

HWMR: KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE, (Week 6)

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:15-16; 4:2

**Allowing the Peace of Christ to Arbitrate in Our Hearts,
Letting the Word of Christ Dwell in Us Richly,
and Persevering in Prayer for the Genuine Church Life**

- Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.
- Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.
- Colossians 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

Day 1

Colossians 3:13-15 - Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive. And over all these things put on love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

I. We need to **allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts—Col. 3:12-15; Eph. 2:14-18; Rom. 5:1; Matt. 18:21-35:**

- A. The Greek term for *arbitrate* can also be rendered “**umpire**,” “**preside**,” or “**be enthroned** as a ruler and decider of everything”; the arbitrating peace of Christ dissolves our complaint against anyone—Col. 3:13.
- B. Often we are conscious of three parties within us: a positive party, a negative party, and a neutral party; hence, there is the need for **inward arbitration** to settle the dispute within us:
1. Whenever we sense that different parties within our being are arguing or quarreling, we need to **give place** to the presiding peace of Christ and **allow** this peace, which is the oneness of the new man, to rule within us and have the final word.
 2. We need to **set aside** our opinion, our concept, and listen to the word of the indwelling referee.

Day 2

Ephesians 2:15 - Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,

Ephesians 4:3 - Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

- C. If we **allow** the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will **settle** all the disputes among us; we will have **peace with God vertically** and with the **saints horizontally**:
1. Through the arbitration of the peace of Christ, our problems are **solved**, and the friction between the saints **disappears**; then the church life is **preserved** in sweetness, and the new man is maintained in a practical way.
 2. The arbitrating of the peace of Christ is **Christ working within us** to exercise His rule over us, to speak the last word, and to make the final decision—cf. Isa. 9:6-7.

3. If we stay under the ruling of the enthroned peace of Christ, we will not offend others or damage them; rather, by the Lord's grace and with His peace, we will **minister life to others**.
4. This peace should **bind all the believers together** and become the uniting bond—Eph. 4:3.

According to the context of Colossians 3, when we set our mind on the things above, the divine element is transmitted into us for the renewing of the new man. As the new man is being renewed, we should **allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts**. The renewing of the new man is actually the spreading of the new man within us. As the new man spreads, we need to let the peace of Christ arbitrate within us.

It is very easy in the church life to offend one another or to make one another unhappy. In the matter of arranging chairs in the meeting hall, a brother may be unhappy if the arrangement is not according to his opinion. But if we **open to the Lord** when we are offended and tell Him that we love Him, something heavenly will be transmitted into us. Then spontaneously we shall be happy with the one who offended us. This is an example of the peace of Christ arbitrating in our heart. This arbitrating peace **preserves the oneness in the church life**. The divisions caused by different opinions are a serious damage to the church life and cut the new man into pieces. But the arbitrating peace of Christ brought in by the heavenly transmission keeps us in oneness and preserves the new man.

When a local church is first established, the saints may experience a church-life honeymoon. But just as there is no permanent honeymoon in married life, there is no permanent honeymoon in the church life. Friction develops eventually between the saints. This friction causes the wrinkles Paul speaks of in Ephesians 5. If we **do not** have the peace of Christ arbitrating in us, **wrinkles will continue to develop**. But if the heavenly transmission **supplies** us with the divine element, the wrinkles will be **removed** metabolically. Then instead of friction there will be the arbitrating peace of Christ. (*Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 63*)

Day 3

- Colossians 3:16* - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17* - All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

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

- A. We need to allow the word of the Lord to have the **first place in us** and to inhabit us so that we may experience the functions of the word of God operating within us and ministering the riches of Christ into our being:
 1. The word of God **enlightens** us (Psa. 119:105, 130), **nourishes** us (Matt. 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:6), and **waters** us to quench our thirst (Isa. 55:1, 8-11).
 2. The word of God **strengthens** us (1 John 2:14b; Prov. 4:20-22), **washes** us (Eph. 5:26), and **builds** us up (Acts 20:32).
 3. The word of God **completes**, **perfects** (2 Tim. 3:15-17), and **sanctifies** us to bring us into the oneness in the Triune God (John 17:14-21).

Day 4

- Psalms 119:54* - Your statutes have become my songs of praise / In the house of my pilgrimage.
- Psalms 119:15* - I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The unsearchable riches of Christ are the fullness of the Godhead. How all-inclusive and extensive these riches must be! The very fullness of the Godhead has become the unsearchable riches of Christ. As we consider Ephesians 3:8 and 16-17a, we see that for **Christ to make His home in our heart** means that His unsearchable riches must **possess our entire being**. They must fill our heart, including the mind, emotion, will, and conscience. No doubt, if our heart has been occupied and possessed by Christ, we shall also be one with Him in spirit. Then our whole inner being will be possessed by Christ and be one with Him.

The word about the fullness of God being the riches of Christ and the riches of Christ possessing our inner being may be little more than a doctrine to us. We must go on to ask how in a practical way the riches of Christ can fill us. The fullness of the Godhead and the unsearchable riches of Christ are realized by the Spirit and in the Spirit. Furthermore, the **Spirit is embodied in the Word**. On the one hand, in Ephesians 3:8 and 17 Paul speaks of the riches of Christ and of Christ making His home in our heart; on the other hand, in Colossians 3:16 he charges us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. The word richly corresponds to “riches,” and the word dwell corresponds to “make His home.” The **Christ with the unsearchable riches desires to make His home in our heart**. Colossians 3:16 refers both to these riches and to the matter of the word of Christ inhabiting us, indwelling us.

Moreover, according to Ephesians 3:19, if Christ makes His home in our heart, we shall be filled unto all the fullness of God. We began with the fullness of the Godhead, and now we return to this fullness. The fullness of God, which is from eternity, has become the unsearchable riches of Christ. Now this Christ with His unsearchable riches is making His home in our hearts so that we may be filled unto all the fullness of the Godhead. Therefore, here we have a full circle beginning with the fullness of the Godhead and also coming back to this fullness. We praise the Lord that **through the Spirit and the Word** we may experience the unsearchable riches of Christ and be filled unto all the fullness of God! (*Life-Study of Philippians, chapter 41*)

- B. Colossians 3:16 speaks of **letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly**, “teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace” in our hearts to God:
1. One way to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly is by **singing** it; in addition to **pray-reading** the Word, we need to learn to **sing-read** and psalm the word of God—Psa. 119:54.
 2. Psalming the word of God includes **dwelling** upon it, **musings** on it, and **enjoying** it, thereby giving more opportunity for the word to **saturate** us (v. 15); singing and psalming the word are excellent ways to exercise our spirit and to be ushered into the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15; Psa. 47:6-7).
 3. In singing and psalming God’s word, we may use any kind of melody, even a spontaneous one of our own composition; we need to build up the habit of **singing and psalming the word day by day**.
 4. The more we sing and psalm the Lord’s word, the more we give opportunity to the word to **dwell** in us, **sink** into us, and **permeate** us with the divine element; then spontaneously, we will live Christ—cf. John 6:57, 63.
- C. Daily we need to **practice coming to Christ** as the living word in God’s written word so that He may speak to us personally as the applied word of the Spirit for Him to be infused into us according to the following life principles—Rev. 19:13; Matt. 4:4; John 5:39-40; 6:63; 8:31-32; 15:7; Deut. 17:18-19:
1. **We must open our entire being** to the Lord for the inner shining of the divine light and the supplying of the divine life; the one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is absolutely open to the Lord—Psa. 119:105; Prov. 20:27; Psa. 139:23-24.
 2. **We must seek the Lord** with all our heart—119:2; Mark 12:30.
 3. **We must deal with anything** that separates us from the Lord—Acts 24:16; 2 Tim. 1:3a; 1 John 1:9; cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26.

4. **We must humble ourselves** before the Lord, putting aside our self-confidence and self-assurance and looking to Him for His mercy and grace—Isa. 66:1-2; 1 Pet. 5:5.
 5. **We must exercise our spirit** to pray over and with God's word and exercise our whole being to sing, psalm, and muse on His word—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15-16; cf. Lev. 11:3.
- D. By allowing the word of God to **inhabit us**, we can become a man of God filled with the breath of God so that we can be fully equipped with God's word as the divine antidote against the decline of the church—2 Tim. 3:14-17.

Day 5

Colossians 4:2 - Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

Colossians 2:6-7 - As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

III. We need to **persevere in prayer**—Col. 4:2-3:

- A. We need to **allow adequate time for prayer**, which will enable us to absorb more of the riches of Christ as the all-inclusive land—1:12; 2:6-7; 4:2:
 1. We need to take time to absorb the Lord, **contacting** Him in a definite and prevailing way—Luke 8:13; Matt. 14:22-23; 6:6.
 2. To meet with God in the morning is not only to meet with Him early in the day; it is also to meet with God in a **situation that is full of light**; we should go to God alone, without any persons, matters, or things to distract or occupy us—Prov. 4:18; Exo. 33:11a; 34:3-4; Mark 1:35.
 3. When we pray, coming forward to the throne of grace, grace will become a **river flowing** in us and **supplying us**—Heb. 4:16; cf. Rev. 22:1.

Day 6

Matthew 26:41 - Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Ephesians 6:18 - By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

- B. In order to fight on God's side against Satan, we need to **persevere in prayer**—Dan. 6:10:
 1. As those who take sides with God, we find that the whole fallen universe is against us and, in particular, against our prayer; resistance to prayer lies not only outside of us but even **within us**—Matt. 26:41.
 2. To pray is to **go against the current**, the trend, in the fallen universe—Luke 18:1-8.
- C. We need to set aside **definite times for prayer**; our attitude should be that prayer is our most important business and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with it—Dan. 6:10; Acts 12:5, 12.
- D. We need to remain in an atmosphere of prayer by **continually exercising our spirit**—Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:7; Col. 1:3, 9:
 1. We need to **pray without ceasing**, to persevere in prayer, keeping ourselves intimately connected to the Lord—1 Thes. 5:17; Matt. 26:41; Col. 2:19.
 2. **Even in the smallest details** we need to **inquire** of the Lord; to do this is to persevere in prayer and thereby to live Christ—cf. Josh. 9:14; Phil. 4:7-8.

IV. As we are ruled by the peace of Christ and inhabited by the word of Christ through persevering in prayer, He permeates and replaces us with Himself until all our natural distinctions have been eliminated for us to have the genuine church life—Col. 3:15-16; 4:2; 3:10-11.

In addition to loving the Lord and consecrating ourselves to Him, we must spend time in His Word. Every morning we must open His Word. We do not need to read too much; we should simply open the Word and **read it with our heart and our spirit**. We may know how to read the Word with our mind, and we may even know how to read the Word with our heart, but do we know how to read the Word with our spirit? Second Corinthians 3:17 states that the Lord is the Spirit, and John 6:63 reveals that the Lord's words are spirit. To read the Word with our spirit means that when we come to the Word, **we need to contact it with the innermost part of our being**. We must contact the Word with the deepest part of our being, and we must not merely understand the Word but sense the Word. We must not only understand the Word with our mind and love it with our heart; we must also **sense it with our spirit**. There is a great difference between reading the Word and reading the newspaper. To read the newspaper, we only need to use our eyes to see the words and our mind to understand them. To properly read the Word, however, requires something more. To properly read the Word we also need to use our heart to love the Word and our spirit to contact and sense the Word.

This matter of sensing the Word may be unfamiliar to many. Some may wonder what this means and how we can use our spirit to sense the Word. To sense the Word with our spirit requires that we not only read the Word but also **pray over the Word**. After reading a verse or two, we need to spend some time to pray with the verse and concerning the verse. For example, suppose we read Luke 18:19, which says, "Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One—God." After reading this verse, we need to pray about it. We may pray, "Lord, Your Word says that no one is good. Thus, I am not good. No one is good except God Himself. Lord, I do praise You. You are the only One who is good. There is nothing within me that is good." After praying in this way, we may continue to pray, "Lord, since there is no good in me, please save me from trusting in myself, and teach me how to enjoy You and trust in You. You are the only One who is good." By **praying with the Word** and concerning the Word in this way, we **exercise our spirit**, and by exercising our spirit in this way, we contact the Lord in the Word. Instead of merely reading the Word with our mind, we can exercise our spirit by praying over the Word. We can pray, "O Lord, no one in this universe is good except One—God. God is the only One who is good." Of course, we need to understand what this verse means, but even more we need to exercise our heart to love this verse and our spirit to contact the Lord in this verse. We should immediately turn our reading into prayer, praying, "Lord, this is so wonderful. No one is good, not even me. Only You are good. Lord, I thank You that You are the only One who is good. Cause me to realize that I am not good and that there is nothing within me that is good. Save me from having any confidence in myself and from trusting in myself. Teach me to trust in You, to take You as my life, and to live by You. You are the only One who is good." This is the way to come to the Word—to **turn all our reading into praying**. By doing this, we exercise our spirit and contact the Lord in the Word. This is the simplest and most effective way to read the Word. (*Contacting the Lord, Being Filled in Spirit, and Having Proper Christian Meetings for the Accomplishment of God's Eternal Purpose, chapter 2*)