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CHRIST IN MY STUDY Michael B. Beough
Psalm 101:1-3; Colossians 3:1-4 April 26, 2009
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Over the next several weeks, I am going to share what it is like for me when the risen Christ comes to visit every room in my house and in my heart. Our worship theme is "My Heart: Christ's Home."

Christ had this thing about coming inside. In John 14:23, he told his disciples *"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them."* In Revelation 3:20, the exalted Christ says, *"Behold, I am standing at the door knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me."*

All through my life, Christ has knocked at my door. Sometimes I have not opened it for him. Those were the worst times of my life.

The other day he knocked, and I opened the door. I was excited to see him because I wanted to show him some things I knew he would pleased with. I invited him inside and then headed off across the living room. I was all ready to give him a grand tour of what I wanted him to see. However, he had other ideas. He said he wanted to see my study first. What was I to say? No, you can't go in there? I followed him into my study.

He stood in the center of the room and turned as if to take it all in at once. When he came to my book shelves, he sort of leaned in closer as though he were reading the book titles. My heart suddenly sank. I would have hidden some of those books if I had known he was coming for a visit. Some of them I just didn't want him to know about. My face flushed and, of course, he noticed.

"Why are you turning so red?" he asked with a kind of mischievous gentleness in his voice. I could hardly admit my shame, so I said something like, "Oh, if I had known you were coming, I would have cleaned up the place a bit." I grabbed a half-empty coffee cup and showed him the dried up coffee in the bottom and the ring it had left on the desk. I chuckled as if to make light of it.

The look he gave me melted my heart. Neither condemning nor judgmental. More like pity or compassion or permission-giving, almost an imperceptible nod to encourage me, as if saying, you can do better than this.

"So, you have read all these books?" He picked one up that should have been in the trash. "You know, my Father and I created the mind that produced this book. We created the science that enables books like this to be produced. We are not into censorship too much, so we allow humans to

make their own way, to decide what to do with their lives. Some of them choose to do stuff like this.”

He paused a moment, then said, “What surprises us, my Father and me, is that so many people pay good money for stuff like this.”

I started to tell him I bought that particular book at Half Price Books, but I knew that wasn’t his point. He was talking about my mind, what I put in my mind.

I reached for the book he was holding. “Lord, I’ll get rid of that book. And any others that you wouldn’t like.” I walked over and literally threw it into the wastepaper basket.

You know what he said? “It’s too late. This book is already in your mind. You really can’t get rid of it. It has become a part of you. You may not consciously remember many details of what you read, but when you read these pages, the neurons in your brain fired and sent electrical impulses to many other parts of your body, including your heart.” Wow! This is Jesus talking? “Your scientists don’t even know how memory takes place, and I’m not telling, but whatever you read, whatever you see or experience, becomes a part of you. It is the way my Father and I designed you humans.

“Did you know that you have more brain cells than the number of stars in the universe? Billions upon billions. You walk around every day with the most complex and sophisticated machine in the whole universe sitting just above your neck. It took us almost 14 billion years to produce your brain. Your brain is why we began this creation thing in the first place. It was to create living beings with the capacity for self-consciousness and God-consciousness, with a capacity for love and knowledge. We gave you a mind that could come up with things like quantum physics and quarks and $e=mc^2$. We gave you a mind that could write a Psalm 23, a Shakespearean sonnet; compose a Bach requiem, a Michael W. Smith praise song. We gave you a mind that could even decide I don’t exist, or decide to do evil things. We have known from the beginning that *what you fill your mind with is what you will become.*”

At this point, Jesus glanced over at my computer. “By the way, do you have a filter on your computer?” I had this inclination to hide under my desk, you know what I mean? A silent prayer crossed my mind, “Lord let an electrical surge fry the hard drive right now.”

As if reading my thoughts, or hearing my silent prayer, Jesus actually laughed. “I could fry your hard drive, if I wanted to,” he said. All I could think to say was, “I know. It’s too late. What I have seen on my computer is already in my mind.”

Then he changed the subject, for which I was glad. "That's why I like what my servant Paul wrote the other day." I couldn't let that slide by. "Are you talking about the Apostle Paul? Don't you mean 2000 years ago?" "2000 or 2 billion, all time belongs to me. Like my Father said once, "A 1000 years in my sight is like a day gone by."

"Do you have a Bible in your study?" I knew he knew, and at last I was happy to show him something I wasn't ashamed of. So I looked for my Bible. . . . Finally, I pulled it off the shelf and proudly handed it to him. He took it but looked like I was handing him a dead rat. Then I saw why. Before opening it, he blew on it and big cloud of dust filled the room. "Man, how long has it been since you opened the Bible?" I wanted to say, 'Lord, you know,' but figured silence was golden.

As he opened the Bible, he said, "Look right here in Colossians 3:2. Just the other day ... I mean 2000 years ago ... my servant Paul wrote, '*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*' That's pretty good advice. Paul was really into this mind thing. He told his brothers and sisters in Philippians, '*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.*' I like that, except I would have written, 'that *is* in Christ Jesus.' After all, I am still alive." He spread out his arms as if to prove it.

I didn't know if that was a Jesus joke or not, so I made a kind of sound that could be taken either as a laugh or a simple acknowledgement of what he said. It didn't impress him one bit. He turned to go. I caught him by the arm. "Lord, I guess you are pretty disgusted with me." He turned and looked into my eyes for a long moment. "I forgive you, if that is what you mean, but your mind doesn't have a chance of firing on all cylinders unless you take the advice of Paul. It is all about concentrating on my Father in your daily walk. Filling your mind with the things of God."

Then as if a bright idea just struck him, he asked, "**Do you want to see what it would be like to keep your mind totally on things that are above?**"

I don't know that I agreed, but the next thing I knew it was like a defragmenter was running in my head. My hard drive was being scanned for errors and viruses. Delete, delete, delete! Do you want to delete these files? A voice said, "Yes!" Do you want to download new software? Yes! Are you ready to run your new operating system? Yes! I realized the voice came from Jesus. Jesus kept saying yes, yes, yes. I don't know how long it lasted, but my mind cleared. It was like all of reality opened up before me and in me. Being filled only with things from above made everything look different. Light where there had been darkness. Joy where there had been stress and guilt. Love where there had been jealousy and shame. I understood the meaning of pain and suffering. I saw the secrets of the universe. I saw the hand of God in every molecule and atom. I saw the potential of my life. I fell to the

floor of my study at the feet of Jesus and wept because of what I had been missing, what I had allowed to be crowded out of my life. It is like he said. "You become what you fill your mind with."

I found myself praying, "Lord, fill my mind with you." Then it was over, and Jesus made the most awesome offer. "What I just showed you you cannot do on your own, but your mind is a precious thing. If you would like, I will meet you here in your study every day. You can ask me anything. We will talk. I will give you my mind, and I will save you. Think over my offer, but right now, I want to see your dining room."

I did a quick mental calculation about what he might find in my dining room. Wait until you hear what happened. But that will have to wait until next week.

was both "I see you have been filling your mind with lots of things that aren't good for you. I wonder what I would find if I searched your computer?get the words out. So, I waffled and said, "Oh, nothing of importance." "What are you reading now?" He talks about our minds being a tool given us by God, a precious computer, the most complex machine in the universe. Took 13.6 billion years to create it. What we put in it comes out of it. "Does your computer have a filter?" he asks. Wondered where this was going. "You need a filter in your mind. To keep you from empty deceits and vain philosophies. And to keep you from dwelling on unclean thoughts." Jesus offered to be that filter. "Look through my eyes," he suggested. "Let me help you see and not see." "Huh?" I said. "Some things you do not need to see. I can blind you to those things, and open your mind to things that are beautiful and wonderful and life-giving." Etc.