To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ fully grown in us, to allow Christ to permeate our whole being and saturate our inward parts, to have Christ mingled with us, to be constituted with Christ, and to allow Christ to make His home in all the parts of our inner being.

The divine power, which includes all that the Triune God has passed through, has been installed into us once for all and is being transmitted into us continually, causing us to enjoy Christ richly and to have the proper church life as His Body, His fullness.

We need to take Christ as our living, take Christ as our expression, take the mind of Christ as our mind, take Christ as our lived-out righteousness, consider the knowledge of Christ excellent, take Christ as our goal, take Christ as our virtues, take Christ as our power, take Christ as our secret, and take Christ as our expectation.

The Christ revealed in Colossians is the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, the centrality and universality of God's economy, who should replace every factor, element, and aspect of our natural life and of our culture with Himself for the new man.
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GENERAL SUBJECT: THE HEART OF THE DIVINE REVELATION

Message One

An Overview of the Four Focal Books—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians

Scripture Reading: Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:8, 17a; Phil. 1:19-21a; Col. 1:27

I. The books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians form a cluster of Epistles that make up the heart of the divine revelation in the New Testament; these writings are brief, but they are profound, unfathomable, and inexhaustible:

A. Galatians reveals that Christ is versus religion with its law (3:15-29); Ephesians reveals the church as the Body of Christ (1:22-23); Philippians concerns the experience, the living out, of Christ (1:19-21a); and Colossians unveils the all-inclusive, extensive Christ as the Head of the Body (1:18).

B. In Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, Paul lifts the veil to show us who Christ is and what Christ is:

   1. In Colossians we see that Christ is all-inclusive and all-extensive, the reality of every positive thing in the universe—1:15; 2:16-17; 3:4, 10-11.
   2. Galatians reveals that Christ stands in opposition to religion—1:15-16.
   3. The message of Philippians is “to me, to live is Christ,” not to live according to even the highest human virtues and attainments—1:21a.
   4. Ephesians reveals that the result of Christ living in us and of our living Him is the church as the Body of Christ—1:22-23; 4:16.
   5. Thus, these four books are the heart of the New Testament revelation concerning God’s eternal economy, showing us that Christ and the church are the focal point of the divine revelation—5:32.

II. Galatians reveals that Christ is versus religion with its law—2:16, 20:

   A. The book of Galatians deals strongly with deviation from Christ by going back to the law—5:1-2, 4:
      1. The desire of God’s heart can be satisfied only if we remain with Christ and allow Him to live in us and to be formed in us—2:20; 4:19.
      2. To hold to the law after Christ has come is against the basic principle of God’s New Testament economy; Christ must replace the law in our life for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose—v. 21; 5:4; 3:23-25.
      3. The central thought of Galatians 1 is the contrast between religion and Christ; from the time that a vision of Christ was imparted to Paul, he began to see Christ, and Christ became everything to him—vv. 13-16.

   B. Paul’s burden in Galatians was to reveal Christ in such a way that He would be the focal point of God’s economy and of our daily walk—vv. 15-16; 2:20.
III. In Ephesians 3, the heart of this Epistle, Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ and of Christ making His home in our hearts—vv. 8, 17a:

A. When God’s chosen people partake of and enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ, they are constituted with those riches to be the church, through which God’s multifarious wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies—vv. 8, 10.

B. Paul prayed that we would be strengthened into the inner man with the result that Christ could make His home in our hearts and thereby occupy, possess, permeate, and saturate our whole inner being with Himself—v. 17a:
1. The Christ who is making His home in our hearts is an unlimited, immeasurable Christ—v. 18.
2. When Christ makes His home in our hearts, we will be filled unto all the fullness of God—the Body of Christ as the corporate expression of the Triune God—v. 19.
3. The genuine church life is the issue of the unlimited and immeasurable Christ personally making His home in our hearts—v. 17a; 4:16.

IV. The subject of the book of Philippians is the experience of Christ in every kind of circumstance; this book shows us that Christ must be our experience regardless of our circumstances and difficulties—4:11-13:

A. As we experience Christ, we may take Him as our living (1:19-21a), our expression (vv. 19-26; 4:22), our pattern (2:5-11), our constant salvation (vv. 12-16), our drink offering (v. 17), our lived-out righteousness (3:9), our goal (vv. 4-14), our virtues (4:5-9), our secret (vv. 11-12), our power (v. 13), and our expectation (3:20-21).

B. When we take Christ as our goal, we count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (vv. 4-11); we know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (v. 10); and we are conformed to His death to attain to the out-resurrection from the dead (vv. 10-11).

C. Philippians is a book not only on the experience of Christ but also on living Christ; the Christian life is a life of living Christ for the constitution and building up of the Body of Christ—1:19-21a; Eph. 4:12, 16; Col. 1:24; 2:19.

V. The book of Colossians concentrates on Christ as the Head, revealing the profundness, all-inclusiveness, and unlimitedness of Christ to a fuller degree than any other book in the Bible—1:15-19; 2:9:

A. The Christ unveiled in Colossians is the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent One, the centrality and universality of God’s economy—1:27; 2:16-17; 3:4, 11.

B. The will of God is that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ be our portion—1:9, 12.

C. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ dwells in us as our hope of glory, He is our life, and He is the unique constituent of the one new man—v. 27; 3:4, 10-11.

D. We should estimate and evaluate everything according to the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—2:8.

E. We need to be infused, saturated, and permeated with the all-inclusive, extensive Christ until in our experience He is everything to us—1:27; 2:16-17.