

The Book of Colossians

Lesson 5

Study Notes

The Preeminence of Christ in the Church

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Text: Colossians 1: 19-29.

Introduction: We have learned that Christ is preeminent in creation, for by Him all things consist; because all things were created by Him and for Him. In this lesson we are going to study the preeminence of Christ in redemption and His preeminence in the Church.

We have a Savior who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which he is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which he is not able to impart. In no situation of trouble and danger will the church find that there is a deficiency in him; in no enterprise to which she can put her hands will there be a lack of power in her great Head to enable her to accomplish what he calls her to. We may go to him in all our troubles, weaknesses temptations, and needs, and may be supplied from his fullness - just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to an ocean of pure water and drink.

Colossians 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

The term "pleased" means to be well pleased with; to take pleasure in; to be favorably inclined toward one. The term signifies God's _____ with Christ and His appropriation of all things under Him.

"That in Him should all fulness dwell" Paul here is establishing the fact that Christ is a manifestation of God, the Sovereign Creator, and the Head of the Church. The Gnostics distributed the divine powers among various aeons. They conceived of God as a pure spirit and denied that the Word had really become _____. They placed a vast, graded hierarchy of spirits between God and Christ. In the Book of Philippians, we see the emphasis that Christ _____ Himself and became a _____; He emptied Himself of the glory that He had with the Father. He didn't empty Himself of His deity, He was God when He came to this earth. The word "dwell" indicates _____ residence, not just a temporary visit. Only a divine person could create a world, be the Head of the church, and reconcile a world to God.

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

I. Reconciliation by Christ.

The word *reconcile* is the Greek word "apokatallasso" (ap-ok-at-al-las'-so) means to "reconcile complete; to reconcile back again; bring back to a former state of _____."

Note: Not once in the Bible is it ever said that God is _____ to man. God has no need to be reconciled to us; we need to be reconciled to Him. God's hands are outstretched to us in love and always has been. We are the one who have turned away. The hostility is always on man's side, not on

God's side. Religion is man _____ God; Christianity is God seeking and _____ man by the way of reconciliation.

A. The peace through the blood of His cross.

Calvary not only exhibited the greatest tragedy in man's dealings with God, but also displayed the greatest _____ in God's dealings with men. Reconciliation is toward _____; redemption is toward _____. God is saying to all men today, "I am reconciled to you. Now will you be reconciled to Me?" Christ is the chosen and sufficient agent in reconciliation; nothing else is needed. Divine harmony had been restored; all barriers and obstacles have been removed. It is always God who takes the initiative to _____ us to Himself.

When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus, it is always speaking of the atoning sacrifice of Himself, presented _____ by Himself on Calvary. When blood is shed on earth between men and women usually a feud begins that only results in more bloodshed. Jesus died a most shameful death at the hands of wicked men; but His death brings _____ and _____, and restores alliance where there has been enmity.

Reconciliation is seen here in two realms; things in earth, and things in heaven. Both heaven and earth have been defiled by sin. The sinful pride of Lucifer in heaven, and Adam and Eve on earth. There will be a new heaven and new earth; but in the new creation the only marks of sin that will be seen will be the marks of Calvary in the _____ and _____ of Jesus.

Colossians 1:21-22 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

B. The people of reconciliation.

Alienated means that we were estranged from God. We were shut out from _____ and intimacy with God. To be enemies meant that we were hostile and at war with God. _____ man, especially, cherishes many false, distorted, and wicked ideas about God.

Romans 1:28-32 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

A man is lost because he wants to be lost, because he is in _____ against God. Because the minds of men are blinded to God; therefore, there is open _____ and hostility toward God.

2Corinthians 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

C. The product of reconciliation.

Colossians 1:22 *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*

"The body of His flesh" is an explicit declaration that Christ suffered, not just in appearance, but He suffered in a _____. This directly countered one of the heresies of Gnosticism in Paul's day.

To present us holy is to made holy or made free from sin. Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness. Unblameable means "without blemish." It is a technical, sacrificial term and means "without _____, free from defects, and stainless in _____ and _____." That was the requirement of the sacrificial animal in the Old Testament. We cannot present perfection before God and God cannot accept anything less than perfection. We cannot meet the demands of a righteous God; but He is able to present us unblameable. He took our place and became sin for us to make us sinless.

2Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Unproveable means "unaccusable or unchargeable." God is the one who _____ us; who then can bring any kind of charge against us?

Romans 8:33-34 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

The persistence of reconciliation.

Colossians 1:23 *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

The word "if" here is not a _____ clause that is based on the future. The point here is that we have been reconciled, it is an accomplished _____. So, if you are a child of God you will continue in the faith grounded and settled; you will not move from the hope of the gospel which you have heard.

The word for "grounded" here signifies the _____ of a foundation. The word for "settled" stems from a word which means "to be seated." We are not only to take a firm stand on the hope of the gospel, but we are also to _____ down there.

"And be not moved away" means "not being continually shifted away." The church has a stable position and shall never be _____.

II. The Reconciled Church.

Colossians 1:24 *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

Paul links his sufferings with the sufferings of Christ and also with the sufferings of the _____, the body of Christ. To live for Christ may mean we are called upon to suffer, but even that is a privilege. He and we suffer together. One day all suffering will cease; as Christ will return to end all suffering.

Colossians 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;*

A. The dispensation.

The word "dispensation" means _____; it is a stewardship. "To fulfil the word of God" this was something that had been hidden in the Old Testament, but now God has declared that the gospel must go to the _____.

Colossian 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

B. The mystery

The "mystery" the word in the New Testament denotes a truth that cannot be discovered by _____ reasoning, but only by _____ revelation, regardless of whether it is hard to understand. Truth concerning the church was concealed in the Old Testament, but has been _____ only in the New Testament.

C. The mission.

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

The gospel is not what we preach, but it is whom we preach. We cannot preach the gospel without preaching Jesus Christ. The Church has to two-fold mission seen here.

1. We are to preach the gospel to every man.
2. We are to teach every man in all wisdom that they may grow in grace and be faithful members of the body of Christ.