

## Message Two

### **Living the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ instead of Our Culture**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:11, 16-17a; Phil. 1:20-21a; Col. 1:15, 18, 27; 3:4, 10-11

#### **I. The central thought of the Bible is that God desires us to live Christ for the church as the Body of Christ, the one new man—Phil. 1:21a; Eph. 2:15-16:**

- A. God's intention is that we become saturated, permeated, filled, and clothed with Christ so that we may live Christ—3:17a; Gal. 2:20; 3:27; 4:19.
- B. The Christian life is the life in which the believers of Christ live Christ and magnify Him—Phil. 1:20-21a.
- C. To live Christ is to live a person, Christ Himself—Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:10:
  - 1. If we would live Christ, we must take Him as our person and be one person with Him; He and we must be one in a practical way—1 Cor. 6:17.
  - 2. If we have light concerning how Christ is replaced in our daily living, we will confess to the Lord that instead of living Him we live many other things, that we live more by culture than by Christ—1 John 1:7.
- D. The reason we do not live Christ is that we are not constituted with Christ; what we are constituted with is what we live—Col. 3:4, 10-11; Eph. 3:17a.

#### **II. Concerning the matter of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ versus culture, we need to see that according to the full revelation in the Bible, God's intention is to work Himself in Christ into His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19:**

- A. God's central work, His unique work, in the universe and throughout all the ages and generations is to work Himself in Christ into His chosen people, making Himself one with them—Eph. 3:17a; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. God's intention is to thoroughly work Himself in Christ into us, making Himself our inward elements—Eph. 3:11, 16-19.
- C. For the fulfillment of God's eternal economy, God needs to build Himself in Christ into our being, building Himself in Christ into us as our life, our nature, and our constitution to make us God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Rom. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:17a; John 14:23; Col. 3:10-11:
  - 1. We need God to build Himself in Christ into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ—Eph. 3:17a.
  - 2. Christ builds the church by coming into our spirit and spreading Himself from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will to occupy our entire soul—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:17a.

#### **III. In saying that Christ is versus culture, we are not saying that we should drop our culture and live without any culture whatsoever—Col. 3:10-11:**

- A. Those who do not have Christ certainly need to live according to culture, for culture preserves, regulates, and improves people.
- B. Prior to receiving the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, everyone needs culture.
- C. After we have received Christ, we should not allow culture to limit Christ or to frustrate us from experiencing and enjoying Christ; rather, we should begin to learn to live according to Christ, not according to culture—2:6-7.
- D. As children are growing up, they need culture and the law—Gal. 3:23-28:

1. Before children receive Christ, they must be trained according to culture and under the law—vv. 23-24.
2. After they have received Christ, gradually we can help them turn from culture to Christ—John 1:12-13; 6:57.

**IV. Since we have received Christ, we should not allow culture to become a substitute for Him—Col. 2:6; 3:10-11:**

- A. Every kind of culture is versus Christ, and Christ is versus every kind of culture—v. 11:
  1. Any culture, no matter what kind of culture it is, is versus Christ.
  2. Apart from Christ, everything we have and every human product and development are part of culture.
- B. The factor that limits the expansion of the enjoyment of Christ is culture; spontaneously, the culture within us keeps us from the real experience of Christ—Phil. 3:3-9.
- C. Because our culture hinders us from experiencing Christ, enjoying Christ, and living Christ, we are heavily burdened by the Lord that all the saints in the Lord's recovery may learn in a practical way to take Christ as their life and person to replace their culture—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:4.
- D. In Christ we have the liberty to set aside our culture in order to enlarge our capacity to enjoy the Lord; all the room within us must be given over to Christ.
- E. If our entire inward capacity is made available to Christ, spontaneously the culture within us will be replaced by the Christ who dwells in us—1:27; 3:11.

**V. It is crucial that we see a vision of the all-inclusiveness and extensiveness of Christ; we should not endeavor to drop our culture without such a vision of Christ—Acts 26:19; Eph. 1:17-23:**

- A. The Christ who indwells us is not a small, limited Christ; He is the One who is the image of the invisible God, the embodiment of the fullness of God, and the focal point of God's economy—Col. 1:15, 18; 2:2, 9-10:
  1. Such a Christ now dwells in us and is waiting for the opportunity to spread Himself throughout our being—1:27.
  2. This Christ should be everything in our daily living, and we should live Him, not giving any ground in our living to culture—Phil. 1:21a; Col. 3:11.
- B. As soon as we see the vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, we should begin to set aside our cultural background and not allow it to replace Christ or restrict Him—Acts 9:4-5; 26:19; Phil. 3:7-10:
  1. We should not give any ground in our living to culture.
  2. Instead, all the room within us should be given over to the all-inclusive, extensive Christ who dwells in us—Col. 1:27.
- C. If we see such a vision of the indwelling, all-inclusive, extensive Christ, we will spontaneously drop our culture—3:10-11:
  1. Formerly, Christ was replaced by culture, but once we have seen this vision, the culture within us will be replaced by Christ—v. 11.
  2. Instead of trying to drop our culture, we should simply live Christ, and Christ will replace our culture with Himself—Phil. 1:21a.
- D. When we live Christ, we are spontaneously delivered from culture, and automatically the Christ by whom we live replaces our culture; this is the revelation in the book of Colossians—1:15, 18, 27; 2:2, 9-10; 3:4, 10-11.