

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.¹
- 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, v. 2, note 2.
 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.²
- 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:³
 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.⁴
 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-19.⁵
 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.⁶
- 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:⁷

¹ *Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 29, pp. 245-248

² *CWWL*, 1985, vol. 4, “Meeting to Speak the Word of God,” ch. 3, p. 272.

³ *Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 29, pp. 245-248

⁴ *Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 64, p. 575

⁵ *Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 29, pp. 245-248

⁶ *Truth Lessons, Level Three*, Volume 3, ln. 52, pp. 134-136

⁷ *Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 29, pp. 245-248

- 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. 3:16:⁸

- 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.⁹

⁸ *Life-study of Philipians*, msg. 41, pp. 361

⁹ *Life-study of John*, msg. 34, pp. 409-413

- 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.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

LETTING THE WORD OF CHRIST INHABIT US

In [Colossians 3:16] Paul goes on to say, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God." The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ. 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.

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). 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.

Colossians is focused on Christ as our Head and our life. The way for Him to exercise His headship and to minister His riches to us is through His word. Hence, the emphasis is on the word of Christ. Ephesians is concerned with the church as the Body of Christ. The way for us to live a normal church life is to be filled in our spirit unto all the fullness of God. Hence, the emphasis is the Spirit. In Ephesians both the Holy Spirit and our spirit are emphasized again and again. Even the Word is counted as the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). In Colossians the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once (1:8), and the human spirit is also mentioned once (2:5). In Ephesians the Word is for washing away our natural life (5:26) and fighting against the enemy (6:17), whereas in Colossians the Word is for revealing Christ (1:25-27) in His preeminence, centrality, and universality.

We have pointed out that in Ephesians the emphasis is on the Spirit, whereas in Colossians the emphasis is on the Word. Ephesians takes care of our living, but Colossians takes care of the revelation of Christ. Paul's concern in Colossians is for the revelation of Christ unto full knowledge. For this, we need the word of Christ.

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. 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. Furthermore, the word of Christ must dwell in us richly. The riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) are in His word. When such a rich word inhabits us, it must inhabit us richly. 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. 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.

I appreciate Paul's skill as a writer. He emphasizes, on the one hand, the peace of Christ and, on the other hand, the word of Christ. Some of us may think that as long as our spirit is living, everything is all right. Perhaps you have not realized the need for the peace of Christ to arbitrate within you and for the word of Christ to make home in your heart. If we let the peace of Christ work in us and the word of Christ dwell in us, we shall be proper Christians. Instead of our preference, we shall have Christ's arbitration. Instead of our opinion, concept, thought, and estimation, we shall have Christ's word.

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. They may study the Bible, but they do not allow the word of Christ to dwell in them. 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. It is crucial for us to let the word of Christ enter into us, dwell in us, and replace our concepts, opinions, and philosophies. 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.”

We cannot separate the word of Christ from His arbitration. The arbitrator settles a dispute by speaking a word. We need to bring our case to the arbitrator and listen to his word. This means that we need to allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts and the word of Christ to dwell in us. Then we shall be filled with singing and giving of thanks.

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. 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. We should teach and admonish not only in words, but also in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (*Life-study of Colossians*, msg. 29, pp. 245-248)

The believers, by being filled in spirit by the processed Triune God and letting the word of Christ dwell in them richly (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16), experience and enjoy the dispensing of the Divine Trinity in the divine transformation for the divine conformation. When we are filled in our spirit by the Spirit and let the word of Christ make home in us, we spontaneously live a life that matches the new man in grace and truth and the wife of Christ in love and light. 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.

**Speaking to One Another
in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs,
Singing and Psalming with Our Heart to the Lord,
Giving Thanks at All Times for All Things
in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ
to Our God and Father**

When we are filled in spirit by the processed Triune God and let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, we will speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with our heart to the Lord, giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father. After charging us to be filled in spirit (Eph. 5:18), Paul continues, saying, "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord" (v. 19). Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not only for singing and psalming but also for speaking to one another. Such speaking, singing, and psalming are not only the outflow of being filled in spirit but also the way to be filled in spirit. Psalms are long poems, hymns are shorter poems, and spiritual songs are poems that are still shorter. All are needed in order for us to be filled with the Lord and to overflow with Him in our Christian life.

Singing may be short. Psalming is always long. Sometimes by only singing we cannot express what is within us to praise the Lord; we need psalming to pour out our praise to the Lord adequately.

Verse 20 says, "Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father." We should give thanks to God the Father not only in good times but at all times, and not only for good things but for all things. Even in bad times we should give thanks to God our Father for all things. Furthermore, we should give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reality of the name of the Lord is His person. To be in the Lord's name is to be in His person, in Himself. This implies that we should be one with the Lord in giving thanks to God.

Colossians 3:16 says, "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." Here, the infilling of spiritual life that outflows in praising and singing is related to the word, but in Ephesians 5:18-20 the infilling of spiritual life is related to the Spirit. This indicates

that the word is the Spirit (John 6:63). A normal Christian life should be one that is filled with the word so that the Spirit may bubble over with praise and lauding melodies from within the believers.

According to Colossians 3:16, when the word of Christ dwells in us richly, we will teach and admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to God. Teaching, admonishing, and singing are 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. We should teach and admonish not only in words but also in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Verse 16 also indicates that when we are filled with the word of Christ, we should be filled with joy. If we receive the Lord's word yet have no joy, something must be wrong. When we receive the word of Christ, we actually receive the Spirit. Receiving the Spirit should stir us up and cause us to be joyful and to sing.

Verse 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." 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. 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. Because the Lord has saturated us and filled us, and because He has mingled Himself with us, making us one with Him, we can do all things in His name. Doing things in the Lord's name is to do things in Him. The name denotes the person. The Lord's person is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). Therefore, to do things in the Lord's name is to act in the Spirit.

When we come to the word of the Lord, many of us use only our mind to search the Scriptures. We do not sufficiently exercise our emotion to love the word of the Lord, nor do we strongly exercise our will to receive the word of the Lord. But if we exercise our whole being to take in the Lord's word, ultimately we will be filled, occupied, and saturated by the living word. Since the word is the embodiment of the Spirit and since the Spirit is the reality of Christ, we are automatically filled with Christ when we are filled with the word. Then whatever we do or say will be in the name of Christ. This is to live Christ. When we are saturated with the word of Christ through the Spirit, we automatically live Christ. (*Truth Lessons, Level Three, Volume 3*, ln. 52, pp. 134-136)

CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN US BY HIS WORD INHABITING US

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:8, 16-17a, 19b; 6:17b-18a; Col. 3:16; Phil. 2:16a; John 14:23; 15:4, 7

The verses printed above may be compared to the pieces of a puzzle. When we put the pieces together, we see a complete picture.

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! 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*, msg. 41, pp. 361)

To Let the Son's Instant Words Abide in Us

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. To let the Lord's instant words abide in us is quite demanding. The Son desires to spread His abiding in us. As He abides in us, He is always speaking. This speaking is the *rhema*, the instant word. He speaks mainly one word to us—no. However, at times His speaking is a requirement or a demand. How we need to love Him and keep His instant words! 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.

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...

In order for the Lord to abide in us, it is necessary to let His words abide in us. The only possible way for the Lord to be practical to us is by His words. By what means did we hear the gospel and receive the Lord as our Savior? It was by His words. When we received His word, we actually received the Lord Himself because the Lord is in His word and He Himself is the Word. According to the same principle, if we want to allow the Lord to abide in us, we must let His words abide in us. Now, since we have in our hands the Scriptures which are full of the Lord's words, we should not say that the Lord is far from us, that He is still mysterious, or that He is still so spiritual instead of being substantial. 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. 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. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 34, pp. 409-411)

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, p. 272.
3. *Truth Lessons, Level Three*, Volume 3, ln. 52.
4. *Life-study of Philippians*, msg. 41.
5. *Life-study of John*, msg. 34.