

Dwell

“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”

Ephesians 3:17

Dwell—The Greek is *katoikesai* from the verb *katoikeo*. The structure of this word is very important to understanding its meaning. The root word is *oikeo*. It is about “houses.” So, we get the idea of “living in a house.” But Paul has added *kata* to this word. This intensifies the word. Now it is not just about living in a house. It is about permanent residence. This is no temporary habitat. It is “home.” The place where you stay forever.

We live near Orlando. As everyone knows, being close to Disney and Universal is an excuse for lots of visitors. They come to enjoy our company, but they also come because we are close to lots of attractive activities. They come for vacation. But it is only temporary. But the end of the summer, we are ready for peace and quiet.

Paul is reminding us that Christ is not a temporary guest in the house we call “me.” He doesn’t show up for a vacation. He doesn’t show up only when we invite him. He is a permanent resident. That means he has the run of the house, just like I do. There aren’t any closets that I keep shut when guests arrive. There aren’t any rooms that are “off limits.” He is the new owner, and all that I am belong to Him.

When we have company, we often go out of the way to make sure everything is clean and tidy. We prepare something special to eat. We are on our best behavior. But when the guest leave, things get back to normal. If Jesus is a permanent resident, He knows what we consider “normal.” Is it a life that is still entirely under His authority? Is it a life that reflects His standards and His grace? Or do we simply breathe a sigh of relief and usher Him out the door an honored guest, but only a temporary visitor?

“Dwell” is the word for continuous and permanent “together.” Christ has moved in for the long term. My house cleaning will become a way of life because he is going to stay.