

## Message 3

### The Inhabiting Word of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18b-20; 3:17; John 15:7

#### I. “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”—Col. 3:16:

- A. In Colossians the Word is for revealing Christ (1:25-27) in His preeminence, centrality, and universality; Paul’s concern in Colossians is for the revelation of Christ unto full knowledge (2:2); for this, we need the word of Christ.
- B. The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ—Col. 3:16:
  1. In His New Testament economy, God speaks in the Son, and the Son speaks not only directly in the Gospels, but also through His members, the apostles and prophets, in Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation; all these may be considered as His word—Heb. 1:1-2 and note 2<sup>2</sup>.
  2. The word of Christ includes the entire New Testament; we need to be filled with this word; this means that we should allow the word of Christ to dwell in us, to inhabit us, to make home in us—Col. 3:16
- C. The Greek word rendered *dwell* means to be in a house, to inhabit; 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.
- D. The word *let* is very significant, and the word *dwell* is also very meaningful; you cannot let a table dwell in you; you cannot even say that you let a dog dwell in your house; the word *dwell* is a verb of dignity, proving that Paul regarded the Lord’s word as a living person.
- E. In this passage, the infilling of spiritual life that overflows in praising and singing is related to the Word, whereas in its parallel passage, Ephesians 5:18-20, the infilling of spiritual life is related to the Spirit; this indicates that the Word and the Spirit are identical—John 6:63b:
  1. When we receive the word of God, we actually receive the Spirit; receiving the Spirit should stir us up and cause us to be joyful and to sing.
  2. A normal Christian life should be one that is filled with the Word so that the Spirit may bubble from within us in melodies of praise—Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18b-19.
  3. When we are filled in our spirit by the Spirit and saturated with the word of Christ, we will also speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ to live a proper human life.
- F. Colossians 3:17 says, “Whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”:
  1. This is the result of letting the word of Christ dwell in us; to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus is related to letting the word of Christ saturate and fill us.
  2. The word of Christ is actually the embodiment of Christ; hence, when the word as the embodiment of Christ is mingled with our inner being, we are one with Christ, and spontaneously we are able to act in the name of the Lord.

#### II. The word of Christ must dwell in us richly:

- A. The riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) are in His word; when such a rich word inhabits us, it must inhabit us richly—Col. 3:16a:
  1. The word of Christ should have free course within us; we should not simply receive it and then confine it to a small area of our being.
  2. On the contrary, it should be given a free course to operate within us; in this way the word will inhabit us and make home in us.

3. Instead of our opinion, concept, thought, and estimation, we shall have Christ's word.
- B. Certain saints love the Bible and read it daily; but in their living it is their concept, opinion, and philosophy that move within them, not the word of Christ:
  1. They may study the Bible, but they do not allow the word of Christ to dwell in them.
  2. Neither do they permit it to move, act, and have its being in them; as a result, what prevails in their being is their philosophy, not the word of Christ; although they read the Bible, God's word remains outside of them.
  3. It is crucial for us to let the word of Christ enter into us, dwell in us, and replace our concepts, opinions, and philosophies.
  4. We need to pray, "Lord Jesus, I am willing to let go of my concepts. I want Your word to have ground in me. I am willing to forget my opinion and philosophy. I want Your word to be prevailing in me. I do not want my concepts to prevail any longer"—cf. Acts 19:20.

### III. Christ makes His home in us by His word inhabiting us—Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:16:

- A. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ; the unsearchable riches of Christ are the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9); how all-inclusive and extensive these riches must be!
- B. 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—John 6:63.
- C. 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:
  1. They must fill our heart, including the mind, emotion, will, and conscience.
  2. 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.
- D. On the other hand, in Colossians 3:16 he charges us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly:
  1. The word *richly* corresponds to "riches," and the word *dwell* corresponds to "make His home."
  2. The Christ with the unsearchable riches desires to make His home in our heart.
- E. According to verse 16, when the word of Christ dwells in us richly, we shall teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to God:
  1. Teaching, admonishing, and singing are all related to the verb *dwell*. This indicates that the way to let the Lord's word dwell in us richly is by teaching, admonishing, and singing.
  2. We should teach and admonish not only in words but also in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

### IV. "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you"—John 15:7:

- A. As we abide in the Lord, we must allow His words to abide in us (v. 7); the Greek word for *words* in this verse is *rhema*, meaning the instant and present spoken word.
- B. When He speaks the instant *rhema*, we must listen to it and keep it; if we do not keep this instant word, we shall immediately be cut off from the fellowship; but if we do keep it, we shall absorb all of the riches of His fullness, of His life, and have an overflow of life for fruit-bearing.
- C. In verses 4 and 5 the Lord tells us that He abides in us, but in verse 7 He changes the wording a little to say that His words abide in us; instead of Christ Himself abiding in us, now it is His words abiding in us.
- D. In order for the Lord to abide in us, it is necessary to let His words abide in us.
- E. Praise the Lord that we have something very substantial, available, and practical in our hands; we have the Word; we can read the Word and receive it with our heart and our spirit.
- F. We can contact the word of the Lord in our spirit day by day and even moment by moment; as long as we are contacting the Lord's word, we are contacting the Lord Himself.

**References and Further Reading:**

1. *Life-study of Colossians*, msgs. 29, 64.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 4, "Meeting to Speak the Word of God," ch. 3.
3. *Truth Lessons, Level Three*, vol. 3, ln. 52.
4. *Life-study of Philippians*, msg. 41.
5. *Life-study of John*, msg. 34.