

The Hiding Place

"You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble. You will surround me with songs of deliverance." Psalm 32:7

God the Father has given us His Son to be our hiding place in time of trouble. This is a great promise but if we do not know Christ as our hiding place, we will not be able to experience God's provision when we need it.

Understanding the secret of how Christ is our hiding place starts at the cross. Everyone who professes to be a Christian knows Christ died for our sins (Romans 5:8). However, many Christians do not know that we died with Christ (Romans 6:8). Yet this was the central purpose of Christ's Atonement. When Christ was crucified, He not only bore our sins on the cross; He bore our old sin nature on the cross with Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, when Christ died, our sinful nature died with Him (Romans 6:6). Not only have we died with Christ, we have been raised with Christ (Colossians 2:12). By the grace of God the Father (the cost was the crucifixion of His only Son), our sinful nature has been removed and replaced with His Son's divine nature (2 Corinthians 13:5). This is the divine exchange that God has provided for us in His New Covenant through the blood of Christ.

We might call this a divine heart transplant. Of course, Jesus had to willingly die for this heart transplant to take place. When Jesus died on the cross, God exchanged our terminally sin-sick heart with His Son's divine holy heart to save us from the power of sin and certain doom (Romans 6:1-11). Thus God included us in His Son's death so that His resurrected Son might now live in us (Colossians 1:27). The Bible also describes this divine surgery in terms of spiritual circumcision: "In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the sinful nature by the circumcision of Christ... When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God

made you alive with Christ (Colossians 2:11-13)." There's another Scripture that sums up this divine transaction that has taken place in us: "For you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)." Why is our new life hidden with Christ? The operation that was done as a result of Christ's death on the cross was spiritual not physical. In other words, Christ's divine exchange occurred in our spirit not our body. Since it was spiritual, it was invisible to the human eye. However, that doesn't make what God did any less true. "For we walk by faith not by appearances (2 Corinthians 5:7)." Although a miraculous, inward transformation has taken place in our spirit, who we are in Christ is not yet visible. "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will be revealed with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4)." Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, we no longer merely recognize them by their outward, natural personality but we see them by faith as a new spiritual person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-17).

Jesus Christ personally revealed this mystery of the cross (we died in Christ so Christ might live in us) to the apostle Paul (Galatians 1:11-16; Colossians 1:25-27). This is the gospel Paul lived and preached: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me and the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2:20)." Since Paul knew the mystery of Christ's "exchanged life," he knew Christ was his hiding place. This is what Paul meant when he said he had learned the secret of being content in Christ in every situation whether he was in prosperity or in adversity (Philippians 4:11-13). When we know we have died in Christ to the world (Galatians 6:14) and Christ is now our life (Colossians 3:3), we can live in the midst of this hostile world without being spiritually harmed by our enemy, the devil (1 John 5:18). We can function very effectively here on earth in body and soul while our spirit is firmly fixed in the heavenly realm where we are seated with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:6). "Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right

hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth (Colossians 3:1-2)."

Just because Christ is our hiding place does not mean we will not suffer physical or emotional pain and loss. However, if Christ is our hiding place, His divine life within us will always be sufficient. When Paul proclaimed nothing could separate us from Jesus Christ - neither trouble, persecution or peril (Romans 8:35), he spoke out of his personal experience. He had suffered hunger and homelessness, shipwrecks, beatings, lashings, imprisonments and stoning for Christ's sake. Yet he overcame all these difficulties in the strength of Jesus Christ, His hiding place (Philippians 4:11-13).

Jesus said great trouble would come upon the earth in the last days and warned us to be ready (Matthew 24:21-44). The only secure way to prepare for the trouble ahead is to know we have been crucified with Christ and make Christ our life each day. If we practice living out this truth of the cross, Jesus Christ will be our hiding place in time of trouble. This is similar to getting ready for a great storm. We must prepare beforehand by securing our house. Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and *acts on them*, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock... And the rain fell, the floods came and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock (Matthew 7:24-25)." If we wait to secure our house during the storm, it is too late. In the same way, if we think we can get spiritually ready and find the hiding place when the trouble is already on us, it is too late.

"For in the day of trouble He will hide me in His shelter; in the secret place of His tabernacle He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock." Psalm 27:5

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