

The Hidden Christ

by Chip Brogden

Chip Brogden's sermon explores the hidden nature of Christ and the necessity of personal revelation for true understanding and confession of faith.

Scripture: Luke 2:25

Topics: "Christ Revelation", "Spiritual Enlightenment"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the hidden revelation of Jesus Christ to the world, where only a few truly grasp His significance, such as the shepherds, Simeon, Anna, and the astrologers. Through the encounter between Jesus and Peter, Brogden illustrates how Peter's perception of Jesus transformed from a mere teacher to the Lord, revealing the gradual revelation of Christ's glory. The sermon delves into the importance of experiencing a personal revelation of Christ rather than just following teachings, highlighting Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Brogden stresses the necessity of inward revelation and enlightenment of the heart to truly know and perceive Christ as Lord and God.

Transcript

Jesus, the Christ of God, did not reveal Himself to the world at large, but to a handful of disciples. We ought to ask why He did not appear upon a mountain in blinding light, or descend in a cloud, but was born into the world as a baby in a stable. A few shepherds worshipped Him the night He was born, Simeon and Anna blessed Him in the Temple at His dedication, and two years later some astrologers from the East worshipped Him. But no one else in all the world grasped the significance of this Child. It was hidden from 99.9% of the world.

When Jesus first met Peter, what was Peter's perception of Jesus? Here is a rabbi who has attracted quite a large gathering of people with His interesting stories and teachings. Very well, there is nothing wrong with that, I'll even let you borrow my boat while you preach. Did Peter perceive Who this Man really was? Of course not. He called Him "Teacher" and "Rabbi".

But then the Teacher said to go out into the deep and let down the nets for a catch of fish. Peter must decide whether or not to obey. After all, Peter was a fisherman, and since he had fished all night and caught nothing, what would be the point? What does a carpenter know about fish? Nevertheless, he complied. When he did as Jesus said and let down the nets they caught an abnormally large amount of fish, so much so that their boat threatened to capsize.

To you and me this may sound like a coincidence, or luck. Some might call it a miracle, and it is miraculous, but it is more than a miracle, it is a sign. A sign is a miracle which points to some truth. This is a miracle, but the miracle was not done just for the sake of Peter gaining an abundant supply of fish for his business. It was a sign given by Christ in order to reveal Himself to Peter. In Scriptural language, it is "revealing His glory." There is nothing glorious in the Son of Man, but in the Son of God we see glory.

Jesus merely said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch of fish." Nevertheless, Peter perceived that Jesus was no ordinary man. For when he saw what happened, he fell down and sobbed, "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The One he called Teacher he now calls Lord, and Peter is immediately made to see the contrast of himself, a sinful man, and Christ, the Holy One of God. Everyone else heard the teaching, but Peter saw the Person.

Why would catching a huge net of fish produce this reaction in Peter? Why was he not simply thankful, or happy, or incredulous? What caused him to fall down upon his knees and confess his sin? It was not because Jesus gave him an altar call, or led him in the Sinner's Prayer, or even asked if He could be his personal savior. It was not necessary, because once Peter's eyes were opened to see the Real Jesus, he fell to his knees quite naturally.

The object of Christianity is not to give people a teaching or to lead them in a prayer, but to introduce them to a Man. I would rather have thirty seconds of seeing than thirty years of preaching. People can listen to me preach all their life and never understand a word, but if the Lord opens their eyes to SEE Who I am preaching about then they will understand everything.

When people are in your presence, what do they touch - a system of beliefs, a code of conduct, an ethical standard, or a Person? We may have an abundance of words and teachings, but all of them together are nothing but letters if they are not constantly pointing us to a Living Christ.

We have surely failed if we can put together a teaching that is so easy to follow that we do not need to know the Lord Jesus. Unfortunately, when I listen to some people teach, I realize that anyone can put their teaching to good use, whether they know the Lord or not. So the teaching is worthless to the Kingdom of God because it creates no dependency upon Christ as All in All.

Eventually the revelation of Christ moved Peter to make the bold confession that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus did not teach Peter what to say, He merely revealed Himself to Peter. He did not sit down with His disciples and say, "I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Now repeat that after Me several times, and I will test you on this in the morning." He did not teach them a catechism or a rosary or a mantra or a confession, He merely revealed Himself to them as He in fact is. They made the confession in due course, having revelation.

The Testimony of Jesus always springs forth from the Revelation of Christ. If we do not have the Revelation then we cannot have the Testimony. That is to say, we cannot bear witness of what we have seen and heard if we have not, in fact, seen or heard anything. We try to get people to confess in order that they may ATTAIN to something, but true confession comes forth naturally after they have OBTAINED it.

Not only was Christ Himself hidden and revealed in degrees, but most of what He taught was hidden. He purposely disguised the truth in parables, and only explained Himself privately to His disciples. Even then, much of what He said was misunderstood, and they failed to grasp the significance of it until after His

resurrection, when He opened their minds and hearts to understand, and the Spirit came to bear witness of Christ and teach them inwardly.

When Christ rose from the dead, we would expect Him to present Himself alive to Pilate, to Herod, to Caiaphas, and to the all the people who had Him crucified. But He did not. We see that Christ had the ability to reveal, or not reveal Himself to people. For Mary mistook Him to be the gardener, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not perceive Who He was, because it was hidden from them.

You see that Christ is revealed or hidden from men as He so desires. So many professed disciples of the Lord Jesus fail to recognize Him. The Lord tells them to go to Galilee, but they go to Emmaus. Many people sitting in church would not discern the Lord Jesus if He walked up the aisle and sat down on the altar. They are not really His sheep, therefore they cannot hear His voice, and they do not know Him.

Even His closest disciples are prone to doubt and unbelief. After the resurrection, Thomas declared, "I will not believe unless I see the scars and put my hand into the wound in His side." When Jesus therefore appeared to them He did not argue or try to convince Thomas. He simply said, "Behold! Look! See my hands and my feet!" When Thomas saw the Lord, he spontaneously cried out, "My Lord, and My God!" This is revelation. Revelation does not require any arguing or convincing, as if it all depends on how well we can make a defense of the Gospel. I see no argument in the Lord Jesus, I only see Him. Seeing Him, I am convinced, and no argument is necessary.

Now we want to impress upon you that the seeing which we talk about is an inward seeing, an inward revelation, an enlightenment of the heart. Jesus told Thomas more blessed than the ones who see with their eyes are those who see with the Spirit, and know and perceive Christ as Lord and God.

There is an apostolic prayer recorded in Ephesians 1 which touches upon this issue:

"I pray that God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the (full)knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power in us who believe."

This is a rich prayer. It is very high. There are a couple of lessons for us here.

First, God must reveal His Son to us by way of the Spirit who illuminates our heart. How can we pray the Lord's Prayer for years and never enter into God's thought or mind for what it all means? Because we learned to recite the Lord's Prayer but we did not have the spirit of wisdom and revelation to SEE what we are praying for. But Paul saw it. Who showed it to him? It came to him by revelation from God Himself. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Where and how do they see Him? Their heart is enlightened and thus made pure. In like manner, Paul prays that we too would be given this revelation of Christ.

Second, the word "knowledge" here does not mean head knowledge or facts we can learn from an encyclopedia. It is the Greek word EPI-GNOSIS, which is a compound word more accurately translated, "full-knowledge". It means to come to a mature, experiential, existential, and complete knowing of Christ. So, Paul is praying - not for sinners, but for people who are already Christians - that God will reveal Christ to them in ever increasing measure so that He may fill all things. It is another way of saying, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done." For this indeed is God's will, thought, and design for the Church, the

earth, and the universe - the whole of creation.

It is amazing to see how many times Paul uses the word "all". He says the grace of God has appeared to ALL men, that his mission is to make ALL men see, that Christ is to fill ALL in ALL, that ALL things will be gathered together into Christ. God's end is not the Church, but ALL. The Church is only the beginning. He begins with a man (Abraham), then with a family (Israel), then all the nations. In like manner, God intends to fill the individual, then the Church, then all things.

God has purposely hidden Christ and makes Him available to us only by revelation when we have humbled ourselves as children and forsaken our wisdom. Revelation is sufficient, for if we have the revelation of Christ then we see all we need to see, and if we do not have the revelation of Christ, nothing else will do us any good. The Church is the synthesis of individual disciples who have the revelation of Jesus and have received His Life, and Jesus is building His Church upon the revelation of Himself.

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