

Message Three

Letting the Word of Christ Dwell in Us Richly

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:16-17; Phil. 2:15-16

I. The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ—Col. 3:16:

- A. In His New Testament economy God speaks in the Son—Heb. 1:2; John 1:1, 14, 18:
 - 1. The Son speaks not only by Himself in the Gospels but also through His members—the apostles and prophets—in Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation—Matt. 17:5; Acts 4:20; 5:20; 6:7; Col. 1:25; Rev. 1:2, 9.
 - 2. All these speakings can be considered the word of Christ; thus, the word of Christ includes the entire New Testament—Col. 3:16.
- B. In Colossians the word is for revealing Christ in His preeminence, centrality, and universality—1:18; 2:9; 3:11:
 - 1. Colossians is focused on Christ as our Head and our life, and Paul's concern in Colossians is for the revelation of Christ unto full knowledge; for this, we need the word of Christ—1:9-10, 18; 2:19; 3:4, 10.
 - 2. The way for Christ to exercise His headship and to minister His riches to us is through His word; hence, the emphasis is on the word of Christ—Eph. 3:8; Col. 3:16.

II. The word of Christ is actually the person of Christ—v. 16; John 15:4, 7:

- A. Paul almost personifies the word of Christ; he tells us to let this word dwell in us, as if it were a living person—Col. 3:16; cf. Eph. 3:17.
- B. First we have Christ as our life; then we have His living word personified as His person dwelling in us—Col. 3:4, 16.
- C. Since the word of Christ can dwell in us, it must be a living person; therefore, to let the word of Christ dwell in us indicates that we allow a living person—Christ Himself—to dwell in us—v. 16; 1:27.
- D. If we would allow Christ to make His home in our hearts, we must be filled with the word of Christ—Eph. 3:17; John 14:23:
 - 1. For the Lord's word to abide in us means that the Lord Himself abides in us—15:4, 7.
 - 2. If Christ is to abide in us in a practical way, His words must abide in us; we cannot have Christ in us experientially unless we have His words in us also—Col. 1:27; 3:16; Eph. 3:17; John 14:23; 15:4, 7.

III. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly—Col. 3:16:

- A. The Greek word rendered “dwell” literally means to be in a house, to inhabit:
 - 1. This indicates that we should allow the word of Christ to dwell in us, to inhabit us, to make home in us—v. 16.
 - 2. The word of the Lord must have adequate room within us so that it may operate and minister the riches of Christ into our inner being.
- B. The word of Christ must dwell in us richly—v. 16:
 - 1. The riches of Christ are in His word, and when such a rich word inhabits us, it must inhabit us richly—Eph. 3:8.

2. For the word of Christ to dwell in us richly means that it inhabits us, indwells us, in a rich way—Col. 3:16:
 - a. This can be illustrated by eating; when we take nourishing food into us and assimilate it, it indwells us richly—John 6:57b.
 - b. In like manner, for the word of Christ to dwell in us richly means that it inhabits us in the way of nourishment and enrichment—Matt. 4:4.
- C. The word of Christ should have free course within us; the word of Christ should be given the freedom to operate within us, inhabiting us and making home in us—Col. 3:16.
- D. Instead of our culture, opinion, concept, thought, and view, we should have the word of Christ—Matt. 7:24; 16:23-24; 24:35:
 1. We might not allow the word of Christ to dwell in us nor permit it to live, move, and act in us; as a result, what prevails in our being is our culture or philosophy, not the word of Christ—John 8:37, 47.
 2. It is crucial that we let the word of Christ enter into us, dwell in us, and replace our culture, concept, opinion, and philosophy—Col. 1:5; 2:8; 3:16.
- E. Negatively, we must set aside our cultural standards, and positively, we need to be filled with the word of Christ; this means that we must let the word of Christ fill our mind, emotion, and will and allow our whole being to be permeated and saturated with the word of Christ—vv. 10-11, 16.

IV. Allowing the word of Christ to dwell in us richly is related to doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus—vv. 16-17:

- A. The word of Christ is actually the embodiment of Christ with all His riches; thus, to be saturated with the word is to be infused with and permeated by the riches of Christ—Eph. 3:8, 17.
- B. As the word of Christ makes home in us, the Lord makes us one with Him, and spontaneously we can do things in the name of the Lord—Col. 3:16-17:
 1. If we exercise our whole being to take in the word, eventually we will be filled, occupied, and saturated with the living word.
 2. Because the word is the embodiment of the Spirit and because the Spirit is the reality of Christ, we will automatically be filled with Christ and do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus—John 6:63; 14:16-18; Col. 3:17.

V. If we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, we will shine as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life—Phil. 2:15-16:

- A. When we are filled with the word of life, we manifest Christ and magnify Him; this is the way to live Christ, who Himself is the word of life with which we shine—1:20-21a; 2:15-16.
- B. The more we allow the word of Christ to dwell in us richly, the greater will be the accumulation of the word within us; then spontaneously we will shine with the word of life that we have taken into us—Col. 3:16; Phil. 2:15-16:
 1. This shining will then be our holding forth, our presenting of, the word of life to others—v. 16; Matt. 5:14-16.
 2. This is the proper preaching of the gospel and proclamation of the truth—Col. 1:5-6, 23; John 1:1, 14; 8:12, 32; 18:37.