

CHRIST

OUR SUPREME PATHFINDER



EXPLORE

THE FOUR DYNAMIC DIRECTIONS
JESUS TAKES US
AS HE GOES BEFORE US

&

LEARN

HOW TO STAY IN STEP WITH HIM



David Bryant

adapted from his recent book

Christ Is NOW!

7 Groundbreaking Keys

to Help You Explore and Experience

the Spectacular Supremacy of God's Son Today

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12 Ways Jesus Goes Before Us Every Day Making the Christian Life a Great Adventure



Part 1 of a 5-part Series



*[Editor's Note: Over the years, David Bryant has helped thousands of Christians around the world gain a grander biblical understanding of the greatness of God's Son today. While exploring with audiences what he calls "the spectacular supremacy" of Christ, one of his teachings has generated a lot of conversation: "Who Christ is BEFORE us." Many have told him these fresh insights changed their whole experience of knowing and growing in Jesus. With this week's blog post, David begins a **five-part series** on this often-overlooked perspective. Learn what it means to say that Jesus goes BEFORE you!]*



The Old Testament prophet Micah encouraged God's people, in their time of defeat and despair, to expect the arrival of a ruler who would go *before* them, to *lead* them into a whole new adventure. In Micah 2 we read:

**One who breaks open the way will go up before them;
they will break through the gate and go out.
Their king will pass through before them,
the LORD at their head.**

In the same way, our involvement today with our living, reigning Lord Jesus should turn the entire Christian life into one of holy restlessness, godly anticipation, abounding hope, and exciting new discoveries because, as predicted by Micah, our Shepherd King is always on the move, forever going *before* his flock, forever leading each of us places we've never gone until now—places that are *good*!

This blog post will introduce you to a whole new way of thinking about your daily walk with Christ. We're going to investigate how every day our Savior goes *before* us—how he gets *out ahead of us* in order to open new vistas for us, creating fresh opportunities for us—and then reaches back to take us with him into unexplored territory.

There are life-changing pathways for us to travel that we would never attempt if he did not precede us and then bring us along after him.

In the Gospels this reality is summed up in Jesus' oft-repeated three-word invitation:

"Come. Follow me."

There are at least **12** amazing ways our Savior remains forever "*prior*" for us in all of life—which is what makes Christian discipleship such a thrilling adventure. Let's take a closer look.



Your Grand Adventure With Jesus Began 2000 Years Ago!

To understand what it means to say Jesus is “prior” for us, let’s start by grabbing hold of an important biblical perspective.

In Ephesians 4, Paul quotes from Psalm 68 to describe Jesus’ triumphant procession preceding us into glory. Recalling the Exodus story of Israel’s massive march out of Egypt many generations earlier, the psalmist declared (NIRV, emphasis added):

May God rise up and scatter his enemies. . . .
God, *you led your people out.*
You marched . . . The ground shook. . . .
He has entered his holy place.
When he went up to his place on high,
he took many prisoners.

But the psalmist’s portrayal of Jehovah’s royal parade, Paul claims, was fulfilled by Jesus rising from the dead to ascend on high. Jesus went *before* us taking with him, as his captives, all who are willing to rally to him for salvation. So it is we read in Ephesians 4 (NIRV, emphasis added):

When he went up to his place on high,
he took many prisoners
The one who came down is
the same one who went up,
higher than all the heavens.
He did it in order to fill all of creation.

No wonder, therefore, Scripture describes God’s children throughout the coming ages as those who will never cease to “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (Revelation 14).

Let me give you two pictures—two metaphors—to prepare you to explore the “*before*” dimensions of Jesus’ spectacular supremacy in our lives, pictures of what it means to say Jesus is “*prior*.”



Jesus Is Like the Gateway Arch in St. Louis

Completed in 1965, the glittering, stainless steel Gateway Arch in St. Louis allows visitors to ride to its top to view a stunning panorama that recalls the role the city once played as “the gateway to the West.”

Intentionally shaped to resemble a rainbow, it speaks of an era in American history when the lands beyond the Mississippi beckoned daring pioneers with unprecedented promises of bright beginnings and fantastic fortunes. The arch commemorates how St. Louis became the departure point for massive migrations (by foot, horse, wagon, railroad, and boat) in keeping with our nation’s sense of “Manifest Destiny,” transforming the makeup of a continent in the process.

Similarly, Jesus Christ, seated at the Father’s right hand, serves as “God’s Gateway,” the entry point into everything the Father has for his children. As the eternal “rainbow” of hope for the nations, our Savior encompasses Heaven’s “manifest destiny” for all believers. He guarantees we will reach our Promised Land because in him resides all that lies in front of us, such as:

- the future of a totally redeemed universe, with new heavens and earth
- the festivities going on around his throne at this very hour
- the fullness and fulfillment of all of God’s promises in Scripture
- the forward advance of the gospel among the nations in our generation

Unlike founders and teachers of earth’s religions who claim to help devotees *find a way* into the meaning of life, Jesus himself **is** the meaning of life. At the same time, he makes himself *the road* that stretches before us into God’s grand intentions for us, now and forever.

One day our Master will *perfect* our lives. Until then, he *directs* our lives. He does so by how he *precedes* us and leads us as Lord of all.

Jesus advances his kingdom in ways that are amazing, wonder-filled, and bursting with surprises. His initiatives prove unexpected, unprecedented, and often inexplicable as they unfold.

Thus, our only reasonable recourse is to fall in line behind him and follow him in his triumphal victory procession—as the King who goes *before* us (like Micah 2 promises).



Jesus Is Like the Whale in *Moby Dick*

Published in 1851, Herman Melville's epic novel *Moby Dick* recounts the adventures of Ahab, captain of a whaling ship harbored in New England, who is consumed with his determination to take revenge on a gigantic white sperm whale known as Moby Dick.

Years earlier, an encounter with the ferocious sea mammal cost Ahab his leg. Now, irrationally driven by hatred, the whaler is determined to kill the monster at all costs. Eventually, he intersects successfully with Moby Dick in open waters for the final showdown. In the ensuing battle, the whaler successfully harpoons the beast, but unfortunately, the harpoon lines become wrapped around Ahab's boat and body so that when Moby Dick makes one last desperate plunge into the ocean's depths, in his wake he takes the captain and crew with him to their doom.

Ultimately, the fate of Ahab became inextricably wrapped up with the fate of the whale. Wherever Moby Dick decided to go, the captain had to follow; the harpoons and ropes bound them together forever.

Even so, it is with Jesus and believers.

When we put our faith in God's Son, it is as if we have "harpooned" ourselves to him. We are so united with Jesus that from that point forward, wherever he goes before us, we are destined to follow. His journey becomes our journey. Surging ahead of us, by the Holy Spirit, he draws us after him.

He has us so "wrapped up" in himself that our "fate" is defined exclusively by who he is, what he's doing, and how he's blessed—and above all, *by where he's headed*.

Therefore, our lives—similar to Ahab's fate, irreversibly entwined with Moby Dick—are forever tied up with where Jesus goes *before* us. In his spectacular supremacy, he plunges into the depths of a loving God's everlasting kingdom purposes—with us in tow!



In Our Adventure With Him, Here Are 12 Ways Jesus Remains PRIOR

How he goes before us depends entirely on the grand implications of New Testament teaching about our *union* with Christ.

Likening Jesus' relationship with us to an arch or a whale makes sense only because, first of all, the Father's decree and the Spirit's daily initiative is fulfilled in all who *abide in Christ*.

Paul uses the phrase "*in Christ*" over 150 times. He teaches that Christians have been enfolded in Christ—or, to use a familiar term today, we've been *embedded* in him. Our life has been "hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3).

In fact, now the entire drama of redemption is not only *about* Christ but also *situated* in Christ. Our *identity* in Christ is the launch point for our whole journey with him.

The gospel declares that freely we are invited to enter into Christ—into joyful participation in everything that's true about him and into everything that belongs to him.

Consequently, in every dimension of discipleship, *Jesus always must remain prior*. He always must go *before* us into all that the Father holds out to us. Consider these snapshots of this truth (emphases added):

- 1. Jesus is prior—our inheritance is in him.** “All things are yours . . . [because] You are joined to Christ and belong to him. And Christ is joined to God” (1 Corinthians 3, NIRV). We are in full possession of this treasure long before we *experience* all of it.
- 2. Jesus is prior—our residence is in him.** “You died. Now your life is hidden with Christ in God. Christ is your life. When he appears again, you also will appear with him in heaven’s glory” (Colossians 3, NIRV).
- 3. Jesus is prior—our riches are in him.** In Christ we are fully received by the Father. Therefore, all of the inexhaustible riches in Christ (Ephesians 3) have now become ours *unconditionally* because they have become ours *positionally*—in him. In ourselves, we do not possess *anything*. However, we do possess Christ, or better yet, we are possessed by him. So, we belong to him to whom all things belong. Therefore, for all eternity we can expect to enjoy God’s indescribable riches in Christ Jesus, entering into *them* because already we have entered into *him*.
- 4. Jesus is prior—our identity is in him.** Even so, from the hour of our salvation, the Father has treated each of us *as if* Christ were us and we were Christ. That’s why the Father longs to lavish on us every spiritual blessing already poured out on his Son (Ephesians 1). Our “clothes” already have been laid out for us as we enter each day—we put on Christ as our singular identity (Romans 13 and Ephesians 6).
- 5. Jesus is prior—our fruitfulness is in him.** To be fruitful, we must first be grafted into Christ as our Vine (John 15). Continually, our existence will be defined by how we unceasingly flourish in our union with him, as the Sovereign of the universe. He never will cease going *before* us to take us further and further into all that the Father desires for us for all ages to come.
- 6. Jesus is prior—our purpose is in him.** For us, therefore, even now we have no life except in Christ alone. For us to live is Christ; he himself has become our reason to live (Philippians 1). “I do not consider myself to have ‘arrived’, spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me All of us who are spiritually adult should set ourselves this sort of ambition” (Philippians 3, PHILLIPS).
- 7. Jesus is prior—our victory is in him.** We follow him into his multiplied triumphs on our behalf. Christ died to sin; now we do too—in him. Christ rose again; now we walk in newness of life—in him. Christ ascended; in him, we now share in the saving impact of his reign, seated with him on his throne in the heavenly realms (as Ephesians 2 teaches us).
- 8. Jesus is prior—our destiny is in him.** Right now, he is what we are to become! Thus, one day our “life hidden with Christ in God” will be gloriously manifested for what it is when he returns (Colossians 3) and we become fully conformed to his image (Romans 8), including resurrection bodies like the one he enjoys already (Philippians 3). Therefore, to all who are in Christ, Scripture promises we are “predestined” (destined ahead of time) to be presented at the Throne “holy and blameless before God in love” (Ephesians 1).

- 9. Jesus is prior—our justification is in him.** Dwelling in him, we have been set down on the end times’ “resurrection ground” because already for us death has been “swallowed up” in Jesus’ defeat of the grave (1 Corinthians 15). I am “justified” before God because in union with his Son I may walk “*just as if I’d*” already been raised from the dead, already passed through Judgment Day, and already been placed in what Scripture calls “the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven” (Revelation 21).
- 10. Jesus is prior—our exaltation is in him.** For example, by going before us into the future and bringing it back to us, Jesus not only secures our anticipation of eternal life after death, but in him, at this very moment, we are nourished with that same eternal life *before* death. Right now in him, we inhabit eternity as he shares his glorified life with us. The essentials of all that’s promised us in Christ at the *close* of the age, God has made ours in Christ in the *middle* of the age—now.
- 11. Jesus is prior—our re-creation is in him.** We should act as if the Consummation is upon us because in Christ it really is. It may not be *chronologically* near, but it always is *Christologically* near. The soon-to-be-renovated universe, under Christ’s lordship, makes its initial appearance with every believer as today we become “new creations” in the Son of Man. “Son of Man” is one of his biblical titles. It honors him as the preview of what we all will be when the Father finally completes conforming us to the image of Christ.
- 12. Jesus is prior—our security is in him.** We have been sealed in him by the Holy Spirit, marked and kept for all that is yet to come. The Spirit guarantees that *nothing* of the Father’s designs and desires for us in Christ will be missing when it is all said and done.

Yes, in these 12 ways—and in so many more!—Jesus always is prior. In his spectacular supremacy, he always strikes out ahead of us. Moreover, he promises to do so forever!

This is why our union with him automatically creates in us a sense of *restlessness*, an *expectant* way of looking at life, as we *anticipate* all that lies ahead of us as his reign reaches its culmination.

Every day, therefore, we are *restless* for more of what he already has prepared for us to lay hold of as we simply keep on pursuing him.

As a popular 19th-century hymn puts it: “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.”



Every Day, Jesus Goes Before Us Like a NASCAR Pace Car

Like the pace car that leads the way for the opening lap of a NASCAR competition, the Lord Jesus Christ goes before his people. At the head of the pack, he leads the way. He sets the pace. The only difference is we will never pass him up! He'll always be setting the pace and the direction. We're headed where he's headed.

He surges out ahead of his followers in four thrilling directions—moving in all four *at the same time*. Untold blessings await those who stay in the race, united with him and following him every mile of the way because:

- he goes **onward** into the FUTURE **in order to bring it back to us.**
- he goes **upward** into the HEAVENS **in order to bring us into it.**
- he goes **inward** into the PROMISES **in order to make them ours too.**
- he goes **outward** into the WORLD **in order to open the way for us to serve.**

We will continue with this study in the next four blog posts. But feel free to get started right now. Read the chapter on “Christ Before Us” in [*Christ Is NOW! 7 Groundbreaking Keys to Help You Explore and Experience the Spectacular Supremacy of God’s Son Today.*](#)

Let me conclude with this reassurance:

We should have no fears as Jesus advances the purposes of God. Wherever he leads out ahead of us, we can safely follow because even before we take our very first step of the journey, we are already IN him. We are united to him forever in the favor and fullness and fervency of his supremacy.

See How Jesus Goes Before Us
Into the **FUTURE**
to Bring It Back to Us Every Day

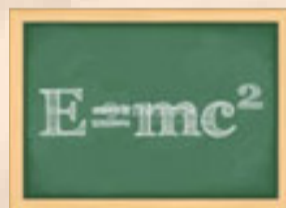


Part 2 of a 5-part Series

[Editor's Note: In last week's blog post, David Bryant began his five-part series on how Jesus transforms our lives by going BEFORE us—moving out ahead of us, preceding us—so that in everything Jesus is always prior. In the remaining four posts, he expands on the major directions in which Jesus takes us as he goes before us:

- *into the FUTURE (blog post 2)*
- *into the HEAVENS (blog post 3)*
- *into the PROMISES (blog post 4)*
- *into the WORLD (blog post 5)*

One of the brightest lights in Princeton University's historic constellation of scholars was Albert Einstein, who taught at their Institute for Advanced Studies until his death in 1955. Regarded by many as "the father of modern physics" and a Nobel Prize winner in 1921, he is best known for this equation:


$$E=mc^2$$

This "general theory of relativity" redefined our understanding of time and space and the very structure of the universe. What the genius was able to demonstrate is that space and time are relative and flexible rather than absolute concepts. Time and space bend, wave, curve. For Einstein, incidentally, this reality inferred a creator because time and space find their very state of being in God, who alone transcends space and time.

With both divinity and infinity in view, the renowned scientist concluded that events which seem simultaneous might not be. It all depends on the observer's frame of reference.

For example, he proved that time passes slightly faster for a climber at the top of a 12,000-foot mountain compared to its speed for those standing at its base. Thus, the climber slightly precedes his friends into the future.

Therefore, Einstein argued, someone traveling at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second), conceivably could find himself in an entirely different point of history than another person who is standing still. They could end up years apart, in fact.

This means that even based on these limited discoveries of Einstein and quantum physicists, **it is not a stretch for us to speak of our Lord Jesus going before us into the future and then turning around to bring splendid aspects of that future back into our walk with him right here and now.** Regardless, totally apart from anything scientists may discover or theorize about God's creation, there is nothing impossible for God!

In fact, the Bible teaches that Jesus' going before us into the future is one of the major displays of his spectacular supremacy today as he reigns at God's right hand.

In this blog post, I want to dig into this exciting dimension of Jesus' lordship and uncover manifold blessings it holds for every Christian disciple.



Jesus Can Dwell in the Future and the Present *Simultaneously*

Geographically speaking, we know Jesus' reign can be fully but simultaneously present in cities or lives on opposite sides of the globe. Even so, *chronologically* speaking, his reign can be fully engaged now and later—in the present and in the future—simultaneously. In other words, Jesus' spectacular supremacy extends over and outside of *time* just as it does over space.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Jesus has gone ahead of us into God's future on our behalf to bring vital facets of it—preliminary measures of the fullness of the life that awaits us—back to us for us to enjoy *here and now*.

Consider the following fundamental biblical truths—twenty-two of them!—about how Jesus goes before us into the future in order to bring facets of it into our daily walk with him.



Insights About Jesus as the “Presence of the Future”

1. By his resurrection and ascension, God’s Son preceded us into the future of the whole universe, thus becoming humankind’s one and only hope.

In 1 Peter 1 we read (NIRV, emphasis added):

In his great mercy *God has given us a new birth and a hope that is alive. This hope is living because Jesus Christ rose from the dead.* He has given us new birth so that we might share in what belongs to him . . . Even though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, you believe in him. You are filled with a glorious joy that can’t be put into words. You are receiving the salvation of your souls. It is the result of your faith.

2. Who holds the future? Jesus claims *he* does:

I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22, NIRV).

At the opening of Revelation, not only is our Savior honored as the one who “is and was” but also is declared to be the one “who is *to come*.” In other words, he has reached the grand climax of history ahead of us. But even now the grand themes of our future can be seen in who he is, where he is headed, what he is doing, and how he is being exalted at this very moment—with dramatic specificity.

3. Our Lord Jesus provides the WAY to reach our ultimate destination because he precedes us into that future and by the Spirit comes to us to lead us there.

In contrast, even at their best, other religious founders and teachers who try to provide their followers a path to some ultimate destiny continually fail because like us, they are corralled by the present, confined one moment after the next in the vortex of time.

In John 14, Jesus reassured his disciples about this dimension of his current activity in an exchange with Thomas. We read:

“[W]ould I have told you that I would prepare a place for you there? If I go and do that, *I will come back. And I will take you to be with me.* Then you will also be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. So how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “*I am the way . . . No one comes to the Father except through me*” (NIRV, emphasis added).

4. Creation’s future will not be defined and decided, first of all, through apocalyptic interventions but rather through a *Person*.

Not only is Christ leading us to the end, he is waiting for us at the end because he himself *is* the end. Not only does he call his disciples to follow him to the end, but he also brings back to us foretastes of the end as he reigns among us right now the way he will rule among us then.

5. Christ fulfills in himself our grandest expectations about what eternity holds for us.

All of God’s promises are defined by him and consummated in him. Therefore, today those in union with him already are enjoying delights of the life destined eventually to saturate the new heavens and earth.

He’s been there before us. Therefore, at this very moment, right where we live, he is able to bring his indestructible life back to us as he shares its blessings with us, doing so not superficially but substantively.

6. As the “*firstborn from the dead*” (Colossians 1), Jesus has become for us the vanguard for our coming day of resurrection.

It has already arrived—in him! Therefore, we are walking in resurrection today because we are walking united with him!

Furthermore, because he was designated the *firstborn* of creation and *firstborn* of the resurrection, and in keeping with the custom of the Hebrews’ firstborn sons, Jesus has been designated and ordained to be the solitary *heir* of everything created and recreated. He inherits everything that is delivered from the curse of death—all that comes “alive in Christ” both now and later.

7. Similarly, the ascended Jesus presents himself before the eyes of the universe as the *firstfruits* of the greater harvest yet to come (1 Corinthians 15).

In a profound sense, our death already has been swallowed up in victory. That happened when the long-anticipated day of resurrection broke in upon our fallen world that first Easter Sunday.

Now, in his continuing incarnation, in his glorified humanity, Jesus is “Exhibit A” of what all of his followers soon shall become—in body, soul, and spirit—at the hour of his glorious re-appearing.

8. We might say that as the “Son of Man,” the Son of God defines God’s people “*eschatologically*.”

In Jesus, as the “Son of Man,” we see how humankind one day will be reconstituted. We see humanity as our Creator intended all along.

In fact, who Jesus is right now is what all of God’s redeemed one day will become when we are fully conformed to Jesus’ image.

God planned that those he had chosen would become like his Son. In that way, Christ will be the first and most honored among many brothers (Romans 8, NIRV).

9. Because Christ has gone ahead of us into the Consummation, we can look at him right now and say with the reformer John Calvin:

Although I am weak, *there is Jesus—already* powerful enough to make me stand straight. Although I am feeble, *there is Jesus—already* living in immortal glory and what he has right now will be given to me, and I will partake of all his benefits (emphasis added).

10. Jesus has gone ahead of us into the future to prepare our dwelling place in his approaching kingdom. Compare these two statements Jesus made in the upper room:

There are many rooms in my Father’s house. If this were not true, would I have told you that I am going there? Would I have told you that I would prepare a place for you there? If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am (John 14, NIRV).

Then, a few minutes later he prayed:

So now, Father, give glory to me in heaven where your throne is . . . Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am. I want them to see my glory, the glory you have given me (John 17, NIRV).

11. Primarily, it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus brings the future to us. As he promised in the upper room:

[The Spirit] will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. *He will tell you about the future.* He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me (John 16, NLT, emphasis added).

Although we may not experience the *quantity* of the Consummation that remains in the future, Christ by the Holy Spirit pours into us the *quality* of our coming life with him.

12. Specifically, we have been sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit as a down payment on all that is waiting for us from our Lord in the coming ages.

The Spirit's presence among God's people guarantees to us the total fulfillment of the future toward which Christ currently is leading us (2 Corinthians 1).

13. His Spirit abiding within us, in fact, creates a deeply intimate experience of the “presence of the future”—a daily, personal foretaste of the life we one day will share under Christ's reign.

Already through the Spirit's activity among us, we have been allowed to “taste of the powers of the age to come,” according to Hebrews 6.

14. Now, as we follow Jesus, we are invited to present ourselves to God *as if* we already were raised from the dead, as we walk in the newness of his risen life.

[W]e were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And *like Christ we also can live a new life . . .* we have been joined with him in a death like his. So we will certainly also be *joined with him in a resurrection like his . . .* We died with Christ. So we believe that *we will also live with him . . .* When he died, he died once and for all time. He did this to break the power of sin. Now that he lives, he lives in the power of God. In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead as far as sin is concerned. *Now you believe in Christ Jesus. So consider yourselves to be alive as far as God is concerned* (Romans 6, NIRV, emphasis added)

15. Outside of Christ, we once were “dead men walking.” In union with Christ, who has gone before us into eternity and brought that future back to us, we have become “risen men and women reigning.” Just as Paul reminds us:

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! (Romans 5, NIV).

16. Right now Jesus puts us on the resurrection ground of the future so that we may present ourselves to the Father as those whom he regards as having passed from death into life through our Savior (Romans 6; John 5).

Participating by faith in Jesus' end-times resurrection, we are treated by God *as if* we currently were standing *on the other side* of judgment day and walking in the new heaven and earth.

17. We have been forged so thoroughly to a destiny that's inseparable from the destiny of God's Son that we are reckoned by the Father as if already we've been *glorified*. Note how all the verbs in Romans 8:30, including “glorified,” are written in the *past* tense:

And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, *he also glorified* (Romans 8, NIV, emphasis added).

Our Father receives us and treasures us *as if* we are living with Christ at the Consummation, *already* enjoying many of the universal displays of his cosmic reign, *already* “glorified” with him and all who belong to him.

18. Therefore, abiding in Jesus, we too should follow him daily *as if* Jesus in his second coming already had arrived and gathered us to himself.

In a very real sense, through our union with the one who has gone before us into the future, it has!

We are receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken. So let us be thankful. Then we can worship God in a way that pleases him. We will worship him with deep respect and wonder (Hebrews 12, NIV).

19. In Christ we should live each day *as if* we already had stepped into the City of God that someday soon, at the end, will descend out of heaven (see Revelation 21-22). That's precisely how Hebrews 12 describes Jesus followers at this very moment:

You HAVE come to Mount Zion, the city where the living God resides. The invisible Jerusalem is populated by throngs of festive angels and Christian citizens. It is the city where God is Judge, with judgments that make us just. You HAVE come to Jesus, who presents us with a new covenant, a fresh charter from God. He is the Mediator of this covenant. (Hebrews 12, MSG, emphasis added).

20. United to Christ, believers around the globe are abiding daily in the coming age because all of us are abiding daily in the Ruler of that coming age.

He is for us, here and now, the substance and source of the new creation that one day soon will engulf all things, especially the saints from all the ages.

21. So, as we saw previously, we might say that even if the end is not yet *chronologically* near, it is always *Christologically* near.

It resides in him, while at the same time he resides among us. What a marvelous transaction that is! In Christ the future remains forever “at hand.” It is always impending, always imminent. That's because at every moment “the Judge is standing at the door” (James 4).

22. Therefore, we should live daily in unceasing anticipation of how Jesus will bring to us what we might call “*approximations* of the Consummation.”

We should expect to experience such foretastes in very practical ways as Christ brings the future back to us and includes us in “previews” of its promises—doing so within us and through us moment by moment.



"I Feel Like Jesus Is Resurrecting Me!"

The *riches* of the gospel (as Paul terms it) come down to this:

Christ is in you! Yes, Christ is in you bringing with him the hope of all the glorious things to come. So, naturally, we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about him, so that, if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ. This is what I am working at all the time, with all the strength that God gives me (Colossians 1, PHILLIPS).

Recently, an Iraq war veteran suffering major disability from the impact of a terrorist's IED, testified to his personal experience of the extraordinary liberation in Christ when Jesus invaded his life with the "presence of the future." Even though confined for life to a wheelchair, he exclaimed to his friends: *"I'm beginning to feel like Christ is resurrecting me."*

In other words, he sensed God's Son was infusing him with a substantial sampling of the coming day of resurrection—which is what Romans 8 teaches all of us to expect:

But your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies, which are going to die. He will do this by the power of his Spirit, who lives in you” (NIRV).

Or as the *New Living Translation* puts the passage:

And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Someone has said: “**Hope** is the music of the future in Christ. **Faith** is hearing it and joining with Christ to dance to that music right now. **Love** is inviting others to dance with you as together you both join Jesus in the song of salvation that will last forever.”

In other words, starting today:

(1) LISTEN to the music. Get to know from Scripture, as much as possible, what the future holds for you because of Christ and begin to “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5).

(2) DANCE every day to the music. Start living a daily discipleship full of obedience to him in anticipation of the many “approximations of the Consummation” he is ready to bring into your life today.

(3) BRING others with you into the music. Share with believers and unbelievers all that the future holds for you because of Christ and urge them to join you in the grand adventure of walking in his resurrection power.

Explore more about Christ going BEFORE us by viewing Session 5 of *The Christ Institutes Video Series*. It’s free!

See How Jesus Goes Before Us Into the HEAVENS to Take Us There With Him Every Day



Part 3 of a 5-part Series



*[Editor's Note: In this five-part series of blog posts, David Bryant invites us to explore and experience God's Son in whole new ways as the One who goes **BEFORE** us—leading the way in four directions: (1) into the **FUTURE**; (2) into the **HEAVENS**; (3) into the **PROMISES**; and (4) into the **WORLD**. This week's installment gives your daily walk with Christ a whole new **location**—in more ways than one!]*



Jesus has become our “GPS”!

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong, leading the Apollo 11 mission, became the first person ever to stand on the moon. Millions around the globe watched on TV as he touched the lunar surface, declaring on behalf of the entire human race:

One small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.

Apollo 11's insignia was an eagle painted on the front of the spacecraft. In its first draft the Eagle held an olive branch in its beak; but finally, to avoid any appearance of a warlike image, the branch was placed in its talons.

In other words, NASA wanted us to understand that Armstrong's triumph was meant to be a mission of peace, commissioned to bring the nations together around something larger than any of us and for the sake of all of us. It is interesting that the lunar module landed in the Sea of Tranquility and the landing spot was called Tranquility Base—both “peaceful” names.

In its dramatic display, the Apollo 11 mission provided us with a vivid picture of the second dimension of who Christ is as he goes **before** us in his supremacy.

For Christians, this means our Savior has relocated us every day to a place of peace (“shalom”) exceeding any moon landing!

The Bible calls our ultimate destination and address the “glory of God.”

Instead of the mapping technology known as **GPS** representing “**G**lobal **P**ositioning **S**ystem,” for *Christians* I suggest we let **GPS** stand for Jesus being God's “**G**lory **P**ositioning **S**on” because he *positions* us every day in the thick of God's *glory*.

In this blog post, I want to share with you facets of the great adventure mapped out for you right now based on how Jesus has gone ahead of you into the very throne room of heaven. He's there today in order to make God's glory your permanent residence every moment of your walk with him.



A GPS That Will Direct You Into the Real Meaning of Life

Let's take a closer look at Jesus as God's GPS, his "**G**lorious **P**ositioning **S**on." Unlike the GPS in your car that helps navigate you only from one earthbound site to another, our Savior, after dying and rising again, entered the splendor of the everlasting Kingdom. He preceded us into the heavens to prepare the way for us to follow him. But then by the Holy Spirit, he comes to guide us there, and welcome us there, and deposit us there—to position us at the very center of the universe where we are alive with him right now.

I'm not talking about what happens after we die. I'm talking about what *is* happening with us this very hour. I'm talking about the ultimate realization of Armstrong's famous moon message, in this sense:

The Son of Man—as representative of a fallen race of sinners—took one unparalleled, unrepeatable "step" that changed *everything*. The single act of his death *for* us and *before* us now makes it possible for countless believers from every people, nation, and tongue on planet earth—past, present and future—to follow after him "into the Father's glory."

This happens for us when we take what is for any of us one incredibly "*giant leap*"—the leap of faith toward our Lord Jesus that brings us God's salvation. When we do this, we are instantly elevated with Jesus into the heights of the holy embrace of the triune God!

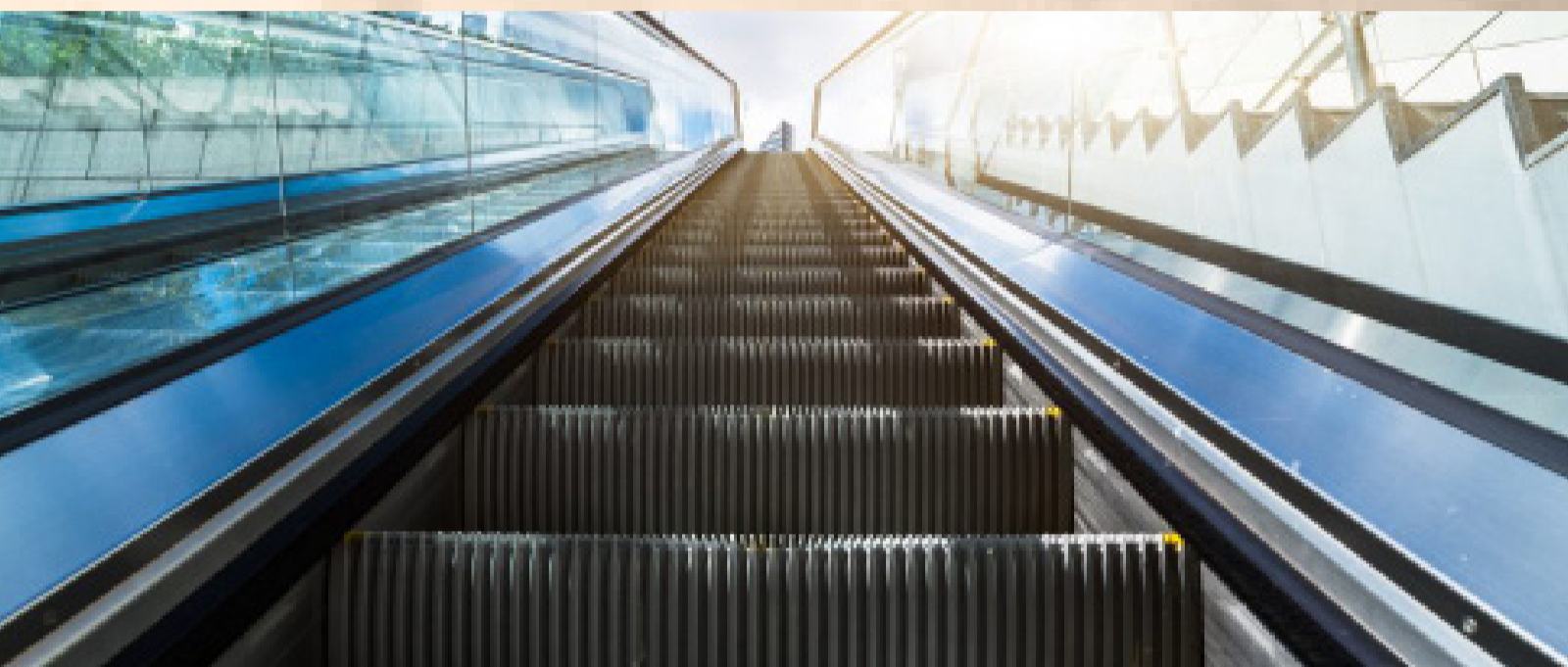
To say it another way: Jesus' shed blood on the cross reconciles us back to God, making peace where once there was only enmity between us. Consequently, the heavens—which is a word that stands for the full manifestation of God's glorious, personal presence—have now become for all believers our *cosmic* "Base of Tranquility," our place of peace and safety without end.

Yes, Jesus is God's "Glory Positioning Son." Jesus *is* our GPS.

Here's an interesting fact: Jesus' redemptive breakthrough recalls the story of a secret held close during the Apollo flight, revealed only many years later. The other astronaut piloting the lunar landing, Buzz Aldrin, was a devout Jesus follower. Privately inside the module, while monitoring the controls as Armstrong explored the moonscape, Buzz worshipfully celebrated the Lord's Supper, parked high above earth on the moon. Later the chalice he used was archived in a special display at his home church.

Unintentionally, his observance announced to the solar system the transforming impact of the work of Christ for the whole creation—especially how our King has opened up before believers a way to dwell with him in the heavens.

As Buzz focused on God’s Son in those historic moments up in space, his act was the very first time the gospel message was proclaimed from earth to the moon and back again—the powerful truth about Jesus who is God’s way of positioning us as Jesus goes *before* us into the heavens in order to place us where he reigns.



How Jesus Takes Us With Him Daily Into the Glories of the Kingdom of Heaven

In his widely popular Easter hymn, Charles Wesley wrote: **“Soar we now where Christ has led, following our exalted head.”**

In those few words, Wesley is reminding us that Jesus, who *descended* for us to carry out his work of salvation, is the same one who was raised from the dead in order to *ascend* for us into the heavens, doing so *ahead* of us. Therefore, as Wesley celebrates, we get to *soar* with him where he has gone—doing so every day as we give ourselves to follow him.

Again, this is why it is so appropriate for us to claim that Jesus has become for us God’s GPS—“Glory Positioning Son.”

Never forget this: We do not go *from* Jesus to the Father. Rather, we go *in* him and *with* him to the Father. In principle, when Jesus ascended to his throne and entered into the majesty of the heavens, *he took us with him*.

At this very moment, he is sitting at the right hand of the Father. So he does not have to call from afar on our behalf; he merely needs to “whisper” in the Father’s ear (as it were) and the Kingdom’s glorious treasury becomes available to us.

The Christian life ought to feel to us like every day we’re *soaring*!

Let me sum up these major *implications* of this marvelous demonstration of the supremacy of Christ in our lives:

1. Now we're home safe. From the moment Jesus entered into glory, that place became our home too. Wherever Christ has preceded us we may safely go, even into the presence of the eternal, holy, triune God of the universe—because Jesus is our GPS.

2. We know where to meet up. His ascension makes the person of our living Lord Jesus himself the constant and cordial point where we can enjoy fellowship with our Creator. Jesus is our GPS.

Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? (Romans 8, NLT).

3. We're welcomed by a gracious host. Our exalted Savior daily *hosts* us in the Father's magnificent "banquet hall" where the feast never ends because the Father placed us there the moment we became united to his Son, never to leave. Jesus is our GPS.

Immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us . . . Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah. Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2, MSG).

4. Jesus provides us with unlimited, unrestricted access. From his place of supremacy, Jesus gives us unhindered entry into God's presence forever. He grants us *permission* to enter. He makes all of our "introductions" for us.

Therefore, daily we may *act as if* we have physically entered into the throne room of eternity, where we're invited to freely walk into direct engagement with the Father the same way the Son is engaged with the Father already. "[W]e have a friend who speaks to the Father for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One (1 John 2, NIRV). Jesus is our GPS.

5. Our public defender has prevailed. Christ is our "friend in court" because his blood secured the "not guilty" verdict for us before the Judge of ALL, allowing us to face him unafraid. What an unprecedented GPS Jesus is!

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit (Ephesians 2, NIV).

6. We will always fit in. Christ assumed our whole response to God perfectly for us, doing so ahead of us. He did so by incarnation, by a perfect life, by crucifixion, by resurrection, and by victorious ascension to be our Sovereign Leader forever.

Then, he took all of this finished work of salvation with him, ahead of us, for us, into the Father's house and laid it down, on our behalf, before the Father's throne. As our Royal Priest, he comes before the face of God in our name and in our place, so that we can enter into the glory of God in his name and in his place.

We're positioned there at this very moment by God's unfailing, saving GPS.

7. So the unending family reunion swells! In point of fact, because Jesus has gone before us into the heavens, we are now invited into the "Trinity unity" that existed before anything was made. We are enfolded into the inner life of the triune God because our Redeemer has made a way for us, a place for us, going *before* us.

In other words, the extraordinary, intimate relationship Jesus himself enjoys with the Father is now open to us and shared with us. It was his first; but now he has made it ours, as well.

In fact, it is as if when Jesus' tongue speaks to the Father, it becomes our tongue. When his eyes look on God's splendor, they have become our eyes. Dwelling in his hands, we now are allowed to offer ourselves to the Father as living sacrifices for Jesus' sake.

GPS for sure.

8. We've been given a total change of address. In Christ we have gained far more than was lost when Adam sinned. Before sin entered the world, Adam walked with God in the cool of the day in a well-defined garden. However, forgiven and reborn in Christ we walk into the very center of the heavens, to dwell at the very throne of God, to thrive in the blaze of his presence and power.

Ours is a fellowship with the Father that has no end and no limits because it is the very same fellowship that first belonged to the Son before anything was ever created, which now Jesus shares with all who are alive in him.

Our GPS tells us that our names have been written in "the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21). That's your permanent address now.



How the Book of Hebrews Reveals Jesus as God's GPS for Us

Jesus reigns as a king who is also a priest, simultaneously. His person and his priesthood are forever inseparable. Only because he serves in *both* roles are we delivered from spiritual impotency so as to freely pursue all that the heavens hold for those who belong to him.

More than any other book of Scripture, Hebrews abounds with insights on this BEFORE dimension of Christ's supremacy. Throughout it testifies to ways Christ goes ahead of us to open the heavens to us and bring us there with him. Consider these examples:

- **Hebrews 3 – Pioneer:** Like an apostle would do, Jesus pioneers the way for us into the heavens; and now like a high priest, he is waiting there to greet us.

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest (NIV).

- **Hebrews 6 – Vanguard:** Jesus is our *forerunner* into God's presence where he guarantees our unqualified welcome there.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (NIV).

- **Hebrews 7 – High Priest:** Jesus takes responsibility for us for one primary reason—to plead our case forevermore in heaven’s courtroom so we can always abide there without any fear.

But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest truly meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens (NIV).

- **Hebrews 9 – Mediator:** When he took it all into the Holy Place, Jesus’ redemptive work—his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—gives us free and permanent access into that very same location.

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation . . . he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption . . . now to appear for us in God’s presence . . . he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (NIV).

- **Hebrews 4 – Advocate:** As our ascended and reigning High Priest, every day and all day long Jesus invites us to come boldly to join him before God’s throne.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (NIV).

- **Hebrews 10 – Waymaker:** Our great High Priest made a way for us into the heavens when there was no way—when we had no hope of finding a way—and invites us to take full advantage of how he has gone *before* us.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful (NIV).



Jesus Is Like the Brooklyn Bridge for You

Let me conclude by switching metaphors on you. It brings all of the truths of this blog post together.

I don't live far from the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. As a renowned crossing over the East River into Manhattan, the Brooklyn Bridge provides travelers access into "the Big Apple" with all the sights and lights it holds.

You might even say the bridge—placed there generations ago for anyone who would come afterward and want to use it—sort of "*mediates*" a way for people to cross over into what is, for most newcomers, the excitement of a lifetime.

Even so, like the Brooklyn Bridge, Jesus is our bridge that "*mediates*"—that crosses over—the Abyss created by sin that separates us from God. Furthermore, he is also the highway *on* the bridge by which we access all that God has for us in Christ.

Paul declares:

God our Savior . . . wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and **one mediator** between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people (1 Timothy 2, NIV, emphasis added).

At this very second, the supremacy of Christ is powerfully displayed by how he “bridges” or “mediates,” through his reign, a way that lifts God’s people up *to* and positions them *in* the heavens.

As our bridge, Jesus has transferred all who belong to him over the Abyss, from the domain of darkness into his realm of day (see Colossians 1). He has *dislocated* us from the fallen race of Adam with its tyranny of sin and death and judgment to come, and he has *relocated* us into a new heaven, new earth, and new city, as he waits to someday consume this current creation with the triumphs of his grace (Romans 5; Revelation 21).

As our bridge, Christ precedes us into the holy Father’s presence to present us without reservations before the forces of divine glory and the fullness of God’s grace.

And then he keeps on interceding for us, always going before us, so that we can be confident in the Father’s promise to never withhold anything that’s good for us from those who belong to Jesus (Romans 8).

In his spectacular supremacy, Jesus breaks open a “road in the wilderness” (Isaiah 40) so we can cross over and pursue the eternal treasures that are true, good, beautiful, righteous, holy, and filled with the Father’s love. It *all* belongs to us because, going ahead of us, Christ has received all authority to invite us into all that surrounds him.

We need only to trust him, embrace him, live in him—and forever *follow* him. “Where I am there will my servants be also” (John 12).

All praise to God’s “Glory Positioning Son”!

Suggestion: Dig deeper into this truth by downloading David’s one-hour teaching on “[*Christ BEFORE Us*](#)” taken from *The Christ Institutes*. It’s free!

**See How Jesus Goes Before Us
Into God's PROMISES to Make
Them Ours Every Day**



Part 4 of a 5-part Series



[Editor's Note: So far in this series on "Christ Going BEFORE Us Today," we discovered how Jesus (1) travels into the future to bring a lot of it back to us right here and (2) ascends into the heavens in order to take us with him there right now. In this fourth installment, David Bryant shows us why the Christian life should be filled with experiences of God's faithfulness and power. That's because our Lord Jesus has secured all the promises God has made to us so that he can now activate them for us as we follow him. This truth provides another evidence of Christ's supremacy and a further reason to call it "spectacular"!]



English literature scholars consider Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, though not as long as some of his other novels, to be the height of his literary prowess. Have you read it or seen one of the movies made from it?

The term "expectations" in 19th-century England referred to one's anticipated *inheritance*. To have "*great expectations*," therefore, would imply the heirs could expect a fairly significant endowment when they came of age.

In the book's title, however, Dickens gives the phrase a double meaning: "Great expectations" includes not only a promising financial windfall but also a destiny full of promises for the main character, Pip.

Dickens's tale illustrates, in part, the most amazing transaction our Lord Jesus Christ has carried out for us, accomplishing something for us we could never have done for ourselves. Yet, tragically, it is something many of us fail to make as fully our own as he intended.

He's gone ahead of us into the promises of God—first to fulfill them in himself, to claim them for himself, to focus them on himself, and then ultimately, as incredible as it may sound, to make all of them as totally ours as they are totally his. Yes, in Christ we *do* have "great expectations!"

Drawing on this classic novel, I want to bring you into a whole dimension of life in Christ you may have never seen—what could become a new beginning for you as his follower.



Because the Document Is Signed in Blood, the Benefits Now Go to You!

To continue with Dickens's tale:

Pip is a young orphan temporarily befriended by a very wealthy but eccentric dowager, Miss Havisham.

Eventually, her ambitions for Pip cool and she sends him off to become a common laborer in his family's blacksmith business.

Many years later, a London lawyer informs Pip that a secret benefactor has willed him a large fortune, which he is to receive once he turns 21 years old. Immediately, Pip assumes the mysterious source is the wealthy Miss Havisham, but he's wrong.

One of the most dramatic moments in the story occurs when Pip learns that his "great expectations" come to him, instead, from a common criminal whom Pip tried to rescue from capture years earlier. In spite of being deported to Australia for his crimes, Magwitch ends up making a fortune there and returns to England to repay Pip for his kindnesses, determined to see him transformed into a real gentleman.

In other words, because of the one who went before him, the poor, disillusioned orphan now unexpectedly faces a future filled with "great expectations"—a life of unimagined blessings inherited from another to whom it originally belongs. And with that, Pip now has every reason to abound in hope about his future.

Here's the application: Like Miss Havisham, the world makes us many promises that end up being fickle or false, and fading at best.

Then, to our utter amazement, from the most unlikely source (from One who was crucified as a common criminal—pictured by Magwitch), we are presented with our “great expectations—inexhaustible riches beyond belief, an inheritance that encompasses all of the promises ever made by the triune God to his people, with the entire universe thrown in as well! It’s like receiving a legal certificate signed and sealed by, in, and for the Lord Jesus!

Here’s how Paul puts it to us:

You are familiar with the generosity of our Master, Jesus Christ. Rich as he was, he gave it all away for us—in one stroke he became poor and we became rich (2 Corinthians 8, MSG).

Therefore, Paul can unconditionally reassure us:

My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4, NIV).

He adds further:

The Father has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1, NIV).

Christ, who has bought and paid for all of God’s promises, did so to secure them, first of all, *for himself*. They are his by right and by sacrifice and by position as the risen, ascended Heir of everything in heaven and on earth.

But here’s the shocker: *He did this also in order to share them with all of us who belong to him and are reborn into God’s family!*

In other words, he has endowed us with *his very own* “great expectations”! What a generous Monarch! You can’t get any richer than we are if we are his!

Let’s dig deeper into this glorious treasure chest:



20 Amazing Truths About How Christ Goes Before You Today to Bring You Into Great Expectations

If you discovered a buried, sea-weathered chest overflowing with coins and jewelry left behind generations ago by an infamous but successful pirate, what would be your first act?

Once the lid was pried open, surely you would carefully dig through the dazzling fortune to calculate the extent and value of what has now become yours.

What you just discovered represents a whole new, magnificent, incomparable set of “great expectations” that were never yours prior to this moment.

In the same way, I want us to take a deep dive into an amazing sequence of 20 biblical truths about the eternal, extravagant treasure trove you *already* have received because you belong to Jesus who has gone *before* you to lay claim to all of God’s promises and then make them yours as well.

- 1. All the promises of God’s Word to God’s people belong to God’s Son first of all.** The promises and the “Promise-er” are forged together forever. All of heaven’s riches are bound up in our Lord *exclusively*, and their ultimate blessings will culminate in our Lord *conclusively*.
- 2. The promises were “closed up” into Jesus so that they could be “opened up” unto us with infinite possibilities because he first made them his own.** Only in him do the promises ever become ours. “Christ not only offers us something for nothing. He even offers us *everything* for nothing” (C. S. Lewis, emphasis added).

3. Scripture declares God's promises are fulfilled in Christ.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us . . . was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God . . . [He] put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Corinthians 1, NIV).

4. **There are nearly 7,000 separate promise statements found throughout the Bible (including different ways of announcing similar prospects). But all of them are “Yes” to us *in Christ*.** They *belong* to Jesus to start with. They all are *summed up* in him. They all are *about* him, *embodied* in him, *purchased* by him, *inherited* by him, *enriched* in him, *guaranteed* by him, *fulfilled* in him. Only then does the Father apply them to us—yet even then, he does it for the prime purpose of *exalting* his Son.
5. **We have no hope beyond the *person* who God's Son is.** He gives us access into God's abounding grace so that we can continually “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,” knowing that in him our hope “will not disappoint us” because God's love for us in Christ is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5).
6. **Put simply, Jesus' *person* and his *position* in the universe guarantee to us his *promises*.** In Christ, the promises have been enhanced, enriched, expanded, and then endorsed over to those who belong to him.
7. **In our Savior, we have become the unconditional beneficiaries of the triune God.** Through him, we have inherited inexpressible provisions—given by the Father to the Son to be endowed lavishly by the Spirit on all the saints.
8. **This provides additional evidence of the supremacy of Christ.** In other words, when the Father's promises are thoroughly implemented in the Son, this will make even more obvious and more wonderful—before the Church and the nations—the glorious riches of the reign of Christ.
9. **Therefore, we have every reason to be at peace as we rest in Christ.** Life under his scepter may not provide us with all the *explanations* we may want for what God is up to in our lives, our churches, our nation, our generation. But we have all the *promises* God's people will ever want or need—and that should be enough for now to fill us with confidence and courage in the face of any challenges.
10. **Here's what's *new* about the New Covenant we celebrate at every Lord's Supper.** As the Father's heir, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant with God—a newly reconstituted covenant—full of far greater promises (see Hebrews 8).
11. **We serve a generous Father who invites us, on the basis of the finished work of his ascended Son, to explore, share, and benefit from the “inexhaustible riches in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3).** We can be sure, that having given us his Son on the cross, the Father will not withhold any good thing from us, but *with* Christ will freely give us all things (Romans 8).

12. So, we can boldly say that because Christ goes before us, we have been welcomed into all of heaven's resources. They are magnificent, undefiled, never fading—laid before us in Christ himself. As a result, he has become our *highest* treasure. Scripture tells us that in him are:

... hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2, NIV).

Even so, in him there is:

... an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade (1 Peter 1, NIV).

Therefore, with resounding joy we shout:

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9, NIV).

13. Furthermore, because Jesus goes before us to secure the promises on behalf of all of his people, each believer receives equal rights to all of it. When an earthly inheritance is distributed, the more heirs there are, the less each person will receive. Not so with Christ! Every saint participates perfectly and to the full extent in everything each promise offers us. Not one promise is diminished for any of us.

14. This is why, in the end, Christ himself becomes the final and fullest answer to every prayer which claims God's promises. Christ encompasses in his very person everything we long to *receive* from God, as well as everything we long to *become* for God.

15. For example, there's not one of the six requests of "The Lord's Prayer" that does not point us to Christ as the final answer, even if initially the Father's response provides only preliminary installments of the promises Christ brings to us. We see:

- when Jesus is exalted, the Father's name is exalted
- when Jesus reigns, God's kingdom comes
- by Jesus' work of redemption and justice, God's eternal purposes are accomplished on earth
- Jesus is the source that supplies all the daily needs of his people
- Jesus keeps his people bound together in his circle of love and forgiveness
- Jesus rescues us to lead us in triumph over all the schemes of the Evil One

16. In other words, Christ possesses nothing that he has not fully applied to our benefit right now. As Jesus said:

And I confer [present tense] on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me (Luke 22, NIV)

Thus, the scope of this hope should fill us with boundless expectations as long and high and deep and wide as our vision of all that Jesus is. The reality of his supremacy over all things in heaven and earth should “explode” in our churches, our communities, our nation, and beyond with joyful, unstoppable confidence about the future, about all the good things Christ’s kingdom is bringing upon us.

17. Far more than Abraham who saw Jesus only “at a distance” (John 8), we who know the One who is the final heir of the promises made to Abraham (Galatians 3) should not waver in unbelief. Abraham is called the “father of all who believe” (Romans 4). How much more should we who have become “fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8) replicate his unshakeable confidence toward God’s promises! Even when fulfillments are delayed, we, like Abraham, should not grow weary in faith but increase our celebrations of what is to come, “being convinced that he who has promised is able also to perform it” (Romans 4). The whole Church is called to “hold unswervingly” to our hope in Christ, especially as we “see the Day approaching” when the promises are fulfilled dynamically, even at a cosmic level (Hebrews 10).

18. Our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to go before us into the promises throughout eternity as well.

And God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2, NIV).

Both now and in the Consummation, we can say:

The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd . . . He will lead them to springs of living water (Revelation 7, NIV).

19. In possession of all of God’s promises, Christ holds out to us the prospect of plunging ever deeper into God’s great love for us, day after day. Therefore, we should pray like Paul:

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ (Ephesians 3, NIV).

20. In addition, with Jesus every promise that is fulfilled actually gives birth to even greater reasons to hope! Every promise that becomes a reality encourages us to seek the Father for even more of what he offers us in his Son because the inheritance he has shared with us is never redundant or stagnant, but always bubbling with new beginnings—creative, inventive, full of adventure, and taking us from “glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3).

Out of His fullness [the superabundance of His grace and truth] we have all received, grace upon grace [spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift] (John 1, AMP).



How GREAT Will Your Expectations Become From Now On?

Imagine two hardy ice fishermen, sitting side by side on up-turned buckets in the middle of a frozen lake in Wisconsin, wrapped in the clutches of a frigid January afternoon. Both have carved holes in the ice. Both hold poles with their fishing lines dropping through the openings into the water.

But look closer. One has carved a hole the size of a bass. The other has spent over an hour sawing out an opening the size of a *whale*—which means, of course, he's fishing for something that makes no sense for Wisconsin! No whales there, right? Nevertheless, what does this picture tell you?

Clearly, the first sportsman is thinking only of his next meal; he's hoping to catch something big enough to provide the main course that evening. On the other hand, his companion is focused on catching something big enough to feed himself, and his family and friends, for the next 60 days.

What faith the second fisherman displays! There he waits for this extraordinary catch! He believes something is swimming somewhere under the icy lake that's huge, ready to be hauled in; something that's significant enough to pursue no matter how ridiculous it seems to his buddies; something so amazing just under the surface that the promise of it has filled the bold sportsman with great expectations!

And so, in anticipation of what he yet cannot see but fully expects to capture, he's prepared an opening enormous enough so that when the whale strikes, despite its size, the angler will be able to pull it onto the ice successfully (although he may need some assistance from his friends!).

Even so, as we follow Jesus, should not all of us believers approach each day with a similar perspective?

If we believe Christ is truly sovereign and supreme, then there's no doubt he has every right and every capacity to go before us into God's promises, to secure them and make them his own in order to turn around and share them with us—which is precisely what he has done! And in turn, he has given all of us “whale-sized” expectations about God's work in our lives in Christ, prospects that he is ready to unleash in our lives right now.

Great, inexhaustible, unprecedented expectations—they are ours in Christ in whom the expansive promises of God find their grandest dimensions. As Paul prays for Christians in Ephesians 3 (from *The Message* paraphrase, emphasis added):

**Take in with all followers of Jesus
the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love.**

Reach out and experience the breadth!
Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!
Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

**God can do anything, you know—
far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request
in your wildest dreams!**

He does it not by pushing us around
but by working within us,
his Spirit deeply and gently within us.
Glory to God in the church!
Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!
Glory down all the generations!
Glory through all millennia!
Oh, yes!

APPLICATION: Take a yellow highlighting pen then comb through the book of Ephesians looking for and spotlighting every promise contained there that is yours to claim because you belong to Christ. See how much of your Bible turns yellow in those few pages.

Then, go back and turn each discovery into a prayer of thanksgiving and a request for those promises to become even more real in your own daily walk with Jesus.

Also, read the chapter on “Christ BEFORE Us Today” in my latest book, ***Christ Is NOW!***

**See How Jesus Goes Before Us
Into the WORLD to Open a Way
for Us to Serve Him Every Day**



Part 5 of a 5-part Series



[Editor's Note: You can catch up on the previous four blog posts in this series by following these links: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), and [Part 4](#). So far, we've discovered that every day the living, reigning Son of God goes before those who belong to him—he breaks out ahead of us—in directions that transform how we walk with him right now. He goes *BEFORE* us into the *FUTURE*, into the *HEAVENS*, and into the *PROMISES*. With this post, David Bryant fills us with solid anticipation about how Jesus makes our lives count for his global cause.]



Wait a minute! Where on earth are you headed?

Put another way: Where in the world is Jesus taking you?

As we've discovered in the previous blog posts in this series, for everyone who belongs to him, King Jesus always remains out in front of us, calling us, drawing us, leading us—taking us *forward*. He goes *BEFORE* us—today and every day.

Even more accurately, we might say he continues to lead his people *outward* without limits—north, south, east, west—as we continue to follow him to the end of the street . . . or to the ends of the earth.

His global cause is an adventure you don't want to miss out on! And you can join it *increasingly*, starting right where you live. I want to share with you its many possibilities and show you how your Master will get you on board, involved in his "Mission Possible."

The great news is that our risen, ascended Lord not only intends to **send** you into the world for his sake but also will be there waiting and ready to **meet** you when you get to wherever he takes you. He precedes you to open up new ways for you to serve him once you get there.



Forward!!

Jesus' initiative among his followers can be pictured by a famous statue that dominates the skyline in Madison, Wisconsin. It doesn't take long for casual visitors to discover the golden lady atop the dome of the magnificent legislative complex in the center of the state's capital city.

There in the heart of this university town she stands, elevated so everyone can see her even blocks away, clothed in brilliant gold leaf, her one arm stretching straight out, her forefinger pointing toward the West.

Locally, the effigy is known affectionately as "Miss Forward" because that is the state motto for Wisconsin—just one word: **"FORWARD!"**

It's as if day after day the regal lady stands above the daily bustle below, persistently urging her "subjects" to keep moving *forward* on all fronts that make up life in Madison—academic, political, economic, commercial, social, cultural.

Similarly, God's Son, the glorious Head of the Church, invites everyone who dwells under his scepter to embrace his compelling call to move *forward*—to choose to take off with him without qualifications on where he sends and leads us or on how he uses us once we get there.

We set no limits on when, how, or where. We are open to following our Savior anywhere he places us among some of the nearly three billion people (near us and far from us) who have no real knowledge of Jesus and no one like them, near them, to tell them—*unless he takes us to them*.

Mark it down: Christians have the grandest of all privileges, which is to invade the world with the Savior of the world, to follow him into the world, and to spread his good news throughout the world as we help fulfill his kingdom's agenda.

We've seen so far in this five-part series of blog posts that wherever our Lord goes *before* us, we can safely and eagerly follow him—*onward* (into the future), *upward* (into the heavens), *inward* (into the promises); and now, *outward* (into the world). In other words, *forward*.



“Boy, Have I Got a Terrific Mission for You!”

From the first moment he called his disciples to join him in his plan for the nations, the Master laid down one prerequisite and added to it one guarantee:

1. They must *follow* him, wherever that took them and whatever it cost them. They could no longer stay where it was soft, predictable, manageable. “Where I am there must my servant be also” (John 12). No turning back. No holding back.
2. In turn, he promised he would so profoundly transform them that they could enter his mission not as fishers of fish (which many were) but as “fishers of people.” In other words, he would open for them an ocean of possibilities to “fish” for him—to bring others to him and into his saving reign—doing so eventually right to the ends of the earth (Compare Mark 1 with Acts 1).

Near the close of his earthly ministry, on Resurrection Sunday, Jesus amplified their future mission when he reassured them in their fear, as he breathed the Spirit of God into them: “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (John 21).

The disciples were terrified about their fate when Jesus appeared to them. Instead, standing in the flesh before them, he proved to them that he had triumphed over death itself—their greatest enemy, their biggest fear, and their largest barrier to any kind of mission into the world. Then, it was sort of like he said to them, “Forget your fears! Boy, have I got a fantastic assignment for you guys to carry out for me for years to come way beyond the confines of this upper room!”

And *how* did the Father send the Son?

On more than one occasion, Jesus claimed he did only what he saw the Father do first and spoke only what the Father spoke first.

In the same way, Jesus was promising his disciples that the success of the Church's mission would depend on *him* as he would go before his followers in word and deed, clarifying the approaches for them to serve him.

After all, this was precisely how his own redemptive undertaking was completely dependent on his Father going *before* him, time after time opening the way for him to serve his purposes by the power of the Spirit (Compare Luke 4 with John 5).

In other words, Jesus promised these newly commissioned change agents—and *all* of us believers with them—that as they traversed the nations, no matter where he sent them, he would go before them, he would lead the way for them. He would also arrive there ahead of them, to meet them once they showed up, in order to deploy them, work with them, and minister through them.

That meant there would be no location where they could go to serve his global cause where he would not *already* be fully involved—not a square inch of planet Earth where his reign would not precede them to open the way for them to serve him.

As a contemporary proverb puts it, “Christ *meets* us where he *sends* us.”

From the outset, the Gospels present us with a Jesus who is always *in motion*! That's precisely who he is today as well. He is forever pressing to take new ground in his unending “road trip” to bring to completion the ongoing, cosmic purposes of his redeeming reign.

For you see, Jesus is not only the ultimate *revelation* of God, he is also is the ultimate *revolution* of God.

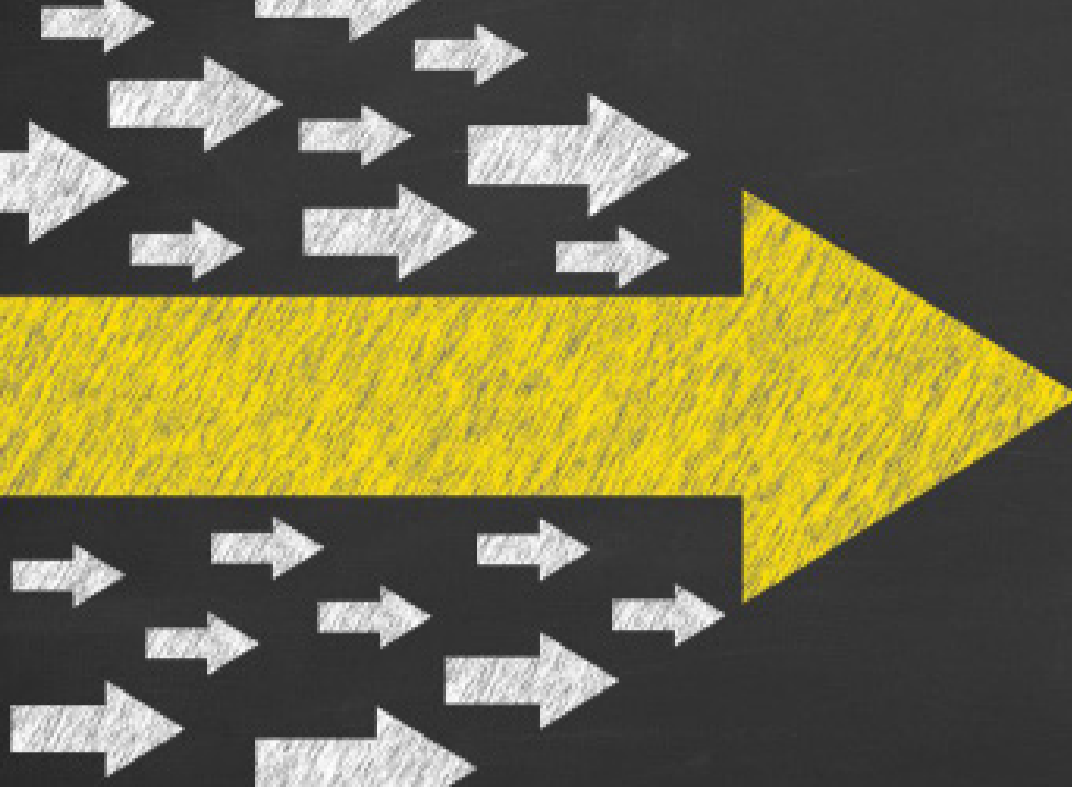
He boldly takes us, his followers, into the world to serve him in outreaches we might not have imagined or dared to expect, often among people different than we are, and in places where we would never have dared to tread on our own.

Except for the fact that Jesus already has gone *BEFORE* us.

Have you heard him lately crying out to *you*, “Forward! Outward!”?

As we seek to obey and follow him, it might help us to dig deeper into this powerful expression of his spectacular supremacy today.

How does he go before us into the world? I see at least thirteen roles he plays as he leads the parade.



13 Roles Jesus Assumes as He Goes Before Us Into the World to Open Up Ways for Us to Serve Him

These 13 roles represent 13 different angles for looking at and thinking about how Jesus serves us and employs us in his global cause by going before us. In the end, all the roles really form the same role because they are carried out by the same Person.

1. Shepherd. Even in the passage about the Good Shepherd, Jesus indicates clearly that he intends to lead his flock out of familiar pens into wide-open spaces in search of even more sheep to hear his voice and join his fold. We read in John 10:

The shepherd walks right up to the gate . . . He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out . . . they follow because they are familiar with his voice . . . You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd (MSG).

2. Farmer. Jesus plants and tends “crops” and then places workers to harvest them.

We see in Matthew 9 that the fields are more prepared to be harvested than we imagine. The only thing lacking is enough laborers to be (his words) “thrown out” (the literal meaning of the Greek word is even more explosive in its implications)—that is, thrust into the midst of flourishing fields made ready by the One who reigns as Lord over the harvest and prepares the way to send forth the laborers.

3. Sower. The second of two parables about a sower in Matthew 13 demonstrates how Jesus makes a way for us to serve.

In the second account, he tells us the “field is the world,” the sower “is the Son of Man,” and the seeds are “the children of the Kingdom.” Observe: The sower flings out his followers into any part of the world he chooses so that they can bring forth a harvest there. Wherever he sends them, the soil has been prepared to receive what they’ve come to do. Paul reinforces this truth in Ephesians 2:10 (NIRV, emphasis added):

We are God's creation. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good works. *Long ago God prepared these works for us to do.*

4. Forerunner. Because he has all authority in heaven and on earth, Jesus promised his newly commissioned disciples that wherever they found themselves as they traversed the nations, he would be with them (Matthew 28).

That means we can be sure that there's no place his ambassadors go where he does not precede them, set the stage for their arrival, eagerly work through them when they get there, and then remain to sustain the impact of his salvation long after they move on to replicate their mission somewhere else.

5. Predecessor. Our mission to earth's unreached peoples is not a fool's errand, *because* wherever we go, Christ has already gone ahead of us to open the way for us to serve.

Paul reminded Athenian philosophers that in God's presence all of humanity "lives, and moves, and has their being." Therefore, it follows that all people (whether they know it or not at this moment) live and move and have their being under the reign of and in the presence of God's Son—before we ever reach them to tell them of his saving work.

Wherever we go, therefore, our job is to help people see, believe, and enter into a kingdom that is already bearing down on top of them.

6. Door Buster. Jesus breaks through barriers, opening entryways for any outreach into which he calls his people. To the church in Philadelphia he declared:

What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open . . . I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut (Revelation 3, NIV).

Since the Father has given his Son the keys to death and Hades (Revelation 1), we can be sure he holds all the other keys needed to unlock barriers for the gospel's advance into cities and nations, making it possible for his people to enter in to proclaim his name, spread his fame, and increase his gain.

Frequently, Paul experienced Jesus doors opening ahead of him; so it became for him a major prayer focus filled with expectations:

I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But . . . a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me (2 Corinthians 16, NIV).

Pray for us that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4, NIV).

7. Facilitator. Christ went ahead and prepared the way for Peter’s initial outreach to Gentiles. We read in Acts 10 that Jesus first prepared the heart of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, so that he was ready to take the gospel seriously. Next, Jesus visited Peter through a vivid vision, which was repeated three times, urging him each time to eat ceremonially unclean animals. This reassured the apostle that going into Gentile territory was thoroughly proper *because* his Lord had gone before him to open the way for him to reach them.

The results were so amazing that when the church leaders in Jerusalem demanded a full report, Peter responded like this:

So I ask you: “If God gave the same exact gift to them as to us when we believed in the Master Jesus Christ, how could I object to God?” Hearing it all laid out like that, they quieted down. And then, as it sank in, they started praising God. “It’s really happened! God has broken through to the other nations, opened them up to Life” (MSG).

8. Preemptor. Often, New Testament witnesses discovered that people’s hearts already had been made tender by the Master before they connected with them and gave them an invitation to believe in Jesus.

In Pisidian Antioch, for example, after being rejected by the local synagogue for three Sabbaths in a row, Paul was delighted that “outsiders” (Gentiles, who were the least likely to respond) had been prepared beforehand to put their faith in Christ.

When the non-Jewish outsiders heard this, they could hardly believe their good fortune. *All who were marked out for real life put their trust in God – they honored God’s Word by receiving that life.* And this Message of salvation spread like wildfire all through the region (Acts 13, MSG, emphasis added).

9. Entrepreneur. The Church’s exciting challenge is to seek God’s face for the Spirit to *reveal* where Christ has opened hearts and then make God’s creatively opened places our priorities too.

In Acts 16, for example, we find that on two occasions Paul and his team probed for an opening for missionary work in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go. *Instead*, God gave Paul a vision of a Macedonian man pleading with them to come there. Immediately they obeyed. In just a short time, Jesus brought them to Lydia in Philippi “whose heart the Lord had opened.” She became the first convert in Macedonia—the beginning of a tremendous harvest for Christ’s kingdom throughout that entire region!

10. Regulator. Going before us into the world, Jesus not only builds the roadway for us to travel but also determines *the perfect timing* for us to move forward on it to serve him.

For example, a few years after not allowing Paul to enter Asia Minor, Jesus finally brought him back to Ephesus. Now, amazingly, many there were ready to hear the message, as miracles flowed from the throne! We read:

Each day he talked with people in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. *This went on for two years. So all the Jews and Greeks who lived in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord . . .* They held the name of the Lord Jesus in high honor. Many who believed now came and openly admitted the evil they had done. [Those who practiced] evil magic brought their scrolls together. They set them on fire out in the open . . . *The word of the Lord spread everywhere. It became more and more powerful* (Acts 19, NIRV, emphasis added).

11. Coach. Before we're even aware that people are ready to hear and believe the gospel, Christ has gone ahead of us to make them ready. He knows exactly where unbelievers are in their spiritual growth and so he can equip us and teach us the best ways to reach them.

For example, in Corinth, Paul initially found so much resistance that he was ready to leave and travel to the next city. But Jesus opened Paul's eyes to how he had gone before him to make Corinth ready for the gospel. Paul just needed to let Jesus take charge. We read:

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Keep on speaking. Don't be silent. I am with you. *No one will attack you and harm you. I have many people in this city.*" So Paul stayed there for a year and a half. He taught them God's word (Acts 18, NIRV, emphasis added).

Consequently, Paul experienced one of his most effective times of ministry ever in Corinth.

12. Drum Major. Christ marches ahead of us into the nations, leading us in his vast victory parade.

Borrowing from the familiar scene of Caesar leading captives taken in battle back to Rome in chains—with Caesar riding at the head of the procession of conquered slaves, and all of the city celebrating the victory—Paul so described King Jesus going before the apostle and his team in similar fashion, opening the way for their mission for him and marching them into it. He wrote:

In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance . . . This is a terrific responsibility. Is anyone competent to take it on? No . . . We stand in Christ's presence when we speak; God looks us in the face. We get what we say straight from God and say it as honestly as we can (2 Corinthians 2, MSG, emphasis added).

13. Champion. In Matthew 16, Christ promises to lead his church up to and through the gates of Hades itself in order to extend his kingdom. He guarantees that no barriers will constrain or prevent this advance.

Sometimes he may lead us through very dark valleys to accomplish a specific assignment, but be assured that there is no resistance or sacrifice we face that he has not previously engaged and from which he has not already emerged victorious.

He championed our service for him, now and forever, the moment he took on our flesh, absorbed our judgment, broke through the tomb, and ascended to the throne with all authority—all authority not only in heaven but also throughout the nations where he sends us.



Let Go! Grab Hold! Then Make That Your Everyday Approach to Life

The pastor of the world's largest church told me he often looks to Matthew 11:12 as one explanation for their growth over the past 50 years from fewer than a hundred people to 800,000 members today. The verse reads:

Since the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven has been advancing with force. And forceful people are taking hold of it (Matthew 11, NIV).

The application the leader shared with me? As his people have increasingly heard the stories of Christ's sovereign, saving initiatives on their streets, in their cities, and among the nations, they have grown in personal eagerness to participate with him in his work. As a result, more and more they have become a "people of force" as they grab hold of Jesus and where he is headed and then enter into what he already is doing.

In other words, we become a "people of force" the moment we let go of everything else, forcefully grab hold of the King and his kingdom, and allow him to lead us forcefully forward. We do so disregarding how "risky" it might *seem* at the moment. There are never any "risks" with him!

Think of a circus trapeze artist high above the crowd. Picture her swinging back and forth, holding fast to her trapeze bar, dangling over the center ring. *Suddenly*, she lets go of the bar. The next moment she's suspended in midair, reaching for the hands of the acrobat on the other swing. Once they securely connect, from that moment forward, her immediate future is wrapped up in the destiny of the other performer. She has no choice. She's going where he's going. His direction and his speed of movement become hers as well—but only as long as she holds firmly to him.

Similarly, God calls believers to let go of the familiar, the seemingly safe, the supposedly predictable, and to thrust themselves into the arms of his Son—to be wholeheartedly engaged with him, to hold fast to him, to move forward where he is headed in order to help fulfill his global cause.



The pastor's perspective on Matthew 11:12 recalls the motto of one of the most famous missionary endeavors in Church history—really, the motto is a paraphrase of Jesus' words in Matthew 11:12:

***Our Lamb has conquered!
Let us follow him.***

Those two sentences formed the marching orders, one might say, of one of the greatest missionary endeavors in church history: the Moravians.

The Moravian outreach emerged from what historians call the “Moravian Pentecost” in August of 1727. As a result of a powerful work of God's Spirit at that time, a community of about 200 religious refugees experienced a “Christ Awakening.” Then look what happened!

Sheltered on the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig Von Zinzendorf (located in modern-day Czech Republic), they immediately moved forward on *three fronts*:

1. They instituted a 24/7 prayer watch (called “The Lord's Watch”) that continued around the clock for 100 years!
2. As they prayed, they spawned revival teams that were thrust out to encourage Christians about a Christ Awakening in other nations of Europe.
3. Eventually, they helped to launch scores of missionaries to serve Christ among unreached people groups across the globe—often at great sacrifice, even by martyrdom.

Why? It was because the Moravians were convinced of two things: Christ is utterly and victoriously supreme (“The Lamb has conquered!”), and since Jesus as Lord of all is advancing his kingdom worldwide, there was no better response than to declare, “Let us follow him.”

They were eager to get behind the One who was going *before* them as he opened up a way for them to serve him, calling others to join them (“let *us*”) in that great adventure.

Surely, we today should look toward no less. Take action for no less. Call others to no less.

Learn more about the Moravian movement [here](#).

Study more about all the ways Christ goes BEFORE us by viewing, free of charge, [Session 5 of The Christ Institutes Video Series](#).

Keeping Up With Jesus, Our Supreme Pathfinder:

Three Secrets to Help You Reach the Finish
Line in Full Stride



**A concluding installment of our blog series on
what it means for Jesus to go BEFORE us today**



*[Editor's Note: Think of this blog post as a postlude to David Bryant's five-part series that explored one of seven key dimensions of Christ's spectacular supremacy: **who Jesus is BEFORE us**. With this installment, David brings us vital, everyday approaches to help us keep up with where God's Son is taking us—which is, as we've seen: **into the future, into the heavens, into the promises, into the world.**]*



A nationally known investment and banking firm built an entire advertising campaign on a big green arrow. In each ad (print or digital), the pathway forward for clients is marked out by the brilliant emerald pointer that always stretches out ahead of them, supposedly leading them toward more profits in the stock market or toward a more stable retirement fund.

The invitation is for potential investors to walk the journey laid out for them by the financial institution, represented by that unavoidable green arrow always in front of them—rolling out ahead of them, setting the course before them, leading the way.

In a sense, this is a perfect picture of Jesus as we've come to know him better through this series of blog posts.

We've learned that the Lord Jesus, like that imaginary arrow, continually *precedes* his people, going *before* them, manifesting his spectacular supremacy *in four directions*: He draws us **onward** into the future, **upward** into the heavens, **inward** into the promises, and also **outward** into the nations.

How should we respond to all of this? How do we work with the “BEFORE” dimension of Christ's supremacy as he exercises it day after day?

You can't sum up the answer much better than the famous motto of the renowned 18th-century Moravian missionary movement that began in Europe:

**“Our Lamb has conquered.
Let us follow him!”**

Full stop.

Yet *practically* speaking, what specifically is required of us as Jesus' disciples to follow the Lamb as he goes before us—as he beckons us as heaven's Supreme Pathfinder?

Here are a few insights you might find useful. I know I have.



Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

One might say that Hebrews 12:1-2 calls all believers to “Keep your eyes on the Prize.” That’s the true secret for following our incomparable Trailblazer to the finish line.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.* For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (NIV, emphasis added).

“Eyes on the Prize” does not simply mean that throughout every mile of the course we must remain fully focused on *Christ himself*. Though we must.

“Eyes on the Prize” does not merely mean we should give priority to the fulfillment of all the facets of God’s eternal purposes in Christ Jesus that lie ahead of us. Though we should.

“Eyes on the Prize” does not refer only to exulting in Jesus—who is truly worthy as the *sponsor* of the race, the *shape* of the track we run on, the *sustainer* of our desire to finish well, the *strength* we need to keep running, and the supreme *spectator* of all our efforts to win for him. Though he is *all* of that and more!

Nor does “Eyes on the Prize” suggest that we just rest in Jesus as our assurance of reaching the finish line victoriously—when we will enter the grand, triumphant finale promised all who have made following him our primary ambition. Though that glorious culmination is guaranteed to all who belong to him.

Ultimately, “Eyes on the Prize” means we keep lifting up Jesus as our Cosmic Champion who has finished the course ahead of us because the “Prize” IS Jesus—who invaded the human *race* (a play on words!) by his incarnation, pressed straight toward the mission of the crucifixion, convincingly defeated death by his resurrection, and then traveled straight to the right hand of God’s throne through his ascension. There he secured for all of us the trophy of eternal life.

What a race! What a feat! What a trophy! What a Champion!

And yet, wonder of wonders, as we run after him in a life that can sometimes feel to us like a marathon, we are running the course that Jesus has already mapped out for us. All we need to do is stay true to the pathway he has traversed ahead of us and already marked out for us—and along which he now draws us.

Listen again to Hebrews 12:1-2 in the Contemporary English Version:

Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won’t let go. *And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete* (emphasis added).



Three Secrets to Help You Reach the Finish Line in Full Stride

The flow of thoughts in Hebrews 12 suggests to me three approaches to the race required of those who intend to stay in step with the Savior with no flagging in zeal.

(1) Pursue Daily Repentance



In the Hebrews 12 passage, we are told to cast away—renounce—*anything* that would hinder our pursuit of Jesus and all he has pioneered for us.

Put in other words: We are to turn from anything that is not *compatible* with who Christ is and where he is headed out ahead of us. We must leave behind anything contradictory with or even inappropriate to the *future* he is bringing back to us, or the *heavens* he brings us to, or the *promises* he's won for us, or the *mission* opportunities in the world he maps out for us.

Repentance does not deal only with moral or ethical issues. It is not only about turning from the ways we have disobeyed God's Word. It is also about replacing ordinary, often justifiable, desires and priorities that simply don't fit the life into which Jesus is taking us. Sometimes repentance means letting go of "good" goals and "normal" involvements *if they keep us from the "exceptional" and the "best" that Jesus has for us as he goes before us.*

Repentance is about *renouncing* mediocrity and lukewarmness in our relationship with Jesus, about *choosing* to become increasingly passionate for him and for what his reign is all about—about loving him "supremely" with all our heart, and soul, and mind.

This was Jesus' plea with the Laodiceans:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth (Revelation 3, NIV).

In other words, repentance isn't just about what we turn *from*; it is also what we turn *toward*, or rather *whom* we turn toward—the Son of God who goes *before* us.

Surely this is what Jesus had in mind when he called his first disciples to find real life by “losing” their lives for his sake. He was inviting them to set aside all of their own dreams and ambitions, their personal achievements and acquisitions, in whatever ways would be necessary in order for them to give themselves more fully to staying in step with him as he led the way, as they joined him in spreading the Good News about himself (Mark 8.)

Today our Redeemer offers all believers the same transformative outcome. As we choose to enter into a Mark 8-type transaction with him—repenting of, turning from, and losing the old life in order to pour ourselves into his greater, global cause—he promises we will find unparalleled fullness of true life.

This is the fullness we've summed up in this blog series as *four directions*: the future he brings to us, the heavens he opens for us, the promises he shares with us, and the ministries he prepares for us.

(2) Let Hope Abound



Like I said above, we find ourselves running a race *that has already been won*, with our eyes focused ahead to the Victor who waits for us at the finish line. This should encourage us to run with tremendous hope, anticipating that there's so much more just ahead. Participants in *this* race are always watching and waiting and wanting—knowing the best is yet to come.

Christians should be anything but complacent or self-satisfied in life. We're running to win! Actually, we're running as those who already have become “winners” in Christ Jesus. In Paul's zealous declaration:

But here is the one thing I do. I forget what is behind me. I push hard toward what is ahead of me. I push myself forward toward the goal to win the prize. God has appointed me to win it. The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus himself (Philippians 3, NIRV).

With the conquering Vanguard for the people of God who leads the way, we can have a confident hope that there's so much more, not only for us but also for HIM—more that he deserves and designs and decrees. Therefore, it's certain there is more he *desires*—not for himself but for us.

Jesus explodes the boundaries of what we have expected or experienced so far in terms of what we've studied in this blog series: the future, the heavens, the promises, and the mission.

That is why, first of all, the Church is fundamentally a band of *receivers*, which means even prior to that the Church is a society of *seekers*. As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 2:

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (NLT).

Christians have every reason to remain ready to enter into increasing measures of the riches of God's grace toward us in Christ Jesus who waits for us at every mile marker of the journey.

Every day a surge of “hope and expectancy” should rise within us.

Every day we need to be looking for more evidence of Jesus' reigning power being revealed in us and around us.

Every day we should be on the alert for his spectacular supremacy to break through as he transforms the status quo—in our own lives as well as among the people where we live—because in everything he actively keeps going BEFORE us all. So we pray:

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him [Christ]. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15, NLT).

(3) Practice Anticipatory Discipleship



To run well, we must first train well. That requires discipline—in other words, Christian “discipline-ship” or as we normally call it, discipleship.

Regarding the preparation it takes to run this race toward Jesus, Hebrews 12 declares:

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? . . . How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! . . . No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest . . . for those who have been trained by it (NIV, emphasis added).

Here’s an example of what I mean: At the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, the world witnessed the marvel of what one might call “anticipatory training.” Four years earlier, the US had boycotted the Olympics held in Russia (for political reasons). That moratorium required a number of American athletes to spend not four but *eight* years getting themselves in shape for a *single* event (like relays, pole vaulting, swimming) that lasted only a few minutes!

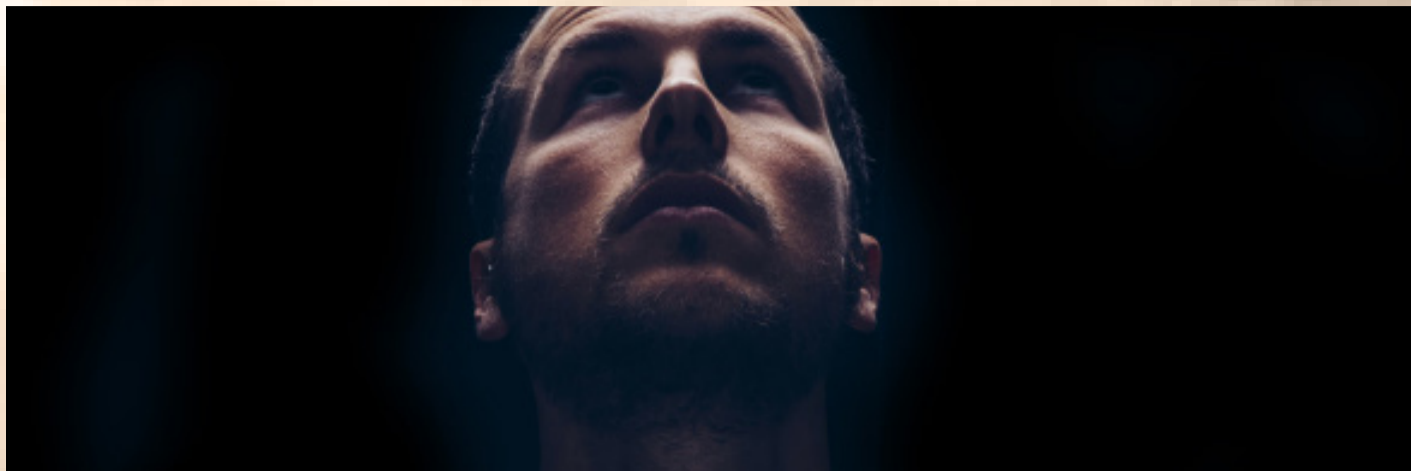
Thousands of hours of discipline were expended for, in most cases, a few minutes of action.

Where did their determination and willingness to sacrifice like that come from? It was inspired by their overriding vision of what lay ahead for them—that at the end an Olympic gold medal actually could be theirs.

Like those hearty souls persevering for years in pursuit of a victory they wanted—though it could offer only momentary fame plus a token made of metal—*even so*, followers of God’s Son should anticipate something so much more valuable than a thousand Olympic medals as we run the race he has set before us because he has gone before us. Ours is the superior motivation Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 9:

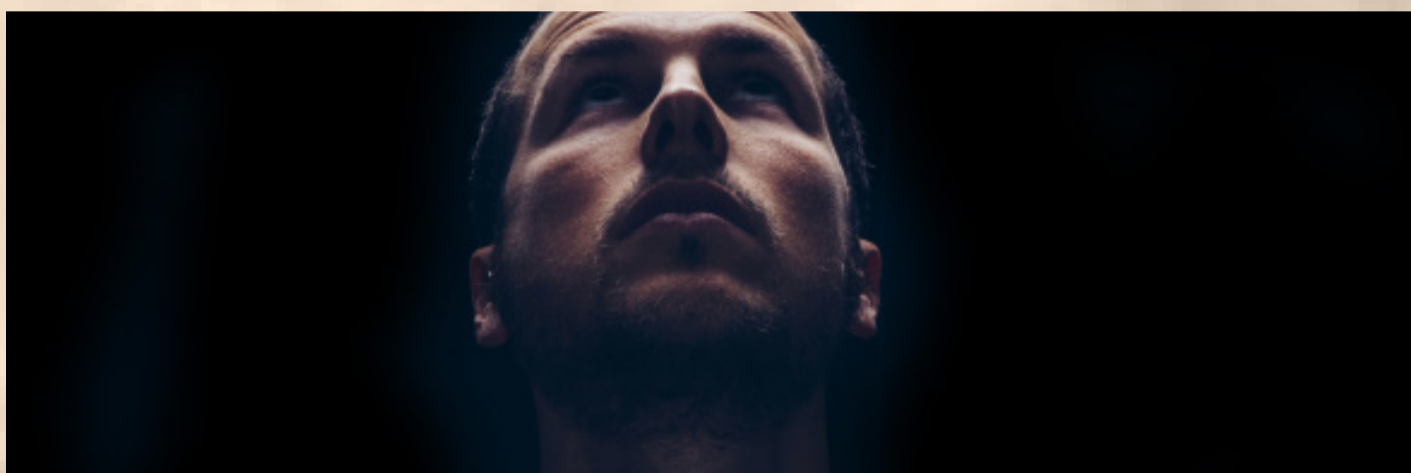
Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should (NLT).

Anticipatory discipleship is focused on the goal of the main event into which Christ has welcomed us—the race of faith that begins and ends in him (Hebrews 12:2). It should cause every disciple to proclaim:



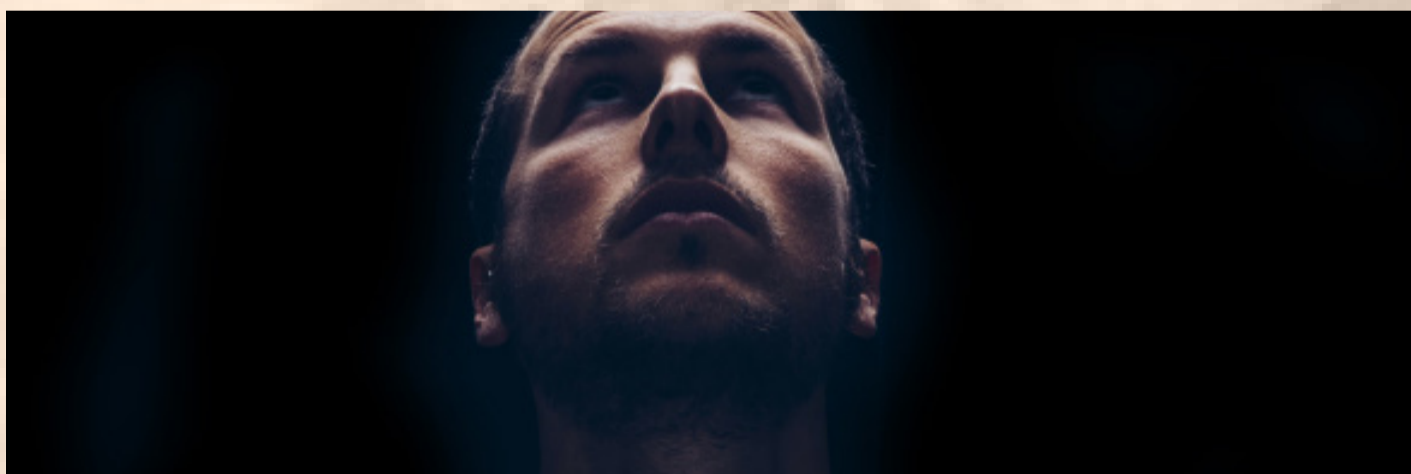
Everything I do for Christ today is not only about what happens *today* but also about preparing to pursue everything he intends for me *tomorrow*.

Anticipatory discipleship requires us to ask ourselves every mile of the race:



What new steps of obedience do I believe Jesus is asking me to take *today* so that I'm better trained for additional blessings and victories *tomorrow*?

Anticipatory discipleship could take as its motto a paraphrase of Joshua 3:5. It was the command to God's people waiting for God's intervention to open a path through the Jordan River at flood stage, as the priests (like Jesus, our High Priest) went before them:



Purify yourselves today because tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you.

That is similar to what Peter urges us to do (1 Peter 3: 15, AMP):

But in your hearts set Christ apart [as holy—acknowledging Him, giving Him first place in your lives] as Lord. Always be ready to give a [logical] defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope *and* confident assurance [elicited by faith] that is within you.

Essentially, the apostle is saying that how you respond to Christ right now is directly related to the outcomes you know are waiting for you as he goes before you as Lord of your life.

Bottom line: As disciples of Jesus, we have every reason to practice a daily discipline that looks not only to fruitfulness for Jesus *today* but also sees ourselves always in training for an even greater impact for Jesus *tomorrow*—as he goes BEFORE us (as we follow behind him) into the future, the heavens, the promises, and the nations.

CONCLUDING THIS SERIES: As a joyful celebration of this weeks-long blog series on “Christ BEFORE Us Today” consider one more “practical” step:

Set aside the next three minutes to offer up this “Tribute” to Jesus. Incorporating the essence of many Scriptures, it captures much of what we’ve uncovered together and turns it into dynamic praise. Make it your own—from your own heart and lips to your King as you bow before him.

My Tribute to the Christ Who Goes BEFORE Me



Father, I come to you to proclaim the name of your Son—to spread his fame, embrace his reign, increase his gain, and honor his claim about who he is BEFORE us.

As I do, awaken me even more to him for ALL that he is. May the praise I bring to him in these moments come forth alive in me by your Spirit and rise as a blessing to you forever.

I use your Word to magnify your Son, without whom I am nothing and can do nothing. This TRIBUTE is all for Christ alone, my one and only Hope of Glory, and the hope for all the nations.



Lord Jesus Christ: Here is my tribute to you as you go BEFORE me today!

I have set my mind and my affections on things above, where you have gone BEFORE me into the presence of the Father, making a way for me to follow you as you sit on his glorious throne. I died, and now my life is hidden within you. Therefore, I reckon myself to be a part of the same perfect fellowship you have with the Father.

Truly, all things eternal have become mine because I belong to the Christ who *precedes* me and *welcomes* me into the future to bring it back to me; into the heavens to take me there with you; into the promises to make them mine as well; and into the world to open up a way for me to serve you.

I anticipate the day when, in a similar invitation, you will go BEFORE me into the climax of the ages so that I might join you and appear with you on that great day of victory.

Hallelujah! You said that because your kingdom is forcefully advancing ahead of me right now, I can lay hold of your *prior* initiatives, follow in the steps of your triumphs, and as a result, join in your kingdom breakthroughs—first of all, because you go BEFORE me.

In this way you fill up Micah's promise when he foresaw One whose origins are from of old, from ancient times, who would break open the way to go BEFORE his people, that our King would pass through the gate and go ahead of us, leading us at the front lines of God's plan for the nations.

In this way, as you assured us, you are not only the gate of the sheepfold but also the shepherd who calls me by name and leads me, your disciple, through the gate, as you go on ahead of me to feed me with great expectations by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, lead on, O King Eternal. The day for marching has come. I am so ready to follow.



Lord Jesus Christ: Here is my tribute to you as you go BEFORE me today!

I celebrate how you died, were buried, and rose again so that I might follow you into my own death, burial, and resurrection taking place right now. Because you went first, I can now reckon myself dead to sin but alive to God, passionate for the One who died and rose again ahead of me, but who included me.

No wonder you invite me to declare myself to be a new creation! It comes from my union with you, in whom the promised new creation has already begun. As the firstborn from the dead, YOU resound with the recapitulation of the whole universe as you exhibit in yourself an unparalleled transformation that will one day encompass everything, everywhere, including all who are united to you.

You go BEFORE me! Therefore God, who is rich in mercy, has made me alive with you right now, has raised me up with you right now, has seated me with you right now in heavenly realms where I can focus entirely on you, in order that both now and in the coming ages the Father might pour out on me the incomparable riches that have *already* become yours, now to be shared with your people forever. Yes, your Church has become co-heirs of the living God of the universe because you, God's Son, share with all of us your inheritance of all things in heaven and earth.



Lord Jesus Christ: Here is my tribute to you as you go BEFORE me today!

Furthermore, because you have been raised to life and placed at God's right hand, you intercede for me. You go BEFORE me by your prayers. You open up to me all the promises of God. You guarantee that those promises will be "YES" to your people because of who you are and what you have done ahead of time, even while I was still ungodly and reprobate.

Such a high priest meets my need because you are holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. You have gone BEFORE me to the Throne of Grace, making a way by the power of your indestructible life for me to come behind you.

I come with confidence then to enter the Most Holy Place by your blood, Lord Jesus. I now walk the new and living way you have opened for me through the giving of your body for me. With such a great priest over the house of God, I dare now to draw near to the Father without fear and in full assurance of faith.

I bless you, the One who is holy and true, who holds the key of David so that you can go BEFORE me to open what no one can shut. What wonder is this: Going BEFORE me, you have set before me an open door into the presence of God, the power of God, the promises of God, the unfolding of the purposes of God, and the everlasting praises of God.



Lord Jesus Christ: Here is my tribute to you as you go **BEFORE** me today!

Therefore, everything I am and have, every breath I breathe, every step I take, every service I render, every prayer I pray, every praise I bring, is possible only by you and you alone.

For without you—without all that you are as you go **BEFORE** me into the future, into the heavens, into the promises, and into the world—I am nothing and can do nothing.

More and more, by the revealing work of your Spirit, awaken me to **ALL** you are. Awaken your whole Church to the glory of your spectacular supremacy so that we move increasingly into the fullness of yourself. **AMEN!**

P. S. Consider exploring the other dimensions of Christ's spectacular supremacy—who he is *to us, for us, over us, within us, through us, and upon us*—by ordering David Bryant's latest book, [Christ Is NOW!](#)



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David Bryant has been defined by many as a “messenger of hope” and a “Christ proclaimer” to the Church throughout the world for the past forty years.

Formerly a minister-at-large with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, president of Concerts of Prayer International (COPI), and chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee, David now provides leadership to ChristNow.com and to Proclaim Hope! whose mission is to foster and serve Christ-awakening movements.

Order his widely read books at <https://davidbryantbooks.com>

