

# The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus

## A Ventures for Christ Newsletter

To those hungry Disciples who long to intensify and expand their following of the Savior by taking up their cross.

Issue 8

December 2024/January 2025

### Words of Eternal Hidden Wisdom

And the Lord Jesus Himself says, "I will open My mouth in parables. I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world" (Matt. 13:34-35).

"Collect for yourselves treasures in heaven," and prove my eternal wealth is Messiah Jesus in my heart (Matt. 6:19-20).

"All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him" (Col. 2:2-3), the Apostle Paul.

"But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart"  
(Luke 2:19), response of the Virgin Mother.



"... since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Heb. 12:1-2).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17), the Apostle Paul.

### The Sweet Sound of Spiritual Harmony

#### Practicing the Spiritual Octave

Pastor McCarty

Napoleon Bonaparte's final surrender to the British in July 1815 brought an end to over a decade of war in Europe. The Napoleonic Wars brought many hardships in their wake, but rebuilding could now begin. In 1816 a young Catholic priest, Father Joseph Mohr, wrote a lovely Christmas poem following a winter evening walk through his peaceful village. For the next two years the poem remained unknown. In need of a Christmas song in 1818 he dusted off his poem and, with the help of his friend Franz Gurber, a choir master who had set the poem to music, first performed "Silent Night" during Christmas Eve mass in St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, Austria. Tradition holds that, thanks to a mouse nibbling at the church's organ, the first performance of "Silent Night" was to the accompaniment of Father Mohr's guitar. The spread of the song was purportedly promoted by the organ repairman who took a copy of it with him to his village. Through whatever means, it was shared then spread as it was performed by traveling musicians.<sup>1</sup>

The song soon became popular in Northern Europe and beyond. In 1834 "Silent Night" was performed for the King of Prussia, made its debut in New York City in 1839, and on around the world it went. It was so well known that during WWI, in the unofficial Christmas ceasefire of 1914, it was simultaneously sung in French, German, and English on the Western Front. It has now been translated into more than 300 languages.

"Silent Night" has been performed by great orchestras, thunderous organs, quiet guitars, and lone voices for over 200 years. You are probably hearing it on your "inner gramophone" right now. Yet, this deeply moving piece of music is made up of just one set of notes (a scale of A through G). It is their arrangement and variations that create the melody. The same is true of the Spiritual Scale we use to create the music of our lives as Cross Disciples.

We must learn to play the scales of the Godhead's keyboard of grace (His initiatives of love) and truth (His unbreakable standards). Spiritual skill comes as we increasingly experience His foundations, completions, finishings, and perfections. We play our "Christ life music" for others as we should when we yield and commit ourselves to the Master's strategic compositions of love and cross action. He has purposed a special part and result for our creation and new creation! We must find our role and play it out for His glory (Acts 20:22-24).

Aspects of these following eight mindsets and Spirit touches are occurring simultaneously and randomly as you increasingly search the Scriptures and yield to the Holy Spirit's voice of grace and truth. These eight are my personal count. All eight are certainly biblical and match my experience of being a Christian for 74 years. I won't quibble over 7 or 9, but eight is a good biblical number. The more we comprehend His personal

revelations to us and embrace the discovery of His love for who and what we are, then the more we will “sound” and “look” like Jesus to others. The melodies, harmonies, words, and rhythms of the magnificent Christ will flow into and out of your life! You will increasingly reign in life as you become *a spreader* of His fragrance in all you think, desire, and do (Rom. 5:17; I Cor. 2:14-17). We have been made right in His sight and promised His continuous initiatives to enable our conquering in all things! We always have enough grace for His race (Heb. 12:1-2)! We keep singing His praise (Ps. 34:1-3). Having this righteousness for Him seats us at the keyboard of the Father’s purposes for our life. To play these eight keys continually under our great Conductor’s direction will create His music within us. Our life to others will become as the sound and fragrance of the Lord Himself walking in the Garden of Delight (Eden—Hebrew). Like Joseph of old, let us be one who dreams about the great and magnificent things of God. May our constant prayer be that of asking our Lamb-Lion-Lord to touch others with His presence, promises, and power as we play out our life before them. Nothing else matters more!

## **The Eight Steps to Cross Disciple Overcoming**

### **I. Theatrize**



I experience Salvation Realization: I see the Lamb destroying sin. His solutions cover my need. I am saved from a hopeless life of sin and self. I am forgiven of all my guilt.

*Messiah Jesus Becomes My Savior*

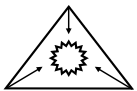
### **II. Realize**



I commit to Crucifixion Motivation: I see and enter the warfare between cosmic good and evil. His sacrifice compels my cross. I slowly but steadily pursue His seven steps in my own crucifixion (Gal. 2:20). He is triune, and we are in His image.

*Messiah Jesus Reveals My Cross*

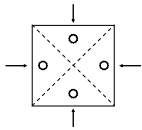
### **III. Triangalize**



I develop Triangulation Illumination: I see His triune truth in every issue. His thoughts control my thinking more and more. I seek to make changes so I will be more like Him (Gen. 1:26-31)! I grow deeper in knowing my guilt is gone.

*Messiah Jesus Transforms My Mind*

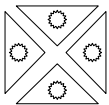
### **IV. Quaterize**



I apply Fourfold Omni Apprehension to all that pressures me: I see His options in every matter that may force my decision. His disciplines become my necessities to choose the best and decline the good. My mind is the same as Jesus’ (Phil. 2:5). I always act on what’s best for the glory of the Father and the good of others, not what seems best for me!

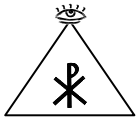
*Messiah Jesus Directs My Decisions*

### **V. Pyramidize**



I build Pyramid Perceptions: I see my challenges, unite them, and overcome. His testings are my opportunities to adopt His thoughts about all things around me. I must choose one of the four. I select no, slow, grow, or go... whatever is the preference of Christ.

*Messiah Jesus Anoints My Maturity*

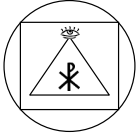


### VI. Pinnaclize

I experience Pinnacle Comprehension: I see my calling and find my peak to pursue. His intentions initiate my spiritual compulsions to choose His oneness. I think and envision His will alone. What is His best? I always choose what will make me more like Jesus.

*Messiah Jesus Expands My Vision*

### VII. Integritize



I achieve the One Thing Necessary—Eternalization: I see my work and duty and will “cross die” to obtain it. Being one with Christ creates my completeness. “Mary has received what will never be taken away from her” (Jesus, Luke 10:38-42).

*Messiah Jesus Confirms My Destiny*

### VIII. Optimize



I possess and experience Absorbed Exaltation: I behold my Lamb-Lion-Lord controlling and transforming my life! His glory fulfills my ecstasy. I begin to apprehend all He is and how He loves me! I come the closest to believing His love when I experience my own pouring out to others in Jesus’ power! (Phil. 2:17)

*Messiah Jesus Becomes My Beloved Master*

### **Summary:**

I can’t get enough of Messiah Jesus—of His mind and His heart and His glory. I grow ever higher in confidence and contentment in His love expectations and gracious redemption that never disappoint me! I offer more of myself to His cross-resurrection agenda so that I might have more of all He is flooding into my life! I taste eternity and His triune Presence beyond my expectations.

### **Note:**

<sup>1</sup> The authorship of both words and music were open to dispute until an original manuscript in Mohr’s hand was found in 1994 clearly showing that Mohr penned the words and Greber the music. (<https://www.wrti.org/arts-desk/2020-12-19/the-story-behind-the-beloved-christmas-carol-silent-night>, accessed 12-8-24)



## **Christmas: Our Greatest Cause for Thanksgiving**

*Ruth Ann Stites, Staff Writer*



The season of Advent began this year on Sunday, December 1st and will continue through the four weeks leading up to Christmas. The word “advent” means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or at a place. Its Latin meaning is “coming, arrival, or visit.” For Christians, Advent refers to the season of preparation to celebrate the coming and the life of our Lord Jesus. While its history is varied, the earliest written evidence we have of the practice of Advent comes for the Council of Sargossa in the 4<sup>th</sup> century (380 AD). No specific date was set, but the council suggested that people attend church daily during the Christmas season. In the following centuries the practices and dating of Advent coalesced into the season of preparation we know today in both liturgical and non-liturgical churches.

Historically, Advent had a twin focus, less pronounced today than in the past. “The Latin word *adventus* [from which we get our English word, Advent] was the translation of the Greek *parousia*—a word used for both the coming of Christ in human flesh and his Second Coming. ... One notable lack in modern Advent celebration [in Protestant evangelicalism]...is the twin focus of both the Incarnation and the Second Coming. Both of these themes make Advent instructive, not only historically but also in terms of biblical theology. We are not a people

who merely look to the one moment God broke into history. We await his coming again in glory, when the King's reign shall be on earth as it is in heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

The focus on Advent practices center around the lighting of the Advent candles and devotional readings. In modern practice a wreath is part of the decoration for Advent. The wreath's significance is a circle “which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ. ...The wreath as a whole is meant to remind us of both the immortality of our souls and God's promise of everlasting life to us through Christ.”<sup>2</sup> Around the wreath are set the four candles symbolizing in order hope, peace, joy, and love. Traditionally all are purple except the third candle, joy, which is pink (or rose). They are also known as the Prophecy candle (hope), the Bethlehem candle (peace), the Shepherd's candle (joy), and the Angel's candle (love). Each week a new candle is lit as well as the one(s) for the preceding week. Bible passages, devotional readings, hymns, and prayer are used to focus attention on the meaning of each aspect of our preparation for Christmas.<sup>3</sup> At the center of the wreath is placed the Christ Candle, a tall white candle, by many who participate in Advent. It symbolizes the birth of the baby Jesus and is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve or Day.

The point of celebrating Advent is not to have a pretty decoration or enjoy the ritual of lighting candles but to prepare our hearts for the remembrance of the Lord's birth. In addition to focusing on the meaning of the candles and nurturing our hearts on the devotions used to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas, we will do well to cultivate an attitude of thanksgiving for the greatest gift we can ever receive, His saving presence in our lives. All of us here at Ventures extend our best wishes that you and all those you can influence will rejoice with praise and thanksgiving this Christmas.

### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Quote from “The History of Advent” by Ryan Reeves found on The Gospel Coalition webpage at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-history-of-advent/>, accessed 11-19-24.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from “The Symbolism & Tradition Behind the Advent Wreath” from CNN's webpage at <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/advent-traditions-world/index.html>, accessed 11-19-24.

<sup>3</sup> While the four Sundays of Advent may be the focus of congregational services, many churches provide or encourage the use of weeklong devotions for personal, family, or small groups during the course of each week. For some suggested sources of making Advent more personal, see our Ventures blog post at [www.venturesforchrist.com/advent/you-cant-do-advent-wrong](http://www.venturesforchrist.com/advent/you-cant-do-advent-wrong).



## **Seven Great Confessions for the New Year**

As we approach the end of 2024 and the new year, many will make “New Year's resolutions.” No doubt we've all done that in our lives. While we often start out with the best of intentions, we quickly find our motivation waning. Most of us, if we're honest, know that we are trying to change ourselves by our own power. For those of us in Christ, we have learned (and are learning) that change comes by His grace and power alone.

Below are seven confessions that every follower of Jesus can (and should) make routinely. These are not one-time confessions; they should be part of the believer's daily life. In looking at the new year, let us hold to these confessions and allow the Lord to change us into the people He calls us to be, not who we imagine ourselves to be.

### **I. The things that will never be: Self-Illusion**

*I accept my creation limitations*

But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” (Romans 9:20)

## **II. The things that should not have been: Self-Deception**

*I discover my sins of rebellion*

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–9)

## **III. The thing that could have been: Self-Ignorance**

*I ignored my grace opportunities*

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:1–2)

## **IV. The things that did not need to be: Self-Worship**

*I chased my idols of immaturity*

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:21)

## **V. All things that teach me the cross: Self-Hanging**

*I am crucified with Christ*

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

## **VI. The things I needed to suffer: Self-Discipline**

*I learn obedience as His son*

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as His children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. (Hebrews 12:7–8)

## **VII. The things that yet can be: Self-Trust**

*I yield my everything to His promises*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

### **Note:**

These confessions were adapted from *The Cross Disciple's Triunity of Seven Great Comprehensions, Confessions, and Convictions*, Victory Resource # 216, by Pastor McCarty.



## **Ventures News** **A Word From Pastor McCarty**

Our editor asked me to write a Christmas message to our dear readers. Many years ago, my dear mentor, J. Sidlow Baxter, wrote the following poem for a dear lady in his church to offer her comfort in a great loss at this time of year.

## Going Home for Christmas<sup>1</sup>

*Absent from the body...at home with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8)*

I met two lads upon a hike,  
Another with a motorbike;  
I chanced to ask, "Where are you going?"  
They answered with their faces glowing,  
"This time of year you should be knowing;  
"We're going home for Christmas."

A group of cheering lads and lassies  
Came running out from college classes;  
I asked, "What makes you all so glad?"  
"Hurrah!" replied a bright-faced lad,  
"We'll soon be seeing Mom and Dad!  
"We're going home for Christmas."

December came; a husband lay  
With heaven only hours away.  
He tried his weeping wife to cheer  
"We soon shall meet again, my dear,  
"Come, let me whisper in your ear—  
"I'm going home for Christmas."

Oh, listen, you who grope and roam  
To find the soul's true rest and home;  
It's found alone in His embrace—  
The Shepherd of our wayward race.  
He calls again with patient grace,  
"Come home to Me this Christmas."

And may we all, who hope in Him,  
Keep singing tho' the days are grim.  
Our Father's home at last we'll share,  
And what a song we'll sing up there!—  
We're HOME because of Christmas!"

*[I would add this verse]*

Through Ventures many will know the cross  
to save their Christmases from being a loss.  
Our commitment to Ventures is to open wide our door  
so others will adore the Babe of Christmas all the more!

The older we grow, the more loss we experience, especially of loved ones. At 92 I've seen so many dear ones "Go Home for Christmas," yet I know that, as much as we may miss them, they are experiencing this season eternally. We look back and regret we didn't take all the opportunities we had to grow in Jesus—to resist sinful temptations—to spend time studying Scripture better after the pattern of Psalm 119. The Savior promises He stands at the door and He will come in to us in love and power if we open the door (Rev. 3:20). When we focus our hearts and minds on the true meaning of Christmas, hope, peace, purpose, joy, and love, we are but finding the increasing light of what Christmas will be when we all reach home!

### Note:

<sup>1</sup> from *Daily Wings: Meditations for Every Day of the Year* by J. Sidlow Baxter, reading for December 24. Last verse added by Pastor McCarty

## End of Year Giving

Pastor McCarty and the staff of Ventures for Christ want to thank you for your support this year. Like most non-profits, a large part of our budget is met through end-of-year giving by generous supporters. We pray the blessings of Christ on you this season as you consider how the Lord would have you support Pastor McCarty and Ventures in the work of sharing the gospel now and in the years to come.

Thanks for subscribing to *The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus*! If you are encouraged by the teachings and insights of Pastor McCarty and Ventures for Christ, please share it with your friends! If you would like to update your contact information or change your subscription options, just go to [venturesforchrist.com/contact-us](http://venturesforchrist.com/contact-us). Email costs us nothing, but physical mail costs us postage.

Please consider supporting Ventures in the work of sharing the gospel and building Cross Disciples. You may make donations by visiting our website, [venturesforchrist.com/donate](http://venturesforchrist.com/donate), or scanning the QR Code at the right. You may also send a check to Ventures for Christ at the address below.



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