

## Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Jesus the Christ is Revealed, Let Us Live For and With Him!**

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-5; 10-14**

### 1. **2023, A New Beginning - Where and How do we start?**

#### ○ **Scriptural Beginning - with the Spirit of God and the Word**

We see a pattern in Scripture:

God begins new things through the work of God's Spirit and God's Word. Words inspired by God's Spirit are uttered and, when believed and acted on, we see God's power at work. Word and Spirit operate closely together.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and **the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said**, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Genesis 1:1-3 NIV

#### **Revealed: Jesus, The Word made flesh**

John 1 - NIV

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made;

without him nothing was made that has been made.

**4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.**

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

#### ○ **Importance of the Word**

Jesus said: "**It is the spirit that gives life**; the flesh is useless.

**The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.**" John 6:63 NRSV

Jesus also said, quoting Moses from Deuteronomy 8:3:

"It is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**'" Matthew 4:4 NKJV

Moses instructed Israel in Deuteronomy 11 (NRSV)

18 "You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. 19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth."

God's word is so important it must form the basis of our conversation, waking thoughts, last words before bed, conversation at the dinner table, etc.

## 2. **Revealed: Jesus, the Christ**

Christ is not Jesus' last name. It is the Greek for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means the Anointed One. Anointing was the act of pouring oil over someone and, through prayer, invoking the Spirit of God on that person.

In Genesis 3 we see that the first humans sinned against God. Through the rest of the Old Testament, we see God inspiring many prophets to prophesy that God will send a savior, an Anointed One, to deliver us from the power of sin, and restore us to the relationship with God for which we were created.

Jesus is the prophesied Christ (Anointed One, Messiah). He described his purpose in the words of the prophecy in Isaiah 61:

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

Luke 4:18-19 NRSV

This was the message of the early church: the Anointed One has come. We have experienced his work and we are his witnesses.

36You know the message he [God] sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. 37That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:

**38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.** 39We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem.”

Acts 10:36-39 NRSV

This must be our message too. In Him was life. We have his life in us. He was the light of the world. He said we are the light of the world now. The same Spirit that empowered Jesus is in us and wants to bless the world through us.

### 3. Revealed: Who We Are and What We have *In Christ*

Paul taught a lot in his letters what he received from God through divine revelation

“For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that **the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

Galatians 1:11-12 NRSV

- In his sharing what was revealed to him, he emphasized a lot who we are and what we have in Christ.
- He also prayed regularly for Christians to get a revelation their status **in Christ**, and what God has made available to us **in Christ**.
- Today we focus on some of Paul’s “In Christ” teachings in Ephesians 1

In Christ,

- we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places
- we are chosen to be holy and blameless in God's sight
- we are adopted into God's family as His children
- God's grace has been freely lavished on us.

- we have redemption through His blood. Our sins are paid for. Our sins are forgiven
- God's will and purpose is revealed to us
- we were included in God's family when we heard and believed the gospel of salvation
- we are chosen for the praise of his glorious grace
- The Holy Spirit has come into our lives as the seal and pledge of our salvation and inheritance

#### 4. Revealed: A New Covenant with God through Jesus

As we start a new year, let us renew our Covenant with God by

- remembering who we are in Christ, and professing that
- Praying together in the manner Paul did, asking for God to fill our lives with the reality of Christ and God's power in us.
- reminding ourselves of what God requires of us

**“6 With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God?**

**8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.**

**And what does the Lord require of you?**

**To act justly and  
to love mercy and  
to walk humbly with your God”**

Micah 6:6,8 NIV

- Committing to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to the Lord and a life of renewing our minds in God's word:  
“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

Romans 12:1-2 NRSV

How do we renew our minds? With the Word!

## **Confession: *Some* “In Christ” Truths About Us**

*From Ephesians 1*

**In Christ, I am blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places  
In Christ, I am chosen to be holy and blameless in God's sight  
Through Christ, I am adopted into God's family as His child  
In Christ, God's grace has been freely given to me.  
In Christ, I have redemption through His blood. My sins are paid for.  
In Christ, I have forgiveness of my sins  
In Christ, God's will and purpose is revealed to me  
In Christ, I was included in God's family  
when I heard and believed the gospel of salvation  
In Christ, I am chosen for the praise of his glorious grace  
In Christ, I am marked with a seal  
- The Holy Spirit in me is the seal and pledge of my salvation and inheritance**

*Acts 17:28*

**In Him, I live and move and have my being**

*Romans 8: 37-39*

**In Christ, I am more than a conqueror  
Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ**

*Galatians 1:26 & John 1:12*

**In Christ, I am a child of God through faith**

*Ephesians 2:10*

**I am God's handiwork, created in Christ  
to do the good works God has planned for me**

*Philippians 4:13*

**Through Christ who gives me strength, I can do all things**

*Philippians 4:4 (NIV)*

**“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!”**

**In Christ, I choose to rejoice always!**

***(Prayer Based on Ephesians 1:17-20, 3:16-20, Colossians 1:9-14)***

We pray that the God of our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One,  
May give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know Him

**So that, with the eyes of our hearts enlightened,**

**We may come to know  
what is the hope to which he has called us,  
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, what is the  
immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.  
The same power God put to work to raise Jesus from the dead**

We pray that, according to the riches of his glory,  
He may grant us strength in our inner beings by his Spirit  
And that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

**That being rooted and ground in love,  
We may have the power to understand, with all the saints,  
what is the breadth, and length and height and depth,  
And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,  
So that we may be filled with all the fullness of God**

We pray that we may be filled with the knowledge of God's will  
In all spiritual wisdom and understanding  
So that we may live lives worthy of the Lord,  
Fully pleasing him, as we bear fruit in every good work,  
And as we grow in the knowledge of God.

**May we be made strong with all the strength  
That comes from his glorious power,  
And may we be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully  
giving thanks to the God  
Who has enabled us to share  
in the inheritance of all saints in the light.**

**Glory to God  
Who is able to do far beyond  
All that we could ask or imagine  
By his power at work within us.  
In the name of Jesus we pray,  
Amen**

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesley Tradition  
(UMH 607 in modern English)

**I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will,  
rank me with whom you will.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you or brought low for you.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
You are mine, and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.**