

The Thanksgiving Blending Conference

November 23-26, 2023

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AND OUR GROWTH IN LIFE UNTO MATURITY

Message Four

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

RM Hymns: 189

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

Col 1:18	And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
Col 1:27	To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
Col 1:28	Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
Col 2:2	That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,
Col 2:3	In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.
Col 3:1	If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
Col 3:2	Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.
Col 3:3	For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
Col 3:4	When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

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.
Col 2:3 In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.
 - 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.
Eph 1:8 Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence,
Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
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.
Col 3:1 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.
Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in 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.
1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
- B. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
 1. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 2. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head— Eph. 4:15.
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- 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:

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

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.

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
3. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him, we cannot have growth—vv. 6-7:

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

 - 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.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

D. The growth of the Body is the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

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.

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
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:

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

 - a. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church—Col. 3:10-11.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 - b. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—1:18; 2:19.

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with

the growth of God.

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:

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God.

1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God has loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 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.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

- 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.

Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,