

Message Four

Knowing the All-inclusive Christ and Growing with the Growth of God

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:18, 27-28; 2:2-3; 3:1-4

I. It is a blessing that we can know and experience the all-inclusive Christ as revealed in Colossians:

- A. Christ is “the Head of the Body, the church;...that He Himself might have the first place in all things”—1:18:
 - 1. In both the old creation and the new creation, Christ is the first and occupies the first place.
 - 2. Both in the universe and in the church, Christ is the preeminent One.
- B. “Christ in you, the hope of glory”—v. 27:
 - 1. Christ, who dwells in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory.
 - 2. When He comes, we will be glorified in Him.
 - 3. This indicates that the indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being so that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory.
- C. In Colossians a number of important phrases point to our experience of Christ:
 - 1. “Christ in you”—v. 27.
 - 2. “Full-grown in Christ”—v. 28.
 - 3. “Walk in Him”—2:6.
 - 4. “According to Christ”—v. 8.
 - 5. “Made alive together with Him”—v. 13.
 - 6. “Died with Christ”—v. 20.
 - 7. “Holding the Head”—v. 19.
 - 8. “Out from whom”—v. 19.
 - 9. “Grows with the growth of God”—v. 19.
 - 10. These expressions give us a complete picture of the proper experience of Christ.
 - 11. “The mystery of God, Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden”—vv. 2-3:
 - a. Colossians concerns the mystery of God, which is Christ the Head.
 - b. All the treasures of genuine wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ—v. 3.
 - c. This is the spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church.
 - d. Wisdom is related to our spirit, and knowledge is related to our mind—Eph. 1:8, 17.
 - 12. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you have been made full in Him”—Col. 2:9-10:
 - a. What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but the expression of the riches of what God is.
 - b. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as One who has a human body.

- D. “If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God”—3:1:
 - 1. Verses 1 through 4 imply that with Christ we have one position, one life, one living, one destiny, and one glory.
 - 2. God in the heavens should be the sphere of our living; with Christ we should live in God.

II. “Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied..., grows with the growth of God”—2:19:

- A. To grow is to have Christ added into us—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:19.
- B. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:
 - 1. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - 2. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15.
- C. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Col. 2:19:
 - 1. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way.
 - 2. The more God is added into us, the more growth He gives to us; this is the way God gives the growth—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 3. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him, we cannot have growth—vv. 6-7:
 - a. The addition of God into us is the growth He gives.
 - b. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—Rom. 8:11.
- D. The growth of the Body is the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:
 - 1. Ephesians 4:12-16 occupies a special place in the New Testament because it shows the mystery concerning the building up of the Body of Christ.
 - 2. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—3:17a:
 - a. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church—Col. 3:10-11.
 - b. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—1:18; 2:19.
 - 3. The love in which the Body builds itself up is not our own love but the love of God in Christ, which becomes the love of Christ in us, by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body—1 John 4:7-8, 11, 16, 19; Rom. 5:5; 8:39:
 - a. Love is the inner substance of God; when we enter into God’s inner substance, we enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love, and thereby love others as Christ did—Eph. 5:25.
 - b. It is in such a love that we hold to truth, that is, to Christ with His Body, and are kept from being influenced by the winds of teaching and from bringing in elements that are foreign to the Body—4:14-15.