

48-02-02-Christ's Epiphany in You

Epiphany, manifestation, glory, death, life, light, body

Gal 2:20

God wants His glory to shine out from us through Christ.

INTRODUCTION:

–**Title** is found in many NT passages, but especially in Gal 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

–*Epiphany season* [from Jan. 6 to Ash Wednesday], focuses on the glory of God being *manifested* on earth through Christ. *Christmastide* celebrates the *Incarnation* [“in-flesh-ment”]. *Epiphany* tells what *Christ in human flesh demonstrated*. The *common theme* in *all the Epiphany passages* is how the *manifestation* of God's glory in Christ always involves His *bodily presence*. *The epiphanies of Christ are incarnational*.

–God is eternally committed to *an incarnational pattern* of ministering to His creation. We see His intention at the start of human history in the Garden of Eden, but its ultimate fulfillment is in Christ. Not only has God wed Himself to *a real human body for all eternity*, but His plan is to expand that epiphany: **HOM.idea**. Gal 2:20 shows how. *First,*

I. Christ's Cross Was Judgment Day Early

A. Listen to Isaiah's prophecy 600 years before Christ came– Isa 53:6,

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1. Because our Creator is a God of justice, human sin had to be dealt with justly. (God puts justice as an ideal in human hearts. *People know what justice is*. They cling to it as *a standard for evaluating both private and public actions*.)
2. But, because He's a God of mercy, He wanted to establish *justice with mercy*, and did so by getting personally involved. [My **email quote**: “The only way God could get any closer to humanity than by taking upon Himself our human flesh was to take upon Himself our human sins.”]

B. Uniting Himself with humanity opened the door for us *as human individuals to unite with Him*. *The humanity He shares with us by incarnation, is that door*, but the location where it first opened up and continues to open is *at the Cross*– Gal 2:20a, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*.

C. Judgment Day came early, when *God's holy judgment* on sins fell

on Jesus. (When “the LORD . . . laid on him the iniquity of us all,” that was our day of judgment, at least, for all who unite themselves by faith to the God-Man who died on that Cross.)

- D. **God wants His glory to shine out from us through Christ**, but that happens only when, *His life is in us and our life is in Him*. His Cross is the point of rendezvous for that union— Gal 2:20a, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

TRANS: God, in Christ, wed Himself to humanity by Incarnation. By faith, we wed ourselves to God, extending that Incarnation, but **only at the cost of death**, both *His death* and *ours*. [At a wedding altar: two lives become one, symbolized often by two candles being extinguished after one common candle is lit from those separate flames. A marriage ignites, a common life begins, but only at the cost of two deaths, the death of two singles forming one single couple.] This is why *the Eucharist brings us both death and life*, not just Christ’s death but a death to self. The Table sustains not our old life, but God’s incarnated life in us. *Communion* means “*sharing*.” *Judgment came early*, so that Christ’s shared glory can shine from us... and because...

II. Our Salvation Is Heavenly Life Early

- A. If Christ’s life abides in us, we already have *heavenly life!* (We’re walking around on Earth with *the life of Heaven in our hearts*.)
1. Christ’s glory shined from His *incarnational presence* on Earth. (We are now incarnational channels for that same glory, shining from our bodily presence on Earth— Gal 2:20b, *The life I live in the body. I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*)
 2. Years of contemplating the Incarnation led me to *think and say* and *write* a great deal about the human body. [Art classes show how artists have historically emphasized *the human figure*. We’re drawn to enjoy and copy the human form, as a *masterpiece* of God, the *original Artist!*]
 - a. God didn’t create humans to have more angels. We are a race of mediators between the *celestial* and the *cosmic*: angel-like spirits intrinsically bonded to animal-like bodies of star-dust.
 - b. Our physical bodies still await their glorifying transformation promised on Resurrection Day, but *right now*, we already have the glorious life of the resurrected Christ living inside of us.
- B. We know what Epiphany meant in NT times, but *today, right now*, *Epiphany* means: **God’s glory shining out of us through Christ**.
1. The doorway opened by the Cross for our *union with Christ* was

God’s means of restoring to us the divine glory of His image that humanity was meant to manifest from the very beginning.

2. Being in Heaven someday *will not change that!* There, it will be just more of the same. ([Real estate salesmen say, “*It’s location that’s important.*”]) But in salvation, it’s not where we’re located, whether on Earth or in Heaven... It’s Who’s inhabiting our real estate!
- C. What does it mean for us to be epiphanies for Christ?
1. It means we’re like **light bulbs**, lit up by Christ with God’s glory [Light bulbs don’t shine on their own. Without electric current, they remain dark.]— 2 Cor 4:6-7, For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.
 2. *Being an epiphany for Christ* means reflecting our union with Christ incarnationally— Mat 5:14-16 (NASB), “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
 - a. Rev 21:2 depicts “the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” We **are that** “bride,” *that* “Holy City,” with our *Bridegroom’s life incarnate in us right now*: “A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
 - b. This world of darkness needs God’s light! (Jesus *indwells us to be that incarnational light* “on the lampstand” of our daily lives!)
 3. Jesus prayed in John 17:1b, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” (His “time” for *death* came to pave the way for our death to self, so that we might receive His glory into us and live for Him, incarnationally reflecting it back to Him.)

CONCLUSION:

—*Epiphany season* starts as people make New Year resolutions. Ours should include a daily prayer: “*Lord, glorify me, so that I glorify You.*” That’s no haughty prayer! It’s God’s will, purchased for us by the Cross of Christ. **God wants His glory to shine out from us through Christ**. For that to happen, let’s make Paul’s memorable words our own affirmation: (Gal 2:20, TLB) “*I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*”