

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 24

May 2026

Words of Eternal Hidden Wisdom

Our Purpose in His Vision

All Cross Disciples must learn the secret of asking. If they obey, they have the promise of Jesus that He will hear and answer.

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).



Our Challenge in His Promise

All Christ Disciples meet with other Christians to do two things: come into His presence and joyfully worship Jesus.

"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.

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1-3), the Apostle Paul to Timothy.

"Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6), Job after being rebuked by the Lord for his sin of self-centeredness.

Being an Effective Cross Disciple

Shaping Our Mind, Heart, and Actions to Be Like His (Pt 4)

Pastor McCarty

In my early days of being mentored by Verd Holsteen he introduced me to this wonderful, life-changing, direction-setting passage only a few weeks after I became a Christian in 1950!

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this (II Tim. 2:1-7).

As I noted last month, I still feel the impact of this pivotal passage to this very day!¹ To become the kind of trusted person who is capable of teaching others the truths about our Messiah Lord, we must, yes, let me say it again, must, learn to believe, think, feel, and act like the Lord Jesus did (I Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5).

Putting on the Mind of Christ as a Cross Disciple

Learning to develop the Savior's mind in us as a continuously renewing change agent is far and away the most critical need and challenge of every Cross Disciple. Having His mind on every issue will gradually produce through us the same character realities that He manifested and demonstrated while He walked the earth. Our highest and deepest satisfaction and significance in living will be totally dependent on our level of possessing and expressing the character of Messiah Jesus! To pursue, explore, and grasp the Mind of Christ will increasingly *create* in us what His mind produced and displayed through Messiah Himself. Remember, we are all called to repeat His life in our generation (John 17:18, 20:21). As Philippians 2:5-11 teaches us, the Savior was:

1. A God Thinker

Philippians 2:5, "Let the same mind that existed in Jesus Christ exist in your own thinking, attitude, disposition, ambitions, and agenda..." This is possible because we become a new creation when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

This incarnational mind experience of Philippians 2:5 can't help but produce Philippians 2:6-8 in the seeking disciple's mind, matrix, and mission. Before you become a new creation, you had only "human brain power" to deal with the world. Once you accepted Christ you received "Spirit mind power" and have input from the Spirit of the Godhead. Your mind thinks like His. He was a God Thinker—what a Christian's first desire should be.

2. A Self Denier

3. A Status Refuser

4. A Servant Seeker

5. A Human Sufferer

6. A Humble Revealer

7. A Listening Sacrificer

8. A Cross Submitter

So that Philippians 2:6-8 will be the supreme reality in your life, and you will be slowly and increasingly transformed into these eight manifestations of the significance and magnificence of our Lord's life.

At the divine right time, your "Spirit Mind" obedience will be followed by the Father's response in Philippians 2:9-11!

9. An Exalted Conqueror

10. An Ultimate Name

11. A Cosmic Lord

12. A Majestic King

And, as Messiah Jesus receives and possesses Philippians 2:9-11, you will share with Him in His exaltation and validation and be content with your ministry!

The Christ in us includes us in the Father's exaltation of His Son! We participate experientially in the overcoming nature of our risen Lord (II Peter 1:3-21)! Nothing else in life comes close to the contentment, motivation, triumph, and ecstasy of being filled and absorbed with the mind, heart, and mission of Messiah Jesus! The whole point of following Christ is not simply to know exactly what He did but to experience in our own lives what it means to do exactly as He did!

Points from the Greek text of this wonderful passage suggest the following insights to the above twelve character qualities and powers. I was thrilled and filled with awe and praise as these truths rewarded my study. I was also compelled to ask the Father to produce in me, at whatever cost or suffering I need, these same traits of godly manifestation. Let's look even more closely at these characteristics of the Messiah we want to emulate in our lives!

- 1- **Messiah Jesus: The God Thinker** (Phil. 2:6a): The Savior's condition was that of a Triune Thinker. This reflects the triune nature of God. We also have this mind, to be one with the Godhead. We have been given in our new birth the capacity to discern, develop, and declare by word and action the Mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16). (He merged *Himself* with the Person of *Truth* in order to redeem and solve the *issue* even of our sin. Jesus revealed the Godhead's mind in the flesh.)
- 2- **Messiah Jesus: The Self Denier** (Phil. 2:6b): He did not eagerly claim, seize, grasp, or exercise His exalted position as being equal to God, nor to announce it or make Himself superior over the people or to act as though He was of higher worth. (He didn't consider bragging about His magnificence.)
- 3- **Messiah Jesus: The Status Refuser** (Phil. 2:7a): He claimed no privileges, divested Himself of His rightful prerogatives, lived abased, emptied Himself of all personal ambition to do the Father's will. (He made Himself nothing.)
- 4- **Messiah Jesus: The Servant Seeker** (Phil. 2:7b): But He did grasp the meaning and limitations of human nature. He took it on Himself anyway, assumed its disadvantages, accepted its restrictions, endured its paltry power, and curbed His own ambitions to do and to be a servant of the Father and people. (He embraced the greatness of being a servant.)
- 5- **Messiah Jesus: The Human Sufferer** (Phil. 2:7c): Being recognized, discovered, and exposed as "just a man," He suffered criticism. He still risked being God's scheme of revelation to those who had the power to bring Him pain, rejection, and grief. He was a man as God intended a man to be even though He was subjected to the potential of our weakness, flaws, failures, and sins. (He displayed the glory of man as created in God's image.) He manifested being a perfect Man living among imperfect men and women.

- 6- **Messiah Jesus: The Humble Revealer** (Phil. 2:8a-b): He lowered Himself, depressed and laid aside His track record of ultimate power and knowledge, and acted like their equal. He humbled Himself to their level so they could recognize, discover, and comprehend what God in a man looks like. (He lived to show pride in them, not to be proud of Himself.)
- 7- **Messiah Jesus: The Living Sacrificer** (Phil. 2:8c): He was submissive to the death of His own will in order to pursue and live out the will of the Father. Sacrificing self on the cross for the Godhead creates life. Sacrifice for the self creates death. (He made Himself obedient enough to “cross die” if necessary if the Father desired the sacrifice for His eternal purpose.)
- 8- **Messiah Jesus: The Cross Submitter** (Phil. 2:8d): He even accepted the worst death of utter submissiveness possible—crucifixion! The necessity of the cross agony and suffering brought the greatest ultimate pain on earth to bring the greatest ultimate gain on earth! Somehow in the Father’s mind, the cross was our Lord’s path to conquer and redeem earth life. Our cross experiences will do the same for us if we embrace them as they come. (He knew His cross death was the Father’s promise answer to all things—on earth and in heaven!) It is a mystery now, but we will eventually understand to the praise and glory of the Father.
- 9-12- **Messiah Jesus: The Exalted Leader—Named as the Highest—Anointed Above All—Ultimate Godhead Glorifier** (Phil. 2:9-11): In other words, Jesus is the All in all and Lord of lords. The eight mind and character realities (1-8) incarnated in Messiah’s life can’t help but produce and finalize the destiny spelled out for Him in His four unrivaled and culminating crowning (9-11) as eternity’s Leader of—Lamb for—Lion over—Lord glorified. The wonder of all this, and that fallen, dense earthlings like ourselves will share in Messiah’s glory, is beyond incredible to our sinful ears and almost inconceivable to our tiny minds! In stunned amazement we can only proclaim with the beloved Apostle, “Thanks be unto God for His indescribable and unspeakable gift!” (II Cor. 9:15). And ponder this, my dear Reader, we have already been given the Mind of Christ as His new creations, and our glory is to use *that gift* to flood our lives with the more and most of His mind as we can (II Cor. 5:17)! I Corinthians 2:16 tells us we have His mind, and Philippians 2:5-11 tells us what it means, how to use it, and where it will take us! Let’s think like Paul in Philippians 3:12-16.

Next month I’ll attempt to write on “our application” of His mind. This is our pathway to take hold of Him for the reality of the goal for which He has taken hold of us...Spirit-Mind faith, which means power to to live like Messiah Jesus!

Notes:

¹ I wrote specifically about this magnificent passage in the March and April 2025 editions of *The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus*. I happily refer you to “The Declaration of Discipleship in II Timothy 2” and “The Declaration of Discipleship in II Timothy 2: Part 2: The Skills of the Cross Disciple” in these issues of our newsletter for a deeper discussion of this glorious passage.



The Shepherd Who Knows Your Name

Michael Floyd, Editor

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:11, 14-15)

There is something deeply satisfying about being known—not just recognized, but truly known. Known by name. Known in your particulars. Known well enough that someone can read your face across a crowded room and tell something is wrong before you've said a word.

Most of us spend our lives hoping for that kind of knowing and fearing we'll never quite find it. We are surrounded by people—coworkers, neighbors, even family—who see us without really knowing us. We present

the version of ourselves we think is acceptable and hope that's enough. The idea that someone could know us fully and love us anyway feels almost too good to be true.

But that is exactly what Jesus offers. Not acquaintance. Not distant observation. He calls Himself the Good Shepherd—and in His day, that meant something specific and intimate. A Palestinian shepherd didn't manage a flock from a distance. He knew every animal by name, could distinguish one from another at a glance, and would leave ninety-nine sheep on a hillside to go looking for a single one that had wandered off. His life was tangled up with theirs. Their safety was his business, day and night.

This is the image Jesus reaches for when He wants to explain who He is to us.

More Than a Manager

When Jesus says "I am the good shepherd," He draws a sharp contrast with what He calls the hired hand—the one who watches the flock only as long as it's convenient, only as long as there's no cost. When danger comes, the hired hand calculates his options and runs. The sheep are not his. He has no stake in them. They are a job, not a love.

Jesus says that's not Him. "I know my sheep," He says—the Greek word for *know* carries the weight of deep, experiential knowledge, the same word used for the intimacy between the Father and the Son. This isn't the knowledge of a file or a database. It's the knowledge of relationship.

Jesus knows you the way a shepherd knows his flock—not as a category or a statistic, but as a particular person with a particular name and a particular story. He knows what you carry today that nobody else sees. He knows the paths you've wandered, the fears that keep you awake, the hopes you've almost given up on. And He has not turned away.

He came, He says, so that His sheep "may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). That phrase—to the full—suggests abundance, overflowing, more than sufficient. The Shepherd's ambition for His flock is not bare survival, it is flourishing.

He Laid Down His Life

But the most striking thing about what Jesus says here isn't the knowing—it's what the knowing costs Him.

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Three times in a few verses, He says it, as if He wants to make sure no one misses it—then He adds the detail that changes everything: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

This was not a tragedy that happened to Him. It was a choice He made—for the sheep.

David understood something of this. As a young shepherd he had killed a lion and a bear to protect his father's flock. He knew what it meant for a shepherd to put himself between danger and the animals in his care. But even David's courage was a pale picture of what Jesus did. He did not fight off a predator to protect His flock. He became the sacrifice that purchased their safety.

The cross is where the Shepherd's love became fully visible. Every promise in Psalm 23—the green pastures, the quiet waters, the restoration of the soul, the table prepared in the presence of enemies, the goodness and love that follow all our days—every one of those promises was purchased at Calvary. They are not sentimental poetry. They are the inheritance of people whose Shepherd gave His life to secure them.

Because He laid His life down, He also took it up again. The risen Christ is still the Shepherd. He is still watching, still leading, still calling each sheep by name.

Learning to Follow

So what does it mean to live as someone who belongs to this Shepherd? Jesus says His sheep know His voice and follow Him (John 10:4). Not reluctantly, not under compulsion—but because they've learned to recognize it and trust where it leads. This is really the whole of the Christian life: learning to hear and follow the voice of the Shepherd.

That means spending time in His Word, which is where His voice is most clearly heard. It means prayer—not the recitation of requests but the practice of listening. It means trusting His leading even when the path He chooses doesn't look the way we expected. The valley of the shadow in Psalm 23 is not a detour around the Shepherd's care; it is a path walked in the Shepherd's company, with His rod and staff close by.

It also means resisting the voices that compete with His. Jesus is blunt about this: there are thieves and hired hands whose aim is to steal and scatter and destroy. Not every voice that sounds authoritative is speaking the Shepherd's truth. Part of following Christ is the ongoing work of learning whose voice is whose—and choosing His.

We Shall Not Want

Psalm 23 opens with one of the most confident declarations in all of Scripture: "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." Not "I have everything I want." Not "nothing bad has happened to me." But nothing I truly need is missing—because my Shepherd is sufficient.

That is the promise Jesus makes when He calls Himself the Good Shepherd. Not that the path will always be easy, but that you will not walk it alone. Not that there will be no dark valleys, but that there will be a rod and a staff beside you in them. Not that your cup will be free of difficulty, but that it will overflow with His goodness and love.

He knows your name. He laid down His life for you. And He is more than enough.



Ventures News Digital Content

Ventures continues to expand our digital content on the website, from newspaper articles written by Pastor McCarty, to our "Year of Reflections" blog (<https://venturesforchrist.com/year-of-reflections/>) to special blog series such as the recent series around Lent. If you haven't signed up to receive all the updates in your email inbox, now's a great time to do so! Just point your browser to <http://venturesforchrist.com/subscribe/>. If you'd like to change your subscription preferences, please call the office (contact information below) or email us at newsletter@venturesforchrist.com.

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