

**PRAISE INTERNATIONAL**  
**HOPE THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM**  
**NT 2 COR. 3:4-6, 12, OT PSALM 103:1-5**

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Good Morning

Denise is back its a good day! Also I want to share a good report so far from Sister Ann who is recovering from surgery.

Next weekend in Fremont Indiana - August 23-24 a weekend with Brad Jersak.

- The Cruciform Gospel - Brad is the author of several books but the one that really resonated with me in my own journey A More Christlike God, he has also written book on hearing God called Can you hear Me? and this year just released A more Christlike Way.
- He is pastor teacher author and professor in 3 Seminaries 2 in England - Westminster Theological Centre and the University of Nottingham as well as one in Canada at St. Stephens Seminary.
- I don't normally want to be about rehearsing credentials but especially in this case when you have someone who has begun to invite the western church to reconsider some of our held understandings about who God actually is - namely that He is most revealed in Jesus.
- You can register online by visiting the Facebook page entitled **The Cruciform Gospel**. Cruciform simply meaning Cross shaped.

Couple of weeks ago we looked at what Jesus meant when He said *the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* - and we asked the question **what are the Words that Jesus spoke with His life?**

- **Loyalty to the plans and promises of the God Head - Faith.**  
So much so Jesus repeats this phrase over and over - **I do not do anything of my own. I am Loyal to the Words of the Father!**
- Watch this - **Jesus demonstrates what it means to live as a person of Faith - in allegiance to the Father!**
- **He demonstrates Hope that is anchored in the reality of an Actual Kingdom that is unshaken by any other kingdom.**  
A Kingdom of righteousness Peace and Joy
- He demonstrates that **Love is the Motivation for all things.**  
Love that is self giving and self emptying and always seeks the good of the other.

I want to talk with you today about **Hope** centered around this idea that Jesus laid before His followers - the Words I give you are Spirit and Life! The Hope of Jesus is not about a little bit better version of something we have currently or previously known. Its a reality of a life lived with Him in which we encounter the eternal touching the present. **Hope the Reality of the Kingdom.**

**Deep inside a mountain** on a remote island halfway between Norway and the North Pole there is an abandoned coal mine that since 1984 has served as a seed bank for Nordic countries but because of the ideal conditions, in 2008 after some expansion it was officially opened as **the Global Seed Vault**.

- Currently it holds close to a million samples of seeds from all over the world. Hundreds of thousands of the worlds seeds have been frozen in time...at a near consistent temperature of -18C or .0f. The vault is intended to hold up to 4.5 million seeds for Centuries.
- Its purpose is to store duplicates of seed samples from the worlds crop collections.
- **It's the final back up** intended to address any number of dooms day predictions; climate change, nuclear war, war.

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*Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.*  
*Col 1:27b JB Phillips*

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- Held at those temperatures Science has concluded seeds can be 'held in time' for centuries as an insurance policy for the worlds food supply - the last Hope for life to be restored.

Amazing ....the power of a seed....'come to life'. These seeds were placed in this glove last Sunday at the opening of the River Promenade...

We have been considering what Jesus said in John 6. The Spirit gives life - **meaning that Spirit can bring life where there was not...no matter the scenario.**

- Jesus in John 6 is speaking to the Jewish community that had just experienced a free meal in the wilderness.
- Jesus is inviting them to a to a meal that would give life where they had not had to eat real bread - namely that He is that Bread. And as they were undone so Jesus talks to them about the bread that their forefathers ate in the desert that came down out of heaven....and then said bluntly **I was that bread!**
- That food in the dessert that gave life was Me! Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.

You are looking to fill your belly - **My hope is to fill your with actual Life!**

- John 6:63 *The Spirit gives life (seed) My words are Spirit and life...*

New Testament reading today - 2 Cor. 3:4-6, 12

*4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

*Vs 12 Therefore having such a hope...*

**Watch this the Seed bank of life.....the Vault of real life....His words....the real Hope....**

Therefore have such a vault of life....we use great boldness.

**This is the Hope of the Gospel beloved not just our bus fare to Heaven....**

- **Hope that something can come alive IN me....**
- **I can actually think and live differently....**

**What does this Hope mean....I want offer a couple pieces of good news according to the scripture...**

**1 - You can throw away your Fuzz Buster - or Shut off Waze....**

- Back in the day there were a number of folks who used to have these devices in their car that would buzz when it detected a speed radar....
- Where there is a radar there is a law enforcement officer....who if you are speeding will pull over not to talk about you or your life but to enforce the law that you have broken.

**The entire nature of my relationship in that system is based on the law....**

- And then there was that time I was rolling into St. Mary's Ohio....at the speed limit and was pulled over and given a ticket by a very unsympathetic officer who informed me that the speed had changed 1/4 mile behind me. No matter how I pleaded it could not change my fate - I had broken the law. **By the way this is exactly how many of us have been taught that God relates to us.**

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##### **Beloved the Hope of the Kingdom of God is this - Rom 5:18-20**

- Through the sin of the one the many were made sinners....no matter how hard you try....we have all blown it.
- Through the obedience of the One man the many were made righteous!

Paul says this in 1 Cor 15:56

- **The Power of sin is the law.....**

**The Good news of the Hope of the Gospel is that the Power of Sin has been broken!  
We can now live in Covenant not Contract!**

*We live in a world that largely sees human relationships in **contractual terms**, not covenantal terms. A contract is a legal arrangement between two parties meant to protect each from wrongdoing. We sign contracts with people (buying a house or car for instance) to protect us from others who might harm us without the contract in place. We trust the law in a contract.*

And again this is exactly how many view our relationship to God - the problem in a Law contract with God is not God but us....we are gonna miss it....

- **So God decided - I want to change the nature of this relationship from Contract to Covenant...in fact that is how I always wanted to relate to man.**

*... in a covenant we trust the person. A covenant is not protection from each other, but a pledge to one to another. A contract is for "services rendered," but a covenant is for a trusting reciprocal relationship. Greg Boyd states it succinctly: "People enter into covenants because they trust one another; people enter into legally binding contracts precisely because they don't" (Benefit of the Doubt, 115).*

##### **Romans 6:5-7**

*5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.*

**Here is what Hope means beloved - The Power of Sin is broken! So we do not have to fear this God - we can throw away the fuzz buster.**

##### **2 - Here is what else this means; You have a name and God knows it!**

One of the more horrific methods of hell experienced in something like the Holocaust was the deliberate steps taken to dehumanize men and women - **by giving them numbers and in many cases even tattooing a number on their body. A name recognizes an individual....**

One of the problems I have with some of the recovery movement is this - I recognize that we must own our stuff to get freedom. **Name it and own it** - that is the only place God can meet you in reality. But watch this - **I am NOT reality! I am not first a addict.**

**Here is why this matters** - I was reading Jeremiah 2:22 this week....

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- The stain of your guilt rises before me....
- I have often related to this....God is really disgusted with how dirty you are....but wait...
- Please notice this...God is talking to His people and it was **NOT about their Sin** but their guilt....

#### **Guilt - this distorting influence that shapes identity and creates distance!**

- Even your pet dog gets guilt!
- Its the guilt of the abused that becomes so deadly!
- It shapes their revelation about God and themselves!
- Guilt informs reality and distorts our view of Gods Goodness and our innocence....
- And we begin to believe that is who we are!

#### **And in that place we begin to make life work apart from God!**

Listen to this from The Passion Translation Hebrews 10:21-22

*21 And since we now have a magnificent King-Priest to welcome us into God's house, 22 we come closer to God and approach him with an open heart, **fully convinced by faith that nothing will keep us at a distance from him.** For our hearts have been sprinkled with blood to remove impurity and we have been **freed from an accusing conscience** and now we are clean, unstained, and presentable to God inside and out!*

#### **Beloved DISTANCE is the goal of Hell against the human heart!**

- Genesis 3...in guilt Adam and Eve hid....in Love the Father pursued them!
- Their guilt did not hinder Him!

**Gods invitation is and always will be...come closer! Exodus 20:21 ... so the people stood at a distance...**

**Here is the Hope of Gods Kingdom - every vapor of distance has been removed.**

- He knows who you are how He made you and He is not relating to you on the basis of guilt.

**Good News - the power of Sin is broken - the Stain of guilt has been removed.**

#### **3. Last thing I want to submit - The Mirror could be lying!**

Augustine ' *What one looks for (in a mirror) is an image of what is true....*'

- **What do I look like?**

Augustine goes on ' *...it is by loving Truth ( who is a person) that the image of God to which we were created is sculpted anew*'.

- **Oh that is who I really am....**
- Here is what I mean by this - when I look in the mirror of religion...I see and hear this over and over... *just a sinner a wretch saved by grace....*can't wait til I get out of here.
- **When I look in this mirror...of the revelation of Christ...in me. I begin to realize that is who I actually am....beloved it matters what mirror you are staring at!**

IE - its just me....look closer ( lion king)

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2 Cor 3:12-18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a **mirror ( actual meaning of the word)** the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

so Paul says later in 2 Cor 4:10  
*....so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body...*

**This has HUGE implications not only of how view our selves but others....**

**Close with CS Lewis - The Weight of Glory.**

*It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor.*

*The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken.*

*It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.*

*All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations.*

*It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics.*

***There are no ordinary people.***

*You have never talked to a mere mortal.*

*Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat.*

*But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.*

*This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn.*

*We must play.*

*But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.*

*And our charity must be real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment.*

*Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, **your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.***

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**Do you know who you are?**

- Ephesians 1:3....*every spiritual blessing*....

This is real Hope there is a Seed Vault of life in you!

**Closing prayer**

Gracious God,  
in the debris and litter of the world,  
you clear a place

where **we can be planted:**

**your justice**

which can bring hope  
to the oppressed;

**your righteousness**

which can receive  
even our enemies  
in peace.

We pray this in the name of the One who taught us to pray:

Communion

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