

**Covered**

*Genesis 9:18The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) 19From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.*

*20After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. 21One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. 22Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. 23Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.*

For this thoughtful act of kindness, this act of discretion, Noah pronounced a long-lasting blessing for these two sons and their offspring.

We have sung about the covering of God’s grace. Our weaknesses, our flaws, our sins have been hidden from God’s sight by His own kindness (similar to that which Noah’s two sons showed to their father). What kindness! What graciousness!

But now, I want to speak to you about the act of “uncovering.”

**Uncover**

Not to expose or make vulnerable; instead, like the uncovering in Proverbs 25:2, which many of us read yesterday:

*Proverbs 25:2 It is God’s privilege to conceal things and the king’s privilege to discover them.*

Sovereign God can hide whatever He chooses. He is not obliged to keep us informed. However, it is our privilege—in fact, it is incumbent upon us—to search out His mysteries. (Isn’t this is the true basis of both science and theology?)

Yet, nothing that God has hidden will remain so forever, as Jesus said:

*Matthew 10:26“But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when* ***everything that is covered will be revealed****, and all that is secret will be made known to all. 27What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!*

This gracious act of *uncovering* is the very essence of the Gospel message, which we proclaim.

Last week, we read from Paul’s letter to the church in Colosse. Here’s another nugget from that book:

*Colossians 1:26This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God’s people. 27For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.*

I really like the way Eugene Peterson translated the passage in The Message:

Colossians 1:26-28; MSG
*This mystery has been kept in the dark for a long time, but now it’s out in the open. God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God’s glory. It’s that simple. That is the substance of our Message. We preach Christ, warning people not to add to the Message.*

This is more than a theological revelation, and it is more than an intellectual discovery; it is also a deeply personal message, as Paul indicated in his own testimony:

*Galatians 1:15But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by His marvelous grace. Then it pleased Him 16to* ***reveal His Son to me*** *so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles.*

Through the preaching of the Gospel—in your home and workplace, across your backyard fence or coffee table, whether by evangelists or ordinary disciples—God is *uncovering* the love of God and the life of Christ in people’s hearts. Jesus called it a “new birth.”

But this supernatural birth of the spirit is only a beginning! The revelation of God’s grace and power continues to unfold…

*Romans 8:18Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later. 19For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who His children really are.*

Who they really are… Who *we* really are… Who *you* really are!

God has given us this theme to guide our journey together this year as followers of Jesus Christ: UNCOVER. I believe He wants to uncover Christ among us.

As we take this journey together, we will reassess WHO we are, in order to uncover what Christ has done in us.

* What Christ has done in us *individually*—the gifts He has given us (including those we don’t yet know about, and those we haven’t used before).
* What Christ has done in us *collectively*—how we can best work together, leaning on one another for support and encouragement.

We will also reassess WHERE we are, in order to uncover previously hidden opportunities.

* What is the *actual character* and heart of the neighborhood and community where God has placed us.
* What *needs* around us are being overlooked that we could serve.

By these two insights, we will uncover our potential for fruitful ministry, and unleash God’s grace and power in and through our church.

Then, we can uncover the Holy Spirit’s strategy for reaching Marin County with the Good News about Jesus.

It’s a simple, but vital 3-point process of discovery, alignment, and strategic service.

For, if we can see ourselves as we really are—without coverups or excuses—we can lean on God for grace (both for ourselves and for one another).

And, if we are willing to align ourselves with the plan God reveals to us, instead of insisting on our own way of doing church, He will empower us by His Spirit to accomplish great things and harvest much fruit in His name.

Finally, if we can see what Jesus is already beginning to do in the people around us, we will know better how to respond. There is an appropriate time for everything. Is it the season for plowing, or sowing, or watering, or waiting, or harvesting?

If we do these things, by the help of the Holy Spirit, then we will see “signs following,” that confirm the truth of God’s Word and conform those who receive it to the likeness of Christ.

Miracles of all shapes and sizes will abound!

So I am praying…

*God, uncover our hearts!*

Help us to see ourselves as we really are. And to see You as You really are.

*God, uncover our eyes!*

Help us to see what You have done for us through Jesus Christ. And to see what Jesus is doing among us and around us today.

*God, uncover our hands!*

Unwrap the graveclothes of spiritual indifference from us. And manifest the works of Your Spirit in response to our faithful obedience.

Give us 20/20 vision of Your plan for our lives, for Trinity Community Church, and for the County where You’ve placed us!

God, be magnified by our submission!

Christ, be glorified by our praise!

Holy Spirit, be honored by our obedience!

Uncover the real church, the real Kingdom of God on earth, for the glory of Your name!