

Monday 3/7**Col. 2:1-3 (2-3)**

1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those in Laodicea, even all who have not seen my face in the flesh,

2 That their hearts may be ¹comforted, they being knit together in ²love and unto all the ³riches of the ⁴full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the ⁵mystery of God, Christ,

3 In whom all the treasures of ¹wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

Related Verses**Eph. 3:8-9**

8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

1 Cor. 2:7, 9-10

7 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory,

9 But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

10 But to us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

2 Cor. 13:11

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Col. 1:9

9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all

spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Phil. 3:8

8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Portions from the footnotes**Col. 2:2¹ comforted**

To comfort people's hearts is to cherish people and lovingly warm them up, that they may be knit together unto the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God.

Col. 2:2² love

The divine love that we have enjoyed and by which we love God's beloved. This love is the factor and element that knits the saints together.

Col. 2:2³ riches

The riches of the full assurance of understanding equal the full knowledge of the mystery of God, which is Christ.

Col. 2:2⁴ full

To be knit together in love involves the emotion, whereas to have the riches of the full assurance of understanding involves the mind. When our hearts have been comforted, we being knit together in love, and our minds function properly, we will have the full knowledge of Christ as the mystery of God.

Col. 2:2⁵ mystery

The book of Ephesians concerns the mystery of Christ, which is the church, the Body (Eph. 3:4). This book concerns the mystery of God, which is Christ, the Head.

Col. 2:3¹ wisdom

According to history, the influence of Gnostic teaching, which included Greek philosophy, invaded the Gentile churches in Paul's time. Hence, the apostle told the Colossians that all the treasures of genuine wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. This is the spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy

concerning Christ and the church. Wisdom is related to our spirit, and knowledge is related to our mind (Eph. 1:8, 17).

Portions from the Life-study messages

In Colossians the heart is of crucial significance. Here Paul emphasizes the importance of the heart in receiving the revelation concerning Christ....The church in Colossae had been invaded by Jewish ordinances and observances and by pagan philosophy, mysticism, and asceticism. These things caused the saints to become opinionated, dissenting, and dissatisfied. They also caused the hearts of the saints to be hurt and to become cold, divided, and separated from one another. Therefore, Paul struggled on behalf of the saints that their hearts would be comforted and knit together in love....The comforting of the heart must have a result. In this case the result is having all the riches of the full assurance of understanding....The Colossians did not have the full assurance concerning Christ. Otherwise, they would not have turned to the worship of angels or taken in such things as observances, ordinances, and philosophies.

In 2:2 Paul speaks not only of the full assurance, but of all the riches of the full assurance of understanding....Some saints may have the full assurance concerning the church ground, but...when they speak about the ground of the church, they have little to say. The reason for this is the lack of the riches in their understanding....Regarding the ground of the church, we need to be exercised until we have all the riches of the full assurance of understanding.

The principle is the same with knowing Christ as the mystery of God. We need to be exercised to such an extent that we always have something to say about Christ as the mystery of God....If we have all the riches of the full assurance of understanding concerning [Christ], we shall never be short of things to say about Him. The riches of understanding will give us rich utterance. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 139, 149)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 15 – Sections: Restricting The Mind And Exercising The Spirit In Reading The Bible; God Being Food In His Relationship With Man; The Bible As God’s Expression Becoming Man’s Food

Tuesday 3/8

Col. 2:4-7 (5-7)

4 This I say that no one may delude you with persuasive speech.

5 For even though I am absent in the flesh, yet in the ¹spirit I am with you, rejoicing and seeing your order and the solid basis of your faith ²in Christ.

6 As therefore you have ¹received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, ²walk in Him,

7 Having been ¹rooted and being built up in Him, and being established ²in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Related Verses

Rom. 8:4

4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Gal. 5:16

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Eph. 3:17-19

17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are

19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

2:20b-22

20b Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is

growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 2:5¹ spirit

The human spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Col. 2:5² in

Lit., into.

Col. 2:6¹ received

Christ is the allotted portion of the saints (1:12) for their enjoyment. To believe into Him is to receive Him. As the all-inclusive Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), He enters into us and dwells in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) to be everything to us.

Col. 2:6² walk

As we have received Christ, we should walk in Him. Here to walk is to live, to act, to behave, and to have our being. We should walk, live, and act in Christ that we may enjoy His riches, just as the children of Israel lived in the good land, enjoying all its rich produce. The good land today is Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit (Gal. 3:14), who dwells in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16) to be our enjoyment. To walk according to this Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16) is the central and crucial point in the New Testament.

Col. 2:7¹ rooted

Like plants, we are living organisms. As such, we have been rooted in Christ, our soil, our earth, that we may absorb all His riches as nourishment. These riches become the element and substance with which we grow and are built up. To be rooted is for the growth in life. This rooting has been completed already. To be built up is for the building of the Body of Christ. This is still going on. Both these matters are in Christ.

Col. 2:7² in

In the faith here means in our faith, the subjective faith by which we believe.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Paul realized the importance of being rooted in Christ. He knew that it was a serious matter to be transplanted from Christ and to be rooted in something else, such as heathen philosophy or Jewish ordinances. He wanted the Colossians to see that philosophy was not the soil in which they had been rooted. They had been rooted in Christ. He is our unique soil.

Having been rooted in Christ, we now are "being built up in Him" (2:7). To be built up is for the building of the Body. Although we have been rooted, we are still in the process of being built up. This is a corporate matter as well as a personal matter. A building is not composed merely of one item, but of many items that have been fitted together. We need to be rooted in Christ and also built up in the church.

Paul was concerned lest the Colossians be distracted from Christ and the church. They had been rooted in Christ, but they still had to go on to be built up in the church. In order to be built up corporately, the Colossians had to forsake the Judaistic observances and the heathen ordinances and philosophies. Otherwise, they would have been transplanted from Christ and rooted in something else. Furthermore, they would have been led astray from the church life. Whenever we take in some kind of philosophy, ordinance, observance, or practice in place of Christ, the church life is annulled. We are divided from those believers who have different opinions concerning these matters. Those who are preoccupied with such things will eventually cease to care about the church life....How crucial it is to be rooted in Christ and to be built up in Christ and in the church! In this way we experience Christ as the mystery of God. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 156-157)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 15 – Sections: Restricting The Mind And Exercising The Spirit In Reading The Bible

Wednesday 3/9**Col. 2:4, 8**

4 This I say that no one may delude you with persuasive speech.

8 Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his ¹philosophy and empty deceit, according to the ²tradition of men, according to the ³elements of the world, and not according to ⁴Christ;

Related Verses**Mark 7:6-8**

6 And He said to them, Well has Isaiah prophesied concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart stays far away from Me;

7 But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commandments of men."

8 While leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men.

Gal. 1:14-16b

14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries in my race, being more abundantly a zealot for the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

16b To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

1 Cor. 2:1-5

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, came not according to excellence of speech or of wisdom, announcing to you the mystery of God.

2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling;

4 And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

5 In order that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Portions from the footnotes**Col. 2:4¹ delude**

In order for believers to be deluded, or carried off as spoil, something close to the truth, such as philosophy, must be used to deceive them. If we have a clear vision of Christ as the center of God's economy, no one will be able to delude us (v. 8). If we take Christ as life (3:4), hold Him as the Head of the Body (v. 19), know Him as the mystery of God (v. 2), experience Him as the hope of glory (1:27), and walk in Him as the all-inclusive Spirit (2:6), we will not be deceived by anything or anyone.

Col. 2:4² persuasive

We should beware of persuasive speech and of eloquence. A speaker may be very persuasive and very eloquent, but the reality of Christ may not be in his persuasive and eloquent speech.

Col. 2:8¹ philosophy

This refers to Gnostic teaching, a mixture of Jewish, oriental, and Greek philosophies, which is an empty deceit.

Col. 2:8² tradition

Tradition is related to culture and has its source in culture. The source of the Gnostic teaching at Colossae was the tradition of men; it was based not on the revealed writings of God but on the traditional practices of men.

Col. 2:8³ elements

The same expression, elements of the world, is used in Gal. 4:3 (see note there). Here it refers to the rudimentary teachings of both Jews and Gentiles, consisting of ritualistic observances regarding the eating of meats, drinking, washings, asceticism, and other matters.

Col. 2:8⁴ Christ

Christ is the governing principle of all genuine wisdom and knowledge, the reality of all genuine teaching, and the only measure of all concepts

acceptable to God. This book focuses on Christ as our everything.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Paul opens 2:4 with the words, "This I say." These words refer to what Paul has covered in verses 2 and 3 concerning the riches of the full assurance of understanding, the full knowledge of Christ as the mystery of God, and the fact that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. Paul emphasized these things so that the saints at Colossae would not be deluded....If we see the vision of the all-inclusive Christ presented in the book of Colossians, we shall not be deluded by anything. No matter how excellent or how scriptural a thing may be, it will not be able to lead us away from Christ. It is crucial that we have such a view of Christ in God's economy.

The first step, seen in verse 4, is to be deluded; the second step, seen in verse 8, is to be carried off as spoil. The word spoil here does not mean to damage; it means to be a prey or a captive. Those who are carried off as spoil are carried off into captivity.

We need to beware that no one carries us off as spoil through his philosophy....The philosophy through which the believers at Colossae were carried off as spoil was Gnosticism, a mixture of Jewish, oriental, and Greek philosophies. As Paul indicates, Gnosticism is empty deceit.... The philosophy and empty deceit in this verse is "according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ."...One principle we should follow is that of testing everything with the Bible. We should care only for God's direct revelation in the holy Word, not for anything that is according to the tradition of men....In the eyes of Paul, the traditions of men were merely elementary principles. These traditions are included with the elementary principles of the world.

Paul concludes verse 8 by saying that the philosophy and empty deceit are not according to Christ. Christ is the governing principle of all

genuine wisdom and knowledge, the reality of all genuine teaching, and the only measure of all concepts acceptable to God. The book of Colossians focuses on Christ as our everything....If we experience Christ as the center of God's economy in all these aspects, we shall be protected, and we shall not be deluded or carried off as spoil. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 172-173, 174-176)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 15 – Sections: Examples Of Reading The Bible

Thursday 3/10

Col. 2:9-12

9 For in Him dwells all the ¹fullness of the ²Godhead ³bodily,

10 And you have been made ¹full in Him, who is the Head of all ²rule and authority.

11 In Him also you were circumcised with a ¹circumcision ²not made with hands, in the ³putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ,

12 ¹Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were ²raised together with Him through the ³faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Related Verses

John 1:16-18

16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Col. 1:19-20

19 For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

20 And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.

2 Pet. 1:1-2

1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 2:9¹ fullness

Fullness refers not to the riches of God but to the expression of the riches of God. What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but the expression of the riches of what God is. See note 193 in Eph. 3.

Col. 2:9² Godhead

This refers to deity, which is different from the divine characteristics manifested by the created things (Rom. 1:20). This strongly indicates the deity of Christ. The fullness of the Godhead is versus the tradition of men and the elements of the world. The world's tradition and elements simply cannot be compared with the fullness of the Godhead.

Col. 2:9³ bodily

This points to the physical body that Christ put on in His humanity, indicating that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as One who has a human body. Before Christ's incarnation, the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him as the eternal Word, but not bodily. From the time that Christ became incarnate, clothed with a human body, the fullness of the Godhead began to dwell in Him in a bodily way; and in His glorified body (Phil. 3:21) now and forever it dwells.

Col. 2:10¹ full

The Greek word implies completion, perfection. Because all the fullness dwells in Him, after we have been put into Christ (1 Cor. 1:30), we are made full, filled up, with all the divine riches. Hence, we need no other source. Because Christ is our perfection and completion, we do not need other rules and authorities as objects of adoration, for He is the Head of all these. This is versus angel worship (v. 18).

Col. 2:10² rule

The rule and authority here are the fallen angels occupying positions of power in the air in subordination to Satan. See note 152.

Col. 2:11¹ circumcision

This is spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of Christ, referring to the proper baptism, which puts off the body of the flesh by the effectual virtue of the death of Christ. This is contrary to asceticism (vv. 20-22).

Col. 2:11² not

The circumcision that is the putting off of the body of the flesh was not made with hands; it was accomplished by the death of Christ, and it is applied, executed, and carried out by the powerful Spirit.

Col. 2:11³ putting

Putting off here means to strip off something, as one would strip off clothes.

Col. 2:12¹ Buried

To be buried in baptism is to put off, to strip off, the body of the flesh.

Col. 2:12² raised

In baptism there is the aspect of burial, which is the termination of our flesh, and the aspect of raising, which is the germination of our spirit. In the aspect of raising, we are made alive in Christ with the divine life.

Col. 2:12³ faith

Faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God (2 Pet. 1:1). The more we turn to God and contact Him, the more faith we have. The Lord is the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). The more we abide in Him, the more we are infused with Him as our faith. It is through this living faith produced by the operation of the living God that we experience the resurrection life, signified by the raising aspect of baptism.

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 16 – Sections: Learning To Be Simple To Pick Up The True Meaning Of The Bible; Reading The Bible Being Simple; Not Setting The Mind On Studying The Truth; Dropping Our Concepts

Friday 3/11**Col. 2:13-15**

13 And you, though ¹dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He ²made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

14 ¹Wiping out the ²handwriting in ³ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, ⁴nailing it to the cross.

15 ¹Stripping off the ²rulers and the authorities, ³He made a ⁴display of them openly, triumphing over them in ⁵it.

Related Verses**Eph. 1:17**

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph. 4:13

13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 6:12

12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

Phil. 3:8

8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

2 Pet 1:2-4

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own

glory and virtue,

4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

Portions from the footnotes**Col. 2:13¹ dead**

Dead in spirit because of sin.

Col. 2:13² made

In Christ's resurrection, God enlivened us together by His divine life. This was accomplished in Christ's resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3) and is experienced through our faith.

Col. 2:14¹ Wiping

Or, blotting out, obliterating, erasing, annulling (a decree of law).

Col. 2:14² handwriting

A legal document, a bond. Here it refers to the written law.

Col. 2:14³ ordinances

Referring to the ordinances of the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship. So also in vv. 20 and 21.

Col. 2:14⁴ nailing

This is to abolish the law of the commandments in ordinances (Eph. 2:15). It kills the heresy of keeping the Judaic rituals.

Col. 2:15¹ Stripping

Or, putting off, as in 3:9. Verses 13-15 unveil the economy of God's salvation: (1) to make us alive with Christ, (2) to abolish the ordinances of the ceremonial law, and (3) to strip off the evil angelic powers.

God was busy while Christ's crucifixion was going on: He nailed the law on the cross and stripped off the rulers and authorities, that the way and the atmosphere might be cleared for us to enter into the participation in Christ.

Col. 2:15² rulers

These are the angelic rulers and authorities. Because at Colossae there was the heretical teaching of angel worship, the passage here must refer to the evil angels. The law was ordained through angels and was even considered to be ordinances of angels (Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53). Based on this, the heresy at Colossae taught people to worship angels (v. 18) as mediators between God and man. The apostle dealt with this heresy by unveiling the fact that the law, consisting of ordinances, had been nailed to the cross (v. 14), and that the leading evil angels had been stripped off from God. This left Christ as the sole Mediator, who is the Head of all rule and authority (v. 10). This killed the heresy of angel worship.

Col. 2:15³ He

Here and throughout vv. 13 and 14, He refers to God (v. 12).

Col. 2:15⁴ display

Or, show, exhibit in the sense of an open shame. God openly shamed the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it.

Col. 2:15⁵ it

Or, in Him; referring to Christ. It refers to the cross.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Paul's concept in these verses is that the law and the angels have been set aside through the cross. The law was nailed to the cross, and the evil angels have been stripped off by means of the cross. Therefore, in God's economy in His salvation there is room neither for the law nor for the angelic rulers. How wrong the Colossians were in following ordinances and in worshipping angels!...The Colossians were altogether wrong in allowing these things to pervade the church.

In the economy of His salvation God enlivens us, nails the law to the cross, and strips off the evil rulers and authorities. The law is a frustration, and the rulers and authorities are troublesome. Because God has removed the law and the angels, we, His chosen people, are alone with Him. We are no

longer bothered by terms, conditions, or requirements. God is here to enliven us, and we are here to be enlivened by Him. We should forget the law and the angels and allow God to put Himself into us as life. (*Life-study of Colossians, pp. 192-193*)

Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 16 – Sections: Not Looking For Inspiration; Practical Examples; Learning To Be Simple In Enjoying God Through Reading The Word

Saturday 3/12

Col. 2:16-17

16 Let no one therefore judge you ¹in eating and in drinking or in respect of a ²feast or of a ³new moon or of the ⁴Sabbath,

17 Which are a ¹shadow of the things to come, but the ²body is of ³Christ.

Related Verses

John 6:35

35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

1 Cor. 5:7-8

7 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed.

8 So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Rom. 14:17

17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Col. 1:10, 12-13, 18

10 To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,

12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the

light;

13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Portions from the footnotes

Col. 2:16¹ in

Or, in food and in drink. Food and drink signify satisfaction and strengthening.

Col. 2:16² feast

Referring to the annual Jewish festivals, which signify joy and enjoyment.

Col. 2:16³ new

Signifying a new beginning with light in the darkness.

Col. 2:16⁴ Sabbath

Signifying completion and rest. Feasts are yearly, new moons monthly, Sabbaths weekly, and eating and drinking daily. Daily we eat and drink Christ, weekly we have completion and rest in Him, monthly we experience a new beginning in Him, and throughout the year He is our joy and enjoyment. Therefore, daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly Christ is to us the reality of every positive thing, implying the universal extensiveness of the all-inclusive Christ.

Col. 2:17¹ shadow

All the aforementioned items of the ceremonial law are a shadow of the spiritual things in Christ, which are the things to come. But the body belongs to Christ and is Christ.

Col. 2:17² body

As with a man's physical body, the body here is the substance. And like the shadow of a man's body, the rituals in the law are a shadow of the real things in the gospel.

Col. 2:17³ Christ

Christ is the reality of the gospel. All the good things in the gospel belong to Him and are Him. This book unveils such an all-inclusive Christ as the focus of God's economy.

Portions from the Life-study messages

Many things in our environment of daily living are also shadows of Christ. For example, the food we eat is a shadow, not the real food. The real food is Christ. Christ is also the real drink. The clothing we wear to cover us, to beautify us, and to keep us warm is also a shadow of Christ. Christ is the One who truly covers our nakedness, who keeps us warm, and who imparts beauty to us. Christ is also our true dwelling place and real rest. The houses in which we live are a shadow of Christ as our dwelling place. The rest we enjoy at night is also a figure of Christ as our rest. Even the satisfaction we enjoy after a good meal is not the real satisfaction, but a shadow of Christ as the reality of satisfaction.... He is the real food, drink, completion, rest, new moon, and feast.

In chapter one Paul shows us that Christ is the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the Head of the Body, the firstborn from among the dead, the One in whom all the fullness is pleased to dwell, and our indwelling hope of glory. In chapter two he goes on to say that Christ is the mystery of God and the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. After all this, Paul comes to our practical living, which involves daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly matters....The reality of all these daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly things is Christ.

In verse 17 Paul says that Christ is the body of all the shadows. This means that He is the reality of our food and drink, of our completion and rest, of our new beginning with light in darkness, and of our enjoyment and joy. Every day, week, month, and year we need Christ. All the positive things in our daily life, weekly life, monthly life, and yearly life must be Christ. Christ must become everything to us not merely in a doctrinal way, but in the way of

experience. I can testify that Christ is my completion, my rest, my new beginning, my enjoyment, my joy, my food, my drink, and my satisfaction. Although Christ is universally vast, He is also all the detailed aspects of our practical daily living. Day by day, He is our breath and everything to us. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 198-200)

Hymns, #818, #189, #538, #540, #542

Outline

II. The preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God (1:9-3:11)

D. The mystery of God (2:1-7)

E. The body of all the shadows (2:8-23)

Crucial points

Colossians 1:9-3:11 unveils Christ as the preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God. Chapter two reveals that Christ is the mystery of God (vv. 1-7) and the body of all the shadows (vv. 8-23).

In verses 1 through 3 Paul emphasizes the importance of the heart in receiving the revelation concerning Christ. He struggled on behalf of the saints that their hearts would be comforted and knit together in love. This comforting of the heart results in our having all the riches of the full assurance of understanding. The Colossians did not have the full assurance concerning Christ. Otherwise, they would not have turned to the worship of angels or taken in such things as observances, ordinances, and philosophies. They lacked the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—the spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church.

In verses 4 through 7 we see that we have received Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit and that we must walk in Him as our good land. Further, we have been rooted in Christ that we may absorb all His riches as

nourishment. These riches become the element and substance with which we grow and are built up as the Body of Christ.

We must beware that no one carries us off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ (v. 8). Christ is the governing principle of all genuine wisdom and knowledge, the reality of all genuine teaching, and the only measure of all concepts acceptable to God. The book of Colossians focuses on Christ as our everything. If we experience Christ as the center of God's economy, we shall be protected, and we shall not be deluded or carried off as spoil.

Because all the fullness of the Godhead is in Christ (v. 9) and because we have been placed in Him (1 Cor. 1:30), we have been made full in Him (v. 10) and are short of nothing. Furthermore, we have also been circumcised in Him (v. 11) from every negative thing. In baptism there is the aspect of burial (v. 12), which is the termination of our flesh, and the aspect of raising, which is the germination of our spirit. In the aspect of raising, we are made alive in Christ with the divine life.

Paul's concept in verses 13 through 15 is that the law and the angels have been set aside through the cross. The law was nailed to the cross, and the evil angels have been stripped off by means of the cross. Therefore, in God's economy in His salvation there is room neither for the law nor for the angelic rulers. Because God has removed the law and the angels, we, His chosen people, are alone with Him. We are no longer bothered by terms, conditions, or requirements. God is here to enliven us, and we are here to be enlivened by Him. We should forget the law and the angels and allow God to put Himself into us as life.

In verse 16 Paul comes to our practical living, which involves daily (eating and drinking), weekly (Sabbaths), monthly (new moons), and yearly (feasts) matters. Verse 17 says that Christ is the body of all these shadows. Christ must be everything to us not merely in a doctrinal way, but in a way of experience. Every positive thing in our daily life, weekly life, monthly life, and yearly life must be Christ. Although Christ is

universally vast, He is also all the detailed aspects of our practical living.

Further Reading:

Life-study of Colossians, msgs. 17, 19, 21, 23-24

Lord's Day 3/13

Related Verses

Heb. 2:6-12, 14-15

6 But one has solemnly testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You bring him to mind? Or the son of man, that You care for him?"

7 You have made Him a little inferior to the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor and have set Him over the works of Your hands;

8 You have subjected all things under His feet." For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him,

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."

14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

15 And might release those who because of the fear of death through all their life were held in slavery.