

**The Church: the Hope of the World**  
Sermon prepared by Bob Young for  
Missions Emphasis Sunday at Northwest Church of Christ, OKC, Feb 14, 2010

*"...Christ in you, the hope of glory...." (Col. 1:27)*

### **Introduction**

Christ is the hope of the world. A bold statement: a true statement. The church is the hope of the world, even bolder. We are, you are, I am.... We want to deny it, we want to pass the buck. But it is true. My purpose today is to convince you that you are the hope of the world. This church is the hope of the world.

A bold statement: The church is the hope of the world! All of us know that Christ is the hope of the world. But the text says, Christ in us is the hope of the world. As long as Jesus remains a concept, an idea, an abstraction, little hope can be extended. Christ as a living, active force in the lives of his people--this is the hope of the world.

How often have you encountered a hopeless situation? There is no hope.

### **BODY**

I am confident that the church is the hope of the world for three reasons.

-1- Because of the instructions Paul wrote to the first century churches, especially to Colosse and Philippi.

This is where we begin, this is what you expect, but it is only a beginning. This is the biblical foundation in those places where we most expect it and are most comfortable.

From prison, Paul wrote the words of Colossians 1, reminiscing about his own sufferings, and recommitting to the presence of Christ in his life as a power for faithful proclamation. It was also from prison that Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. The Philippian letter reminds me of principles that the church can put into practice to be the hope of the world.

→The church is the hope of the world **when its lifestyle complements the gospel (1:27)**. Live in a way becoming to the gospel. Stand firm. Live without jealousy. Some are motivated by selfish ambition and jealousy. When the church lives above the typical level of our contemporary world, the distinctiveness of the message is apparent. The **church living like Jesus** is the hope of the world. The church that is HOLY, set apart for God is the hope of the world.

→The church is the hope of the world **when its attitudes and thinking are like those of Jesus (2:5ff)**. Have the mind of Christ, humble, self-emptying, sacrificing, without self-advancement, obedient. God exalts in due time, but the hope of the current age is in the **church which is serious about following Jesus in thinking and attitudes**. The church that is SACRIFICIAL and SERVING is the hope of the world.

→The church is the hope of the world **when it adopts the priorities and purposes of God (3:8-14)**. The siren songs of our age beckon, but the things profitable in this world are lost when it comes to following Jesus. The church that can escape the call of materialism and the values of this world will affirm the greatness of knowing Christ, gaining Christ, being found in

Christ, knowing Christ as the source of genuine power for living. The church that is the hope of the world is the **church that can learn to live above the world**. The church that is FOCUSED is the hope of the world.

→The church is the hope of the world **when its dependence is upon God (4:11-13)**. God's transcending peace comes from such dependence. Our sufficiency is of Christ, and the externals no longer matter. All power that matters is from Christ. The EMPOWERED church is the hope of the world.

-2- Because of Jesus' prayer, John 17

Note especially vv. 20-23.

Nearing the end of Jesus' prayer. Conclusion. Summary. Important.

A prayer for all who will believe. Listen.

→First, people who have and share a message cause others to believe in Jesus.

→Second, people connected with the Father and the Son cause others to believe that God sent Jesus.

→Third, people united as one cause the world to know that God sent Jesus AND that they are loved by God.

-3- Through personal experience and reflection upon the nature of the world.

I have lived in this world for a while—not as long as some, longer than many/most. Something like 10-15% of population is over 60. I am in an elite group. I have looked at life—lots of places, different contexts, different countries.

People are the same world over. The problems are the same, the challenges are the same.

What I want to share in this final section is true everywhere. It is the motivation for missions—it is what keeps me going.

Evan Pearce illustration. Those whom we have taught, and they continue.

Dixiana.

## CONCLUSION

As we close let me give you the "take-aways".

The call from above

The call from below

The call from around

The call from within (Isa. 6)

Senders and the sent

One other group—the "pre-sent"

Is the church where you worship the hope of your community? your nation? your world? The hopeful church lives and thinks with the priorities and power of God. The hopeful church can extend hope to others. How's your hope?