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 30 November 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.

The God Picture and the Z Life (Part II)

Cross Questions We Must Ask of You

Pastor McCarty

We examined some important points about the Master's two alphabets, the A to Z of our speaking to Him and the A to Z of His speaking to us in Part I of "The God Picture and the Z Life" last month. Considering the following six questions leads us into living more of the Z Life as we go deeper in Part II.

1) Do you thirst for conquering strength from His glorious riches? Carry the cross!
2) Do you really want Christ Jesus exploding in your heart in overcoming faith over all things? Carry the cross!
3) Do you yearn to have a life rooted and established in God's kind of love for <u>everyone</u> you know? Carry the cross!
4) Do you long for the power to grasp the width, length, height, and depth of Christ's love, patience, forgiveness, restoration, and plans for your life? Carry the cross!
5) Do you dream of experiencing daily knowing the Savior's love, gentleness, and encouragement for you that surpasses knowledge? Carry the cross!
6) Do you hunger to be filled to overflowing with the mind, heart, will, and fullness of Christ? Carry the cross!

These six realities are the six things the great Apostle prays for us in Ephesians 3:14-21. Then, in Colossians 2:11-15, Paul declares all the evil powers of darkness that would deny us these six wondrous experiential possessions—his prayers for us—have been disarmed of their authority by the Lord Jesus nailing them to the cross...His cross!

As I read that the Lord Jesus was the A to Z of life, I immediately recalled that my beginning stage of knowing how to read and write in my little world. Both <u>my study</u> of Scripture and <u>my experience</u> in life of learning to fly an airplane has convinced me that our progress with great principles of life is always in three stages. The Apostle John makes that clear in his letter we call First John. He tells them he is writing to the <u>children in faith</u> (I think the A-B-C'ers), to the <u>young men</u> who are <u>warriors</u> (I think the M-N-O-P'ers), and to the fathers, the <u>combat veterans</u> (I think the X-Y-Z'ers). (Please study I John 2:9-14.) The principle point is to grow in love and follow the light of Jesus in all things! (I have a great article on those three stages. Please request it!)

Isaiah and the A-Z Life

I was surprised and thrilled when I also saw this triune pattern of growth in Isaiah. *The youths* grow tired and weary (I think of immature A-B-C thinkers) and *the young men* stumble and fall (I am thinking of M-N-O-P warriors seriously trying to come against Satan), but *the fathers* are those who have put all their expectations and confidence in the Lord (I think of X-Y-Z veterans). They constantly renew (Hebrew—exchange) their thinking from their mind of ignorance and denseness to the Lord's mind of brilliance and wisdom (Isa. 40:30-31). "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa. 40:31, emphasis added).

The long battle that steadily brings increasing triumph in the Christian life is an exchange in three areas—knowing and studying the Scripture, listening to the Holy Spirit's voice, and identifying and taking up our cross struggle—our flawed and weak mind daily exchanged with the Savior's perfect and conquering one! "Let the same mind (attitude, disposition, expectations, desires, purpose, personality, vision) that dwelt in Christ Jesus dwell in your thinking and come alive in your own mind!" (Phil. 2:5, HDM, Greek).[1] Isaiah is perfectly clear! Once we put all our expectations (hope) in the Lord, we discover we can exchange (renew) our mind for His and bring His ecstasy into our life (soaring) which empowers all our efforts (running) and builds into us endurance (no fainting) so we walk through life overcoming our challenges and battles. All our victorious expectations for living are increasingly focused in Christ cross for us alone. Our joy and triumph then fill us because we are never disappointed (Rom. 5:1-11).

My Final Appeal: Are You Pursuing the Z-Life?

It is obvious to every Christian that the Scriptures teach spiritual growth. Every Believer in the Savior is to advance in accessing, possessing, progressing, finessing, and expressing the Messiah's message of *salvation redemption splendor*. Equally apparent are the three stages in view—A-O-Z—that the true, earnest Cross Disciple encounters and must pass through to qualify for his or her Jesus promotion. That goal is to become "overcoming pillars" in the temple of the Father as promised by the Lord Jesus (Rev. 3:11-13). Some Christians are saved but remain immature children...they live the A-Life of only repeating their A-B-C's. Some Christians are becoming spiritual combat warriors for Christ and are facing and accepting deeper dimensions of the cross. They strive to live the O-Life of M-N-O-P's and begin to taste a majority of spiritual victories over their fewer defeats. And some Christians have walked with Christ in the depth of the cross while grasping His liberating revelation, "in the beginning" of Genesis 1:1—2:3 and John 1:1-18. They see the Godhead's eternal Idea, His purpose and plan while Cross Sacrificing for its fulfillment as His veterans. They live the Z-Life of Messiah's X-Y-Z's of the mysteries and majesty of the kingdom!

Those who have loved and pursued the idols and trivia of a fallen world, who ignored their spiritual calling, remained deaf to God's voice, and refused to explore the claims of His sent Savior are living the U-Life. They are unaware, unsaved, uninitiated, unsafe, unsure, and unsatisfied, etc. Satan has blinded their eyes and minds to the all satisfying message of the splendor of Christ Jesus—the image of our Godhead (II Cor. 4:1-18).

Next month we will explore the life lessons I've garnered from learning to fly an airplane. Living life, learning to fly, and my study of Scripture have all convinced me that our progress with the great principles of life is always in three stages.

Notes:

[1] See my *Victory Visual #19: The Pyramid Path of Promise: Our Transforming Mind Exchange*, *Isaiah 40:31*.



The One Who Satisfies

Michael Floyd, Editor

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'" (John 6:35)

Thanksgiving tables this month will be full — turkey and dressing, pie, the dishes that only make an appearance once a year. For a few hours, most of us will have more than enough food in front of us. And yet abundance at the table rarely touches a different kind of hunger, the one that no amount of food has ever been able to reach.

Call it soul-hunger; it shows up everywhere once you know to look for it. People chase achievement hoping the next promotion will finally feel like enough. They chase relationships, entertainment, possessions — good things, often, pressed into service as substitutes for something they were never built to provide. The hunger doesn't go away. It just gets fed the wrong food.

Jesus addressed this directly, the day after He fed a crowd of thousands with five loaves and two fish. The people came looking for Him again — not because they understood who He was, but because they wanted another meal. Jesus used the moment to point past the bread they held in their hands to something they actually needed: "I am the bread of life."

More Than Bread

The crowd's request was reasonable enough on its own terms: They asked Him to always give them this bread (John 6:34). They had just watched loaves multiply in His hands. Naturally, they wanted the supply to continue.

Jesus' answer reframed the entire conversation. The crowd had asked for a renewable food supply, and He offered Himself: the bread itself, the one thing that actually answers the hunger.

This claim has roots that go back to the wilderness. God fed Israel with manna for forty years — bread from heaven, sustaining a nation that couldn't feed itself. But manna, Jesus pointed out, couldn't keep anyone from dying. "Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die" (John 6:49-50).

Back in His own wilderness temptation, Jesus had quoted Moses on this point: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Physical bread was never meant to be the final answer to human need.

Given for the Life of the World

What makes Jesus' claim more than a clever metaphor is what He was willing to do to back it up. "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). The crowd found this language confusing, even offensive (John 6:52). Jesus was telling them, well before the cross, that satisfying their deepest hunger would cost Him everything. The miracle of the loaves was a sign pointing to a far greater gift: His own body, given up so that people who could not feed their own souls could finally be fed.

Every time the church takes communion, it remembers the same gift. At the Last Supper Jesus said, "This is my body given for you" (Luke 22:19), and He carried that statement all the way to the cross. He gave His body so that we could have something to feed on that actually lasts.

And He continues to sustain those who come to Him. The bread doesn't run out, and the hunger He meets doesn't return the way physical hunger does within hours. "Whoever comes to me will never go hungry" is a promise that holds for everyone who keeps coming.

Come and Be Satisfied

The crowd that followed Jesus for more bread shows that a person can be near Jesus, even benefit from His provision, and still miss what He is offering.

Jesus uses only two verbs, come and believe. The trouble is where we take our hunger: we keep bringing it to tables that were never going to fill it.

David understood this centuries earlier and invited his readers to find out for themselves: "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8). You learn whether a meal is good by eating it, and David says the same is true of the Lord.

Thanksgiving for the True Bread

Gratitude for a full table is right; the provision is real, and it deserves thanks. The deepest thanks belong to the One who answers a hunger no turkey or pie was ever meant to touch.

The hunger that keeps us chasing achievement and entertainment has an answer in a Person who gave His own body so that we could finally be fed. He hasn't stopped offering Himself. The invitation is still what it was in Capernaum: come, and be satisfied.

[Michael Floyd is Editor of The Hidden Treasures of Messiah Jesus, the monthly newsletter of Ventures for Christ, Inc. You can find more of Michael's content at http://thegospeltoday.online.]

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