes the mystery, the revealed secret as being two things. The first we looked at last week and referred to it again this morning: *Col 1:27 God's plan is to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God.*

This is what is truly unique about the Christian faith. You will find no other religion on earth preaches it. Christ is in us and as a result we have the hope of glory! We have His Spirit in us. It's unique, it's radical and if we really grasp it, it's truly life changing! And it should drive us to change others.

Then we come to the second aspect of the revealed secret and that's in verse 2 of chapter 2: *Col 2:2 In this way they will know God's secret, which is Christ himself. 3 He is the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge.*

The secret is Christ Himself. He's in us but there's so much more implied in that phrase than just His presence. In Christ is the key to all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and knowledge – Greek and Judaism – was the territory of special people, philosophers, scribes, priests. In other world religion that's true. Knowledge of spiritual things is in the hands of the shamen, medium, witch, prophet or whatever they are called. In new age philosophy that's true too. It's how people are controlled. They are held in fear or at the behest of individuals. Sadly that has found its way into the church down the centuries. Whether it was priests who were literate when others weren't, or “prophets” who have been given “new” revelation, we see their products still today.

That's not the message of Colossians and indeed the NT. All the secret knowledge of God – the secret that had been in the hands of the few up until the time of Jesus is now accessible to everyone in Christ. Salvation is for everyone, and access to God is equal for everyone. Each man and woman has the same access to salvation, the same source of knowledge and revelation. To boot, we are all priests. Yes we have leaders, but they are gifted and of God. Indeed, people have gifts of the Spirit but as we understand in 1

Cor 12, they exist for the common good. Nobody has information for God that they personally hand on to. It's for the church and freely given. Remember that every time you hear someone claiming special revelation. If it isn't freely given for all the church without limit, then it's probably not of God.

So as we consider afresh the bread and wine it reminds us that our faith is for all of us equally. All of us trace our spiritual lives, our forgiveness, our righteousness back to the cross, to the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. No one is superior, or more spiritual – everything just comes down to Jesus and the grace of God.

I hope all of this is old hat to us, but for the Colossians and for that day it was dynamite – Christ is in you. As a result you have access to the wisdom and knowledge of God. In our relationship in Christ, there is no mysticism, no secret stuff only revealed to special ones – it belongs to us all equally.

Even sign gifts that bring words of knowledge or prophecy is not for individual consumption but given to all. Remember that if God gives you something – it's been given to pass on.

Similar never think yourself unimportant – we are of equal value to God because Christ is in each of us. Never look on others as more important than yourself – your salvation is identical to mine or anyone else's.

Christ is in you. Words that challenge. Words that bring us to confession of how we fall so short of the One who indwells us. Words that challenge us to think different, speak different and act different. To God's glory! Amen.

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