

GRACE Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2001

I want to be open to God's heart in sharing His gospel – His very Life. That's why I am openly sharing my heart with you through this newsletter. I did not sit down and plan this newsletter to do something good or to please God, although it may seem that way. I believe it is simply a result of Christ's life in me. I believe I am responding to God's grace – His initiation and His enablement. That's humbling and exciting to me. This newsletter seems natural to me and is a joy for me.

God is tenderly teaching me that He doesn't want us to live by any standards, or even moral principles, that try to define the requirements of the Christian life (law). God's heart is that we simply live **IN CHRIST** (grace) - to rest **IN CHRIST** - to cherish the truth of who we are **IN CHRIST** as a result of the finished work of Christ on the cross. The "doing" of the Christian life will be the fruit of the "being" **IN CHRIST** (and not vice versa). I hope this newsletter will be a gift that encourages you to continue to see your unique identity and opportunities **IN CHRIST**. Thank you for being a friend **IN CHRIST** to me! **Gregg**

I continue to be gripped by the foundation of the gospel – the message of the cross:

*When I trusted in Christ, not only was I forgiven of all my sins (Colossians 2:13),
God also placed me in union with Christ so that I died and was raised in union with Him to a new life **IN HIM**.*
It was a spiritual, and a literal, death and resurrection with Christ.

From the pulpit of the cross, Jesus proclaimed "It is finished!"
I received this truth, and as a result, I am now and forever complete **IN CHRIST** (Colossians 2:10)!

Believing God's Word that my identity is **IN CHRIST** is the foundation that leads to **CHRIST LIVING THROUGH ME**.
I am beginning to see these integral truths to be prevalent in every New Testament book. Look at Romans.

Romans 6:6, 8 summarizes the message of the cross:
"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Christ...and we were raised to new life **WITH HIM**."

Then, **Romans 6:11** exhorts us to "**RECKON yourselves to be alive IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD**."
A Greek word dictionary defines "to reckon" as "to occupy oneself by counting on (relying on) a truth."
I like that definition. It is more than just knowing. It reminds me of savoring a special situation or person.

Think about a special situation and person – for example, being in the mountains during Fall colors with a loved one.
Isn't it great to savor that? So "reckoning" is much more than just "knowing" the truth of a situation.

Have you ever savored being **IN CHRIST** – just to stand in awe of His loving gaze and embrace of you?
Ephesians 1:6 reveals how believers are totally accepted **IN THE BELOVED (CHRIST)**!

Then, **Romans 6:13** reveals the result of reckoning: *Therefore...yield yourself to be an instrument of Christ's life!*
So, as you savor the truth of being **IN CHRIST**, you focus on Him, and He overflows your life to others!

*"Your need for striving by the law has been removed. You are now free to be intimately one with Christ!
Look in the mirror. When you see your face, see also the face of Christ! It's true! I don't understand
it either - we will spend eternity savoring this. So as you behold Christ now, you will be transformed on
the outside to what you are completely like on the inside. And because all of this is by grace through the
Spirit, and not by your works, God is glorified." (my paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 3:18)*

As I shared these foundational gospel truths, I saw a healing joy begin being manifested in a family who has experienced a series of traumas. *In Touch Ministries* (First Baptist Church Atlanta) referred this family to *Christ Life Ministries* where I am a part-time discipler.

I also had the opportunity to fellowship around these gospel truths with three young pastors in a week-long workshop at *Christ Life Ministries*. Each of us were joyfully encouraged by God in "**the HOPE of the GOSPEL**" (**Colossians 1:23**).

GRACE NOTE

Because of your union with Christ through the cross,
you no longer have to view activities (such as obedience and prayer) as things you do apart from Christ, or even for Christ.
You can now trust and experience His faithfulness in you, as opposed to striving alone by your own faithfulness. He loves you dearly.