



December 2001

This past year, I believe God has affirmed in me again and again the message of His heart:

*His Son Jesus Christ . . . who is offered as a gift to us through the cross.
When this gift is received,
the death of Christ RECONCILES us to a holy God
and
the resurrected life of Christ RECREATES us infused with His very life!*

My desire with these newsletters is to present this glorious message from various perspectives, like looking at a diamond from various angles...same message, but a never-ending glory. I hope people are encouraged to see the reality of Christ and to consider His glory and the unfathomable riches available through Him. I can now relate to Paul in Ephesians 3:8, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

Following are some key aspects of this message I have thought about reflecting back on this year.

- 1. The message is alive.** The message is not about principles to live by, but is all about the Person of Christ living through people! God doesn't want us to live moral lives...He gives us the privilege to live the Christ life! We no longer have to try to be moral...we already have the life and character of Christ! **Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but ALIVE to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:11).**
- 2. The message is universal.** It's been so amazing this year to see this message reveal true peace and freedom to many people from all walks of life and all ages, including members of several Christian denominations. This message is not a unique doctrine for certain people, but is LIFE offered to everyone! **For God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in [receives] Him should not perish but have life [the very life of Christ] that is eternal (John 3:16).**
- 3. The message is foundational.** Apart from this message that Christ is the only source of true life, a ministry can minister to many temporal, earthly needs, yet without giving true life and having no eternal value. **For no other FOUNDATION can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).**
- 4. The message is the heart of God the Father.** Because of the finished work of Christ, God lovingly embraces each of His children and exclaims from eternity past to eternity future, "This is My son (or daughter) in whom I am well pleased!" Only out of such pure acceptance can we know true peace and freedom. **To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which HE MADE US ACCEPTED in the Beloved [Christ] (Ephesians 1:6).**

On the back of this newsletter are some ways Jesus is leading me to share His message. However, the underlying "method" of sharing is simply being free to be yourself and trusting Jesus to live through you in all things. The message is a Person named Jesus, and He is shared not through periodic special events, but moment by moment as the fragrance of a person's unique life (2 Corinthians 2:15).

GRACE NOTE

Salvation is not getting Jesus to come into your heart.
Salvation is receiving a brand NEW heart...the heart of Jesus Christ Himself! Happy NEW Year! ☺

SHARING THE MESSAGE OF THE CHRIST LIFE

Prison Ministry

Recently, my mother (a.k.a. Mama ☺) accompanied me (on behalf of Christ Life Ministries) to a chapel service at Henderson County Correctional Center to fellowship around this message with 8 special men. We all discussed John 1:12, **“For as many as RECEIVED Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.”** This verse reveals that the gospel is unconditionally receiving (surrender) the Life of Christ Himself, not acknowledging facts about Christ. This verse also reveals God’s heart for us not to focus on our BEHAVIOR but on what He has made us to BECOME - His children. We are products of the cross, not our past behavior. With this as our focus, we are focusing on Christ who is our life (Colossians 3:4) and then our present behavior will be the fruit of who we truly are in Christ (Galatians 5:16).

We discussed how Satan changes one little letter in the word RECEIVE to pervert it to the word DECEIVE! Satan’s original deception continues to tempt everyone today, including Christians: *that we have to do a little something to finish what God has re-created in Christ...that life is not as simple as receiving what God provides.*

So, Satan’s primary ploy is to tempt us to get our focus off of our union with Christ and our dependence on His all-sufficient life. And when we fall for this temptation, we live according to the lie that we can do something good on our own. Consequently, we strive to live for God and for others, instead of resting in the majestic life of Christ in us. We often strive for blessings, while the truth is that we have already received all of the riches of Christ! Ephesians 1:3 says we have already been blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing! This is because Colossians 1:17 says we have the ultimate blessing: CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY! Oh how we often pray for blessings when we already have in us the fullness of the “Blesser” Himself!

However, even in and through these temptations, God is in loving control and is revealing His Son in us (Galatians 1:15-16)! We all rejoiced in these truths during the chapel time. Each time I fellowship with these men and anytime I am with Mama ☺, I receive a special blessing - *the fragrance of Christ springing forth from their openness and humility.*

Church Ministry

Christ Life Ministries passion is to support local churches:

First Baptist Church Atlanta (In Touch Ministries) continues to refer people in this area to Christ Life Ministries for discipleship counseling. A pastor and a youth pastor are joyfully receiving (and giving) training and encouragement through (and to) Christ Life Ministries. Brevard Community Church has invited Christ Life Ministries to teach a Grace Life Conference in March 2002.

Grace Life Conferences

The Grace Life Conference is a 10-hour study on the glorious gospel message (3 hours Friday evening and 7 hours Saturday).

Six conferences are scheduled in 2002 at the main office of Christ Life Ministries in Hendersonville, NC.

In addition, four Conferences are scheduled in 2002 in Simpsonville, SC:

February 1-2

May 3-4

August 3-4

November 1-2

Fellowship

The little satellite office of Christ Life Ministries in Simpsonville has opened up several opportunities this past month to fellowship with family and friends around this message...very precious times for me. I am excited to fellowship more through the office. The office also allowed me to begin sharing this message of hope during the holidays with a person referred by In-Touch Ministries.

This office is a quaint little sanctuary that I know God will continue to use in a special way to share His heart this year. There are several opportunities that I sense God opening up through His office. Please call or email me any time if you would like to come by for fellowship and encouragement. I pray the office will be a “life gate” to all who come by – to the glory of God!