

# SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 25.08.24

**PREACHER: PS BEN TEEFY**

“LIFE IN TWO PLACES”

## BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING, THINKING & DOING*

**Conviction of a Disciple:** We are secure in our identity in Christ. As we grow into Christlikeness, we become increasingly aware that we are securely in God's family. We are fully in Christ and are allowing Christ to live fully through us.

### OVERVIEW

As Christians, we live in two realities at once—fully in this world and fully in Christ—drawing our identity and strength from God's love, which bridges the divide between Heaven and Earth.

### ACTION

**Step 1:** Reflect: How does being "in Christ" change the way I view my circumstances and identity?

**Step 2:** Commit: How can I more consciously live with the awareness that I am in both the world and in Christ at the same time?

**Step 3:** Act: What practical steps can I take this week to let God's love flow to and through me in my everyday interactions?

# THOUGHT

**SCRIPTURE:** EPHESIANS 1:1-3; COLOSSIANS 1:1-2; PHILIPPIANS 1:1

Have you ever played the Word Association Game? Basically, one person says a word and the other person says the first word that comes to mind. The idea is that you find out what word is triggered by hearing another word. If we played this game and asked what word comes to mind when we say "Heaven", most often, people would say "Hell". Heaven and Hell, right?

These words are very commonly associated with each other in our modern context. However, this isn't the case for the biblical authors. Throughout the scriptures, "Heaven" is most commonly associated with "Earth": "Heaven and Earth". In fact, THE MOST dominant plotline in the overarching narrative of the scriptures is that God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, is at work to bridge the divide that human beings have created through our selfishness, our violence, and our disconnection from life in Him.

The gospel, aka the GOOD NEWS, is that in and through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, God's space (Heaven) has invaded humans' space (Earth) and is inviting us to participate in His life now! He invites us to abide in and live in Him - so that we can be changed to become like Him - His image bearers in the world. This is what the scriptures call The Kingdom of God. We see this explicitly in Jesus's prayer "...may your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

The task for every Christian then, is awakening to the awareness that we are living life in TWO places at the same time. We aren't just waiting around in this reality to hurry up and pass so we can get to the "real thing" one day. Jesus announces boldly that God's Kingdom HAS come and it has come in Him (Luke 17:20-21). For those of us who have stepped into this reality of God, we are in this world, AND while in this world, we are also IN Christ Jesus.

God's people have a special capacity: We are transdimensional beings. This means we live crossing between these two realities. What does this mean for us? It means our IDENTITY isn't determined by our LOCALITY. Our identity is based on the fact that we are IN CHRIST - our truest Source. This is how we can have joy in the middle of suffering, peace in the chaos of a storm, hope in the place of despair, and life in the face of death. We are fully in our circumstances and fully in Christ at the same time.

This isn't about living in denial or having slippery theology. Jesus, through the comfort of the Spirit, is right there with us in the most difficult seasons of life - never afraid of our darkness or shame but is right there carrying us through it all. So how do we encounter this kind of life - a life lived fully alive to the present moment and also fully secure in our identity IN Christ?

We find it in lives that are secured in LOVE. Genuine, self-giving, grace-filled, Christ-centred, gospel love. Christ's love is the place where HEAVEN INVADES EARTH - and in His kindness, we are invited to participate. No lights are needed, no sound system, no talent, no brilliance of ours is required. All that is needed are hearts opened to Jesus - opened to His radical transformation and willing for Him to pour his radiant love in and through us.

## DISCUSSION

1. How does understanding that we live in both Heaven and Earth at the same time affect our daily lives and decisions?
2. In what ways can we encourage each other to live out our identity in Christ while navigating the challenges of this world?
3. How have you experienced God's love bridging the gap between Heaven and Earth in your own life?

## PRAYER

Lord,

Attune us to your imagination, making us fully aware of your presence in Heaven and Earth - the two places where we live our lives. Help us ground our identity in you and let your love flow in and through us to reach the world around us.

Amen.