

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
Executive Pastor Carey Dean
March 23, 2025
COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory
Christ in You
Colossians 1:27-29

Who loves a great mystery? I have two ways to enjoy a mystery. One way I enjoy them is by solving the puzzle the popcorn is finished popping. The other way? I skip to the final scene, then watch from the start to follow and admire the writer's genius of laying out clues all along the way. Both bring me joy and bring Amy frustration.

But do you know who authored the greatest mystery ever told? You know where I'm going. It's God Himself. In His Word, God unveils to us a mystery for the generations. And unlike most mysteries, this one was never meant to be kept hidden. It was designed to be slowly, patiently unveiled, until we finally see the full picture with absolute clarity.

This mystery spans from eternity past to eternity future. Its main character is the One who was, and is, and is to come. Its setting stretches from Eden to the New Heaven and New Earth. Its conflict is God and man's fellowship broken and separated by sin. And its plot is the unfolding of God's redemptive plan.

This morning, we come to an incredible passage, a moment when the mystery is revealed to all who will hear. Our passage for today is Colossians 1:27-29 but for context's sake, let's start reading from verse 25.

Colossians 1:27-29

25 of which I (Paul) became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Let's start this morning with our first core truth of the morning.

Core Truth #1: The Once Hidden Mystery Is Now Gloriously Revealed In Christ.

Colossians 1:27

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul uses the Greek word *mystērion*, translated “mystery”, to describe a divine reality that was previously concealed but is now unveiled by God Himself.

With this one word, Paul dismantles a dangerous cultural myth surrounding the Colossian believers. This idea that spiritual insight was only for the religious elite who or those with mystical access. But Paul declares to the church at Colossae, the riches of God’s mystery aren’t discovered by man, they’re disclosed by God.

To grasp the fullness of this mystery, we need to step back to the beginning and remember who God has always been. As I’ve studied and prayed through this passage, a deeper layer of God’s character has captured my heart:

As Creator, He is a Gracious Host. He always prepares before He fills. He is not a God of chaos but a God of purpose.

Habitat Created	→	Inhabitants Placed
Day 1: Light	→	Day 4: Sun, Moon, and Stars
Day 2: Sky and Waters	→	Day 5: Birds and Sea Creatures
Day 3: Land and Vegetation	→	Day 6: Animals and Humans
The Garden of Eden	→	Adam and Eve
Tabernacle & Temple	→	God’s Manifested Presence

From the very first chapter of the Bible, God is seen as a Gracious Host.

- Days 1-3 He created each habitat uniquely fitted for its future inhabitants.
- Days 4-6 He creates the inhabitants and placed them in the environments where they could thrive.

The Old Testament remains consistent in His gracious ways.

- God formed Eden first, then placed Adam in it.
- God gave Moses blueprints for the Tabernacle before He filled it with His glory (Exod. 25:8).
- God revealed the design of the Temple to David before Solomon ever laid the foundation (1 Chron. 28:19).

Even in the good Garden, formed by God for man to dwell, Adam and Eve believed the serpent’s lie.

- Sin desecrated Adam’s heart and corrupted every generation born from his line.
- Their rebellion made them unfit for God’s presence, and they were removed from the place of fellowship.

Yet God’s loving-kindness did not change.

- He remained faithful, even when humanity was faithless.
- He moved toward us when we would not move toward Him.
- He has never forsaken those created in His image.

And that brings us to history's greatest mystery. How could a holy God ever dwell again with sinful humanity? And now comes the unveiling.

Colossians 1:27

"...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Core Truth #2: The Gracious Host Became The Indwelling Redeemer.

The mystery is not just that God draws near. It's that Christ enters in. "Christ in you." The Son of God, not beside you, not around you, but in you.

From the beginning, we were created to be a dwelling place for God Himself. In His sovereign design, God formed us to know Him and be known by Him. Yes, we are born in sin. But just as true, we are created in His image.

He shaped you and me with a heart where He could abide, when by faith, we turn from sin and surrender to Him. Just as God prepared Eden for Adam, just as He designed the Tabernacle and Temple for His manifested presence, so too, you, the moment you place your faith in Jesus and receive His breath of life, are made a new creation, a perfectly fitted dwelling place for Christ.

New Creation – New Inhabitant

Habitat Prepared	→	Inhabitant Placed
New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17)	→	Christ in Me – The Indwelling Redeemer (Col. 1:27)

2 Corinthians 5:17

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?

Before we continue, I want to pause and speak to those who haven't yet trusted Christ as Lord and Savior. You were not created for hopelessness, buried under the weight of sin's guilt and shame. You were created for life with Him and in Him. Will you receive Him by faith? This isn't a metaphor. This is a reality with implications for today and eternity.

If this is where your heart is this morning, I invite you to come speak with a pastor or prayer partner at the end of the service. When you place your faith in Christ, you will understand the mystery first-hand:

Galatians 2:20

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me..."

You were made to house the glory of God's only Son. Sin made you unfit. But Christ will make you new. And now, by faith, He will abide in you. Not as a guest but as your Indwelling Redeemer.

This week, Amy, Corban, and I went to the Miami Open Tennis Tournament. It was a great day, but a long one, so we decided to stay the night and drive home the next morning. Since this sermon was still very much in process, I got up early to study. I found a quiet corner in the hotel lobby, opened the Word, and that's when it hit me. Many of us treat Jesus like an honored hotel guest, welcomed, but with limits and boundaries.

We hand Him a key with limited access, tidy up select rooms, offer conditional hospitality, and deep down, we've set His checkout time. Jesus Christ did not die on the cross to be a visitor in your life. He resurrected from the grave to be your Indwelling Redeemer. He doesn't just forgive your sin; He's at work transforming you from the inside-out. And that is exactly what Paul is telling us in verse 28.

Colossians 1:28

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Paul not only declares this truth, he demonstrates it with his life. The mystery of Christ in him has become the mission of Christ through him. It is Christ within him who supplies the wisdom for every warning and every word of teaching.

His goal is focused: present everyone mature in Christ. Paul's goal is not making quick converts and then moving on. He is pouring out his life for Christ-formed disciples. Listen to how he describes his daily ministry.

Colossians 1:29

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

The word translated "struggling" (*agōnizomai*) comes from the same Greek root as the word used to describe Jesus' "agony" in the Garden of Gethsemane (*agōnia*, Luke 22:44). It paints a picture of intense effort, like an athlete in a contest or a Savior in anguish.

Why that word? Because when done in Christ's power, true ministry is a spiritual labor. It's agonizing. And yet, it's not Paul's strength on display.

This kind of ministry pours oneself out so that others might be made whole in Him. Like Jesus in Gethsemane, Paul's striving is driven by sacrificial love, not self-preservation. In Paul's agony, it's Christ's energy that empowers him. He isn't imitating Christ's suffering or asking, "What would Jesus do?" He's agonizing with Christ and asking, "Jesus, what will you do in and through me?"

And Christ's not only gives strength for today but also hope for tomorrow.

Colossians 1:27

Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Core Truth #3: Christ In You Secures Your Eternity With Him.

Habitat Prepared		Inhabitants Placed
The New Heavens & New Earth	——>	The Redeemed

I will let God's Word speak for itself as we celebrate Him as our forever Gracious Host and Indwelling Redeemer.

Revelation 21:1–3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

Revelation 21:22

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Revelation 21:23–27

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The One who dwells in you is preparing your eternal home and He will welcome you there. This morning we've seen the mystery unveiled. Not just Christ near you. Not just Christ above you. But Christ in you, your Indwelling Redeemer, the One who transforms you from the inside out and secures your hope of glory.

Pastor Titus and I have been waiting for Colossians 1:27 to come in our series so that we could give you a gift. When you exit today, you can receive it at the coffee station in main street.

It's a small silicone bracelet. On the outside, it reads: 'Not I but Christ' (who lives) - embracing God's revealed mystery of "Christ in you." On the inside: 'Not Christ but I' (who live) - rejecting God's revealed mystery of "Christ in you."

To those who desire to turn to Christ, please come and speak with a pastor or prayer partner at the end of the service. Church, is Christ your guest or your Redeemer? If He's only a guest, will you surrender and give Him His rightful place as your Indwelling Redeemer?

I pray this bracelet reminds you each day of the life you were created to live: NOT I BUT CHRIST WHO LIVES IN ME.