

Message Five

Colossians—the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ versus Culture

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:9, 15-18, 27; 2:2, 8-9, 16-17; 3:4, 10-11, 15-16; 4:2-3

- I. The Christ unveiled in Colossians is the all-inclusive, extensive One, the centrality and universality of God's economy—1:15-18, 27; 2:16-17; 3:4, 11:**
- A. Colossians reveals the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—the One who is God, man, and the reality of every positive thing in the universe—2:9, 16-17.
 - B. For Christ to be the Firstborn of both the original creation and the new creation means that He is both all-inclusive and extensive—1:15, 18.
 - C. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in everything—v. 18.
 - D. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the centrality and universality, the center and circumference, of God's economy—vv. 15-27; Eph. 1:10.
 - E. The will of God is that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ be our portion—Col. 1:9, 12.
 - F. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the Head of the Body, the church—v. 18.
 - G. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the fullness of God—v. 19.
 - H. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ dwells in us as our hope of glory—v. 27.
 - I. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the mystery of God—2:2.
 - J. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden—v. 3.
 - K. We should estimate and evaluate everything according to the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—v. 8.
 - L. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is our life—3:4.
 - M. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the unique constituent of the one new man—vv. 10-11.
 - N. For the Body life, it is crucial that we let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts—v. 15.
 - O. We should allow the word of Christ to dwell in us richly—v. 16.
 - P. We need to be infused, saturated, and permeated with the all-inclusive, extensive Christ until in our experience He is everything to us—2:16-17; 3:4.
- II. God's intention in His economy is that Christ be everything; therefore, it is crucial for us to see that God wants nothing but Christ and that in the eyes of God nothing counts except Christ—Matt. 17:5; Col. 3:10-11:**
- A. The all-inclusive Christ is in us, but we need to see Him, know Him, be filled with Him, and become absolutely one with Him—1:27; 3:4.
 - B. God's ultimate goal in His economy is to gain the one new man constituted with the all-inclusive, extensive Christ wrought into a corporate people—vv. 10-11; 1:18; 2:9, 16-17.
 - C. In the one new man, there is only one person—the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—v. 17; 3:4, 10-11.
 - D. Colossians reveals that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ should replace every factor, element, and aspect of our natural life—1:18; 3:4, 10-11.

III. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ revealed in Colossians is versus culture—2:9, 16-17; 3:10-11:

- A. The book of Colossians was written in order to reveal the all-inclusive, extensive Christ who deals with our culture and even replaces our culture with Himself; the Christ who can replace our culture and become everything to us is the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—1:12-13, 15-20.
- B. Culture is the systematic method that we have developed to exist and to maintain our being—cf. Gen. 4:16-17, 20-22:
 - 1. Culture is a subtle and hidden substitute for Christ; it is important for us to realize that within us the ultimate substitute for Christ is our culture.
 - 2. Our self-made and self-imposed culture is a substitute for Christ; it separates us from others and keeps us from being built up with them—Col. 2:8, 18-19.
- C. In Colossians Paul is dealing with the hidden matter of culture; if we get into the depths of Colossians, we will see that it deals with culture—3:10-11:
 - 1. Culture is the unconscious living of every human being; unconsciously we are under the influence of the culture into which we were born, and this culture is now undermining our experience and enjoyment of Christ—2:16-17; 3:4.
 - 2. God's eternal purpose is to have a corporate people to be the Body of Christ for His expression, but if mankind remains divided by cultural opinions, God's purpose cannot be carried out—1:18; 2:19; 3:10-11:
 - a. Christ's death on the cross abolished all the cultural differences and terminated them—Eph. 2:15.
 - b. In the new man there is no possibility for the various cultural distinctions to continue to exist—Col. 3:10-11.
 - 3. Whenever the peace of Christ is allowed to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will subdue all cultural opinions—v. 15.
- D. As culture has become the replacement for Christ, so Christ can become the replacement for culture—vv. 4, 10-11:
 - 1. When we live Christ, we are spontaneously delivered from culture, and automatically the Christ by whom we live replaces culture; this is the revelation in the book of Colossians—Phil. 1:21a; Col. 1:19; 2:9; 3:4, 10-11.
 - 2. Christ has reconciled us to Himself, and now we should live Him and allow Him to replace every aspect of our culture—1:20; 3:4, 10-11.
- E. Whenever we experience genuine prayer, we are outside of our culture; in particular, we are outside of our cultural opinion—4:2-3:
 - 1. The more genuine prayer we have, the more we will have the experience of being outside of our cultural opinions and of being one spirit with the Lord—1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 2. When we pray with others in a genuine way, we touch the reality of the one new man and realize that the new man is constituted with Christ alone and that in this realm there are no differences of culture—Col. 4:2-3; 3:10-11.