

CHRIST IN YOU

The Wisdom of God

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Scripture Reading:

I Corinthians 1:30-31—Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

Andrew Murray has said that salvation is not just having our sins forgiven and going to heaven. Salvation can be summed up in: you in Christ, and Christ in you. Christ for you is that Christ may be in you. Christ is the beginning and the end of salvation; you in Christ and Christ in you. This is full salvation.

We thank the Lord that when we believe in the Lord Jesus, God puts us in Christ; that is to say, all that is in Christ is now open and available to us. The Bible says: "All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, and ye are complete in Him." When we think of God—all His fulness—it is beyond our comprehension; and yet, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily. Then God puts you and me in Christ. So everything that is in Christ is now available for us. This is our blessed position that God has given to us.

At the same time, when God puts us in Christ, He has made Christ to us wisdom from God. In other words, not only has God put us in Christ, but God has also put Christ in us. So everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus is in Christ; and everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus has Christ in him or in her. Christ in you is not static. Christ in you is living, vibrant, operative, working. That is to say, how do we know Christ is in us? We know He is in us because He is living in us. He is working in us. We are experiencing Him every day, every hour, in every circumstance. We are experiencing Him as living and real in us. And He is living in us to complete His work of redemption.

At the very outset, I want to impress upon you that this is full salvation. You are in Christ. What a position that is! Christ is in you. We can experience Him daily in our life. Christ is not a theory to us.

Christ is real to

us. He lives in us and we live by Him.

I often feel that I Corinthians 1:30 is a key verse in the Bible because it shows us what Christ being in us means: "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus who has been made to us wisdom from God, righteousness, and holiness, and redemption." God has made Christ to us wisdom.

Probably we all feel we lack wisdom. This is something we really need. The Bible says that the natural man does not receive the things of God, nor can he know the things of God. In other words, when you come to God and to spiritual things, it is beyond the understanding of the natural man. If you are not the Lord's, if you do not believe the Lord, no matter how clever you are, no matter how learned you are, you cannot understand spiritual things. You may be able to understand everything under heaven or upon the earth, and yet when you come to the things of God, when you come to spiritual things, you do not and cannot understand at all. You do not have the wisdom that is from above. But thank God, when we believed in the Lord Jesus, something happened to us. God has made Christ wisdom to us. We who believe in the Lord Jesus have become sons of wisdom. There is a wisdom from above that is in us.

Revealed Knowledge and Applied Knowledge

We can define wisdom as revealed knowledge as well as applied knowledge. Wisdom is revealed knowledge, something that has to be revealed to us by God. The Bible says, "God's wisdom in a mystery." God is a mystery and God's wisdom is in a mystery. It is something that by human search and effort we cannot reach, but it is revealed to us. Wisdom is revealed knowledge—a knowledge that we did not have before, but a knowledge that has been revealed to us. And what is revealed? God is revealed to us. God's purpose, His counsel, His work, His heart, His mind, what He is, what He is doing, these are all revealed to us. That is wisdom.

Wisdom is not only revealed knowledge, wisdom is also applied knowledge. These revelations of God that have been revealed to us are not theories. They are life, they are living and working; they are applied, experienced. That is wisdom. God has made Christ in us wisdom to us.

Wisdom is not an it; wisdom is a He. What is that knowledge God revealed to us? That knowledge is Christ. God revealed His Son in us. That is wisdom. His Son is wisdom. He is the purpose of God, He is the counsel of God, He is the working of God, He is God's heart, He is God's mind. So what is revealed actually is a Person, not a thing, a teaching, a doctrine. Therefore, what is applied is not just an experience; what is applied is a Person. Christ lives in us. This becomes our experience. So Christian experience is experiencing Christ—what Christ means to us, what He is to us. That is wisdom.

Wisdom is a Hearing Heart

In the Old Testament, there was a person named Solomon who was the wisest man in this world. One day, when he went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God, God spoke to him in a dream and said: "You can ask anything that you want and it will be given to you." Solomon asked for one thing: wisdom. If you compare I Kings and II Chronicles, you will find when he asked for wisdom he actually asked for a hearing heart. In other words, he asked for a heart that could hear God. That is wisdom. If you do not have such a heart that can hear God, you do not have wisdom, no matter how clever you are. That is why you find the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God.

Solomon asked for a hearing heart, a heart that could hear God. And the Bible said his wisdom excelled the wisdom of the East. Generally speaking, the wisdom of the East is philosophical.

Then you find, his wisdom excelled the wisdom of Egypt. The wisdom of Egypt at that time was scientific, technical, because Egypt was famous for its architecture. You have the pyramids there, which are wonders in this world—technical wisdom. But Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of Egypt.

Solomon's wisdom even excelled the wisdom of Heman, Ethan, Cacol, and Darda. In the book of Psalms, there are some poems, some hymns written by Heman. These are prophetic psalms. In other words, it is inspirational, even prophetic and yet Solomon's wisdom excelled even that. Why? It is because the wisdom that God gave to Solomon is the wisdom of God. He can see God in the plants, from the tree of Lebanon to the hyssop on the walls. He can see God in

all the animals. He can see God in everything. That is wisdom.

When Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, in chapter 8, he personified wisdom. Wisdom is not just a thing, a theory, something abstract, philosophical. Wisdom is a Person. He said, "Before God laid the foundation of the earth, wisdom was there rejoicing in the presence of his father." And of course we know this refers to our Lord Jesus, the Son of God. So even Solomon understood that wisdom is more than a thing, an experience, a teaching, a knowledge. Wisdom actually is a Person. If you know that Person, you have wisdom. And that Person has been made wisdom to you.

Thank God, even though in the world they may consider us as fools, there is wisdom in us that the world does not know. We know that Wisdom, we know that Person and we experience Him in every way.

Experiencing Wisdom

In I Corinthians 1:30, he said: "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption." According to the original Greek, we should put a colon there. "Who has been made to us wisdom from God: righteousness and holiness and redemption." In other words, wisdom sums up these three things: righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Or to put it in another way, wisdom is composed of, is known by: righteousness, holiness, and redemption. How do we know wisdom? How do we experience wisdom? We know wisdom as righteousness; we know wisdom as holiness, and we know wisdom as redemption. And that brings us down to our experience.

I think righteousness is the first problem that faces everybody. How can man be just before God? That is a question asked in Job 9:2. We know the book of Job was actually the first book written in the Bible. It traces back to the time of the patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Job lived at that time, and when he was conversing with his three friends, they raised a question: "How can a man be just with God?" God is just, God is righteous; but we are unjust, we are unrighteous. How can we be just before God? When we hear of God, we hide ourselves.

In the beginning, our forefathers, Adam and Eve, sinned against God. They rebelled against God, they disobeyed God, and when they heard God coming into the garden, instead of running out to welcome

Him, they hid themselves among the trees. They dared not see God because God is just and they were unjust, unrighteous, sinful. If any sinner should see God, he would be smitten to death. No one can see God without being smitten to death because God is so righteous, so complete, so perfect, so noble, so just, full of light, no darkness, pure, holy. How can we sinners face God?

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they knew they were naked before God. What did they do? They used the fig leaves to make aprons, and tried to cover their nakedness. But when God came to seek them in the garden, they hid themselves because they knew that aprons made of leaves could not cover their nakedness. They knew they were sinful before God.

We are like our forefathers. When we realize that we are sinful before God, when in our conscience we are being convicted that we are not perfect, that we have sinned against God and against man, what do we do? We do the very same thing. We try to do some good works; we try to accumulate some merits, hoping these will cover us. But remember, these works of man are like the aprons made of fig leaves. They cannot cover our nakedness. And the Bible said the weather changed. It became cool. The wind was blowing, and how could that fig leaf apron cover your nakedness? All our own righteousnesses, all the good things that we do to try to make up for the bad things that we do, are like filthy rags. They do not, they cannot cover our nakedness. How can man be righteous, that is, considered by God as right? How can God look at you and say you are right? Now, you may think you are right because you are in darkness, but when you come to the light, then are you all right?

I remember a story. I have a friend who was a banker. One day he went to a coal mine for investigation. When he came up from the mine, he looked at the people that went with him and he laughed. Why? He saw all these black things on their faces. So he laughed at them. He did not know that his face was black too. And that is the way we are.

We look at people and say, "Oh, you are sinful. You are wicked. You are bad. Oh, I am all right. I am a good man. I am perfect. I do lots of good works," not knowing that we are as black as they are. How can a man be just with God? With man it is impossible, but thank God for His love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." By the works of law, no one can be justified, but outside of law, without law, the righteousness of God has been manifested to us. The righteousness of God is extended to us freely, by grace, through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Christ our Righteousness

When we realize that we have no righteousness of our own, that we cannot stand before God and that one day we will all have to go to meet our Maker, then we know we cannot do it. But thank God, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world. He became the Lamb of God. He took our sins upon Himself. The sinless was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God. He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we may be the righteousness of God. In other words, the Son of God, who came into this world as a man, He is the only man who is sinless-perfect. He took all our sins upon Himself and there on the cross He became the Lamb of God. He died as our substitute. Because of the shedding of His blood, if you believe in Him, your sins are all forgiven. The righteousness of God has come to you, and God can say, "You are right, you are all right," because you have the blood of the Lord Jesus sprinkled on your wicked conscience. Your wicked conscience has been cleansed. You can stand before God and be justified, justified by faith through grace. The grace of God in Christ Jesus has come to you and all you need to do is believe by faith, receive Him as your Savior, trusting in His blood shed for you. That is the reason we worship Him around the Lord's Table, remembering what He has done for us. When we believe in Him our sins are remitted, the blood of the Lord Jesus cleanses our conscience, and we are justified before God by faith. In other words, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, our sins are forgiven, we are justified, we can stand before God, and God can say, "Just as if you have never sinned."

That is our understanding of righteousness. But the Bible says, "God has made Christ righteousness to us." In other words, righteousness is not just something that God has reckoned to us; righteousness actually is a Person. It is more than just having our sins borne away by our Lord Jesus. We find that when we believe in the Lord Jesus, God has clothed us with Christ as our righteousness.

You remember the prodigal son. He came from a rich family. One day he asked for his portion of inheritance from his father: "Don't wait until you die to give me the inheritance. Give me my portion now. I want to see the world. I want to go away and enjoy myself." So he got his portion, he went to a far country, and he lived a life of pleasure in sin. He wasted all his money. And then you find, there was a

famine there and he could not get a job. He was put to feed the swine; and he was so hungry, he wanted to eat the husks that the swine were eating. Then he remembered that his father was rich and had many servants. Why should he die of hunger here? So he went home; he repented. He told his father, "I sinned against God, and I sinned against you. I am not worthy to be a son, but take me in as a servant. At least I will have something to eat." And you know what the father did? The father kissed his neck. When you rebel, your neck is stiff, so the father kissed his neck. Oh, the father's love softened his heart. And the father said, "No, you are not a servant; you are my son." He asked his servants to clothe him with the best robe so he could sit at the table and feast as a son of the nobleman.

Clothed with Christ

The parable of the prodigal son is a parable our Lord Jesus used to show what God our Father has done for us. We were in rags; we came back to God and said, "God, we are unworthy. Take us as servants." But God said, "No, no. You are My children." And He took off our rags, our own so-called righteousness, and He clothed us with the best robe. What is the best robe? That best robe is Christ. We are clothed with Christ—made fit to be children of God, fit to sit at His table and enjoy His bounty.

Righteousness is more than just having our sins forgiven as if we had never sinned. Righteousness is that we are clothed with Christ as our righteousness. Every time we go before God, we are clothed with Him. When God looks at us, He sees His beloved Son and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. I am satisfied." That is our standing before God. We are clothed with Christ.

I think most of you have read *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is a wonderful book. I hope everyone will read it many times. The writer of *Pilgrim's Progress* is John Bunyan. When he was young, he was convicted of his sin and he was seeking for salvation. And one day, as he was walking in the field, he was thinking: "How can I be just before God? Where is my righteousness?" And he heard a voice, as it were, from heaven, "My righteousness is in heaven." What does it mean? It means that his righteousness is Christ.

We may change from morning to night. In the morning when you get up, you feel you are all right and you can draw near to God; you pray and have a good time with God. But in the evening when you come home, you are full of dust and your spirit is low. You feel you are not fit to go to God, that you should

clean up yourself a little bit before you can go to God. Have you ever had such a feeling? You may change, but thank God, your righteousness never changes! Every time you come to God, it is not on what you are, it is on what He is. Every time you come to God, you are clothed with Christ. When God looks at you, He sees righteousness, because Christ is our righteousness. It never changes. And that should give us that holy boldness to come to God, knowing that Christ is our righteousness.

But there is something more. Righteousness is not only having our sins forgiven and being reckoned as right before God; righteousness actually is being clothed with Christ. We are always clothed with Christ, so our standing before God never changes; we can come before God at any time.

Constituted Righteous

In Romans 5:18-19 it says, "So then as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteous act towards all men for justification of life." (Because of the righteous act of Christ on the cross we have the justification of life.) "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners . . ." (That "one man" was Adam. The "many" are the people in this world. Because of our forefather's disobedience, we who are born of our forefather have been constituted, formed, made sinners. When we were born, we were already sinners before we ever sinned. Because we were sinners, therefore we sinned. We cannot help but sin.) But here you find: "So also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous." And the one is Christ, the second man.

What does it mean? It means that we are not only clothed with Christ as our righteousness, given our permanent standing before God; but, we have been constituted righteous. In other words, Christ lives in us, and because He lives in us, He lives His righteous acts out through us. We are *made* righteous.

In I John 2, you will find that God is righteous; therefore, he that practices righteousness is of God. Every believer in the Lord Jesus has that righteous life of Christ in Him; therefore if we live by Christ, we will *practice* righteousness. This is practical righteousness. In our daily life, we will do right, not because of what we are, but because of what Christ is to us. Because He lives in us, when He lives out, everything is right in the sight of God. This is the meaning of: "Christ has been made righteousness to us."

Is this a theory? Is this just a teaching? No. We find this is substance, this is an experience, this is real. We live it every day: Christ, our righteousness—a Person, not a thing.

Christ our Holiness

Secondly, God has not only made Christ righteousness to us, but He has made Christ holiness to us. Holiness is deeper than righteousness. Holiness is an inward character; righteousness is an outward behavior. God is holy; that refers to His character. God is righteous; that refers to His acts. Holiness governs righteousness. Because God is holy, therefore He is righteous. The opposite of righteousness is sin; the opposite of holiness is commonness.

Our God is uncommon, so uncommon that He is alone. He is unique. You cannot compare Him with anything else. He is all by Himself. He is holy, different, special, incomparable. This is our God. And He wants us to be holy. The Bible says, "Be ye holy because I, Jehovah, am holy." Not only outwardly do you have righteous acts, good behavior that will please Him, but God looks at the heart and says, "Inwardly you have to be holy, separated, separated from the world, separated unto God."

Let us try to approach this from our experience. Before we were saved, the one problem that bothered us was this matter of righteousness. How can we be right before that righteous God? After we believe in the Lord Jesus, we have experienced the forgiveness of our sin, the joy of salvation, we know we belong to Him, gradually we begin to realize we should be like Him. That is very natural. That is supernaturally natural. You do not have that feeling before you believe in the Lord Jesus, but after you believe in the Lord Jesus, supernaturally, naturally you know that you have to be like Him. If you do not have that kind of sense, I wonder if you are saved. But if you have that kind of sense, it proves that you belong to Him.

Gradually, you find this sense of being holy, this desire to be like Him, begins to increase within you. But the more you try to be like Him, the more you find you are not like Him. In other words, the closer you come to Him, the more light you receive from Him, the more you discover that you are far from being like Him. So you try very hard to be a good Christian, to be like Him, to live a Christian life; but, the more you try, the less you succeed.

It is like the man in Romans 7 whose soul has been awakened. He knows what is right, and he wants to do what is right. The Lord said, "Do not be greedy." And he is determined not to be greedy, but the more he

tries not to be greedy, the greedier he becomes. Until he cries out and says, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from this body of death?"

Is this something that we are all experiencing? How can we be holy like God? And we begin to hear many teachings on holiness, many teachings on sanctification. Some people say, "Well, you need a second experience. The first experience is to get saved, to have your sins forgiven. The second experience is to have the root of sin eradicated. Then you will be holy throughout your life." As a matter of fact, when I was saved, I was among the holiness people. But unfortunately, I saw the founder of that group lose her temper in the meeting.

Then we hear, "Well, if you want to live a holy life, read Romans 6:6: 'Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him.' And then Romans 6:11 says, 'Reckon yourselves as dead to sin and as alive to God in Christ Jesus.' Then continue with Romans 6:13 which says to yield yourself to sanctification; yield the members of your body to righteousness unto holiness." You hear such teaching: "When Christ died on the cross, I died," so you reckon yourself as dead unto sin. But when temptation comes and you begin to reckon, it is too late. That teaching does not help you, because you are looking for an *it*. Holiness to you is an experience, is a teaching, is an *it*. It is something that maybe God will give to you and then you can have it without being in communion with God. You can live by yourself because you have that package. No, holiness is a Person.

One day, you will realize it is really not just a teaching. Now, there is nothing wrong with that teaching. It is true, when Christ died on the cross, He took you with Him. He not only took your sins with Him, He took you with Him. It is because you do not realize you are that bad and need to be crucified, therefore you are fighting. One day, when you realize you are as bad as God has seen you to be and God says, "You are condemned, you are crucified," you say, "Amen. I am dead, I am crucified." You realize that; you reckon it by faith. That is true. There is nothing wrong with that truth. What is wrong is, if you hold to an experience, it will go away. You need to see through the experience, that actually it is Christ, it is in Christ that you died, it is Christ in you that you live today.

The apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me; but in that now I live in flesh, I live by faith." (Whose faith? Not my faith.) "The faith of the Son of God who has

loved me and given Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). What is holiness? Holiness is not an experience of Romans 6. Holiness is: Christ lives in you. That is holiness.

Martin Luther, the reformer of the sixteenth century, once said: "Formerly, if you came to my door, whom would you find in the room? You would find a round-headed monk, with shaved crown, hair shirt, two stones for a pillow, and a knotted scourge hanging by the bed. That is what you would see—Martin Luther the monk. Now if you come to the door and say, 'Who lives here?' Martin Luther does not live here; Christ lives here." That is holiness.

If you try to live by your self, even your good self, you may perhaps attain to some human perfection, but you are far from being holy as God is holy. The only holy life that we can live is when we recognize that it is Christ who lives in us. It is no longer I, it is Christ who lives in me. If you live by the life of Christ, there is holiness. If you live by your self, it is commonness. Therefore we need to look to Him and live by Him every moment of the day. That is holiness. Holiness is not an *it*; holiness is a *He*, a Person. It is only when we live by Him that we are able to live a holy life. Yes, it is a life of faith. It is not a life of feeling or of sight. But whose faith? Our faith may waver and falter. It is by the faith of the Son of God. Oh, that comforts me so much. Often, I feel my faith fails me, but I look up and find He is faithful. He is faithful to what He said, to what He has done, to His own word. His faith maintains us in this life of holiness.

Christ our Redemption

Redemption has a broad sense and a narrow sense. In the broad sense, redemption includes all the finished work of Christ—justification, sanctification, glorification. That is redemption. He is our kinsman redeemer, just like in the book of Ruth. He not only redeems us, He also redeems our lost inheritance. He restores everything by His redemption. But redemption has a narrow sense, as we find in Romans 8:19: the redemption of our body. We may put it this way. Righteousness has to do with the salvation of our spirit. Holiness has to do with the salvation of our soul. Redemption has to do with the salvation of our body.

The salvation of God is complete. He not only saves our spirit, quickens our dead spirit into life, and puts His Holy Spirit in us, but we find that He also saves our soul. He transforms us by living in us, that we may be conformed to His image. But we know that His salvation also reaches even to our body.

Now today, we are still in this mortal body, but one day, even this mortal body will be transformed by His power into an immortal body. This is a body of humiliation. Do you feel that your body is a body of humiliation? When you are young, you do not feel it that way. But as I get older, more and more I feel this is a body of humiliation. I feel humiliated. Many things I want to do, I cannot do anymore. Isn't that humiliating? But thank God, one day His salvation will come to this body of humiliation and change it into a body of His glory! Wonderful! Wonderful!

Even before that day comes, today, while we are still living in this mortal body, do you not know that the Spirit of God who dwells in us will quicken even our mortal body? When we feel weak, when we feel low, we look to Him, and He will quicken even our mortal body, enable us to do things that we cannot do in ourselves. In other words, His power, His resurrection power, has already been working in us today, and it will continue to work until this mortal body will be transformed into an immortal body, a spiritual body, transcending time and space. We are looking forward to that freedom.

Our Lord Jesus is not only our Redeemer, He is our redemption. It is because He lives in us, therefore this body one day has to be changed. And even today we are experiencing His power, His glory.

This is wisdom. God has made Christ to us wisdom. Remember, it is not something in the future; God *has* made. Because Christ is in you, God has already made Him righteousness, holiness, and redemption to you. Isn't that wonderful? It is all Christ. Because of this, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord Jesus. We have nothing to boast of; we were as unrighteous as anybody else. We are as unholly as anybody else. We are in this corrupted body like anybody else. But thank God, it is all His doing. It is all Christ. He has been made unto us righteousness, and holiness, and redemption.

What is Christianity? Christianity is Christ. What is Christian life? Christian life is a life with Christ. It is very simple, but it is glorious. That is why the Bible says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." One explanation of glory is that glory is how it ought to be. One day, we will be what we ought to be in the mind of God. That is glory. Christ is glorified, God is glorified, and we are glorified. Praise God!
