

Message Seven

The One Who Is Formed in the Believers

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 3:29; 4:5, 19;
Eph. 3:17a; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; 12:2a

I. The New Testament reveals that Christ is deeply related to our inner being and desires to have a subjective relationship with us—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20:

- A. God revealed His Son to Paul and to us—1:15-16:
 - 1. The word *reveal* in Galatians 1:16 is crucial and of utmost importance.
 - 2. To reveal is to make known (divulge) or to show plainly (display) something that has been kept secret.
 - 3. In the New Testament *revealed* is used in a profound manner related to our spirit—Rom. 1:17; 8:18; 1 Cor. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:5; 5:1.
 - 4. God's revealing of His Son to us is in us; it is not outward but inward, not by outward vision but an inward seeing.
 - 5. God's heart's desire is to reveal His Son in us so that we may know Him, receive Him as our life (John 17:3; 3:16), and become sons of God (1:12; Gal. 4:5-6).
- B. In Galatians 2:20 we see the most basic truth of God's economy—no longer I but Christ living in me:
 - 1. When Christ was crucified according to God's economy, we were included in Him; this is an accomplished fact—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.
 - 2. We have died to the law and live to God through the organic union with Christ—John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Thes. 1:1.
 - 3. The "I" in Galatians 2:20 refers not only to Paul but to each one of us, and Paul's testimony is also our testimony:
 - a. "I am crucified with Christ"—v. 20a.
 - b. "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me"—v. 20b.
 - c. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God"—v. 20c.
 - d. "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me"—v. 20d.
 - e. "What from Thee can separate me? / Thou wilt love me to the end! / Oh! Thy love is so prevailing, / E'en Thyself with me to blend! / We two one will be forever; / I am Thine and Thou art mine! / This will be my testimony: / In Thy love we'll ever twine!"—*Hymns*, #152, stanza 4.

II. Christ was crucified (Gal. 3:1) to redeem us out of the curse of the law (v. 13) and rescue us out of the evil religious course of the world (1:4), and He was resurrected from the dead so that He might live in us (2:20) and be formed in us at our maturity (4:19).

III. In Galatians 4:19 Christ is presented as the One who is formed in the believers:

- A. Christ, a living person, is the focus of Paul's gospel—1:16; Rom. 1:1, 3-4.
- B. Paul's preaching was to bring forth Christ, the Son of the living God, in the believers—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19.
- C. Christ is now living in us, and He will be formed in us—v. 19.
- D. Paul was travailing so that Christ might be formed in the believers for their full sonship—vv. 5, 19.

IV. According to Paul's usage in the New Testament, the word *form* refers to the outward expression of the inner being (Phil. 2:6); what we are is expressed in our form, that is, the outward expression of our inner being.

V. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ fully grown in us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13-16:

- A. First, Christ was born into us at the time we repented and believed into Him, then He lives in us in our Christian life (Gal. 2:20), and finally, He will be formed in us at our maturity.
- B. To have Christ formed in us is to allow Him to permeate our whole being and saturate our inward parts—4:19; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:4, 10-11:
 1. When Christ occupies our inner being in this way, He is formed in us—Psa. 51:6.
 2. We need to allow Christ to saturate every part of our inner being; He must occupy us and saturate our mind, emotion, and will—Phil. 2:5; Eph. 3:17a.
 3. To have Christ possess our entire being is to have Him formed in us—Gal. 4:19.
- C. For Christ to make His home in our hearts, He needs to be able to settle down within us, and this requires that we allow Christ to make His home in all the parts of our inner being; this is to have Christ formed in us—Eph. 3:17a.
- D. To have Christ formed in us is to allow the all-inclusive Spirit to occupy every part of our inner being—Gal. 4:19; 3:2-3, 14:
 1. Christ should not only spread into our mind, emotion, and will; He should actually become our mind, emotion, and will—Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16.
 2. Everything other than Christ must diminish, and Christ must become everything to us in our experience; this is to have Christ formed in us.
- E. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ mingled with our whole being—6:17:
 1. In every part of our being, Christ should be mingled with us—Eph. 4:23.
 2. Christ must permeate us and saturate us until He is completely blended with us; then He will be formed in us—3:17a; Gal. 4:19.
- F. Paul's word about Christ being formed in the believers implies that we are being constituted with Christ—Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11:
 1. Christ is living in us, He is being formed in us, and He is becoming our constitution; Christ is now living in us so that we may be constituted with Him organically—Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4, 10-11.
 2. Eventually, our whole being will be constituted with the element of Christ, for He will constitute every part of our soul so that we may have His form, His image, in every part of our being—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29.
- G. The word *formed* in Galatians 4:19 corresponds to the word *image* in 2 Corinthians 3:18:
 1. Christ with His element is working within us organically so that we may have His form and express His image—Rom. 8:29.
 2. Christ's being formed in us depends on our being transformed into His image—2 Cor. 3:18.
 3. Our being transformed into His image and His being formed in us cause us to be conformed to His image; our being conformed to His image is the issue of His being formed in us—Gal. 4:19; Rom. 8:29.

- H. To have Christ formed in us is to have the three parts of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will—renewed—12:2a; Eph. 4:23:
1. In order for our mind, emotion, and will to be renewed, Christ must saturate our mind, emotion, and will and replace the self and the world in our soul with Himself—Rom. 12:2a.
 2. If we are renewed in this way, every part of our inner being will bear the image of Christ—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29.

VI. Christ needs to be formed in us so that we may be sons of full age and heirs to inherit God's promised blessing and so that we may mature in the divine sonship—Gal. 3:14, 26, 29; 4:5-6:

- A. Galatians 3:26 says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"; the expression *sons of God* refers to sons of full age.
- B. Under the old testament, God's chosen people were considered infants; now under the new testament, they are considered sons of full age, who will inherit the promised blessing—the all-inclusive Spirit of Christ.
- C. Christ must mature in us in order for us to be heirs for the full enjoyment of the Triune God as our inheritance; the Holy Spirit is the pledge of our inheritance—Eph. 1:13b-14; 1 Pet. 1:4.
- D. We need to pray that the Lord will bring us into the experience and enjoyment of Christ, who has been born into us, is now living in us, and will be formed in us at our maturity in order that we may be sons of full age and heirs of God's promised blessing and that we may mature in the divine sonship—Gal. 3:29; 4:6, 19.