

COLOSSIANS THREE, SIXTEEN

Intro: This verse comes in the practical section of Colossians. And it comes as the Apostle seems to be reaching a climax before speaking specifically to wives, husbands, etc.

The Colossians had been subjected to a desecrating of the Person of Christ. Paul is seeking to bring them back. This is very apparent in vv. 16, 17 of our chapter. The Lord is not to be set aside, nor just to be considered in all that we do. HE IS TO BE ALL IN ALL! Cf. 1:18.

There is also in Colossians a conflict between human wisdom (or philosophy) and the Word of God. Cf. the warning in 2:8. See Paul's prayer in 1:9. Note the nature of Paul's ministry in 1:25-29.

Therefore, as we come to our text we will appreciate it all the more if we know what has led up to it.

Note that we have, first of all,

I. A PRIMARY CONCERN (Col. 3:16a).

This is the only place in the Scriptures that this exact term is used: "the word of Christ."

It has two possible meanings, and we probably must consider them both.

- 1) Christ's own words to us.
- 2) The Word as it reveals Christ to us.

Without any doubt this is a verse showing us the unique place that the Lord Jesus Christ has in the Word.

Cf. the Word as His Word to us. Cf. John 14:6; 16:12-15. It is the Word which He speaks. Oh, that we would always consider it this way!

But it is all also about Him. Cf. Luke 24:27, 44 for the OT. What would you have of the Gospels if you removed the Lord Jesus out of them? Try taking all references to Christ out of the book of Acts, or out of the Epistles of the NT. Think how much you would have left of the book of the Revelation if you took the Lord Jesus Christ out. It is "the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ"!

"Study the Scriptures, get your ideas about Christ from

them, keep your soul full of them... (Nicholson, p. 24.)"

We can never be reminded too often that this Bible of ours is the Word of Christ to us and the Word about Christ for us. This is the key to understanding its wonderful message.

But what are we to do with it?

It is to dwell in us ! This means it is to be that which above everything else influences our lives. Paul was concerned not just about the outward profession of the Colossian church; he was concerned about the effect that the Word was having upon the lives of its people!

We should treasure it. "Richly"--abundantly. ^{fully, completely} There can never be too much of the Word. We are to be rich in our understanding and rich in our experience. We must have this if we do not have anything else. We are to be so filled with the Word that it influences our thoughts, our decisions, our actions--everything!

And this is what it means to be filled with the Spirit! Note that Eph. 5:18 is a parallel passage. And yet we practically never hear these two verses brought together.

But what does this lead to?

II. A GLORIOUS CONSEQUENCE (Col. 3:16b).

How strange that Paul should link the knowledge of the Word with music! And yet there is an obvious relationship.

The Word in your life will produce a joy in your heart that will very naturally be expressed in singing.

Notice that we have the following details in this verse:

- 1) Who can sing.
 - 2) Why we sing.
 - 3) What we sing.
 - 4) How we sing.
 - 5) To whom we sing.
- A. WHO CAN SING. PAUL IS TALKING TO BELIEVERS.
- B. Why we sing: "In all wisdom teaching and admonishing yourselves."

All that we know from the Word is to be applied in music as:

- 1) An opportunity to strengthen faith through teaching. What have you learned from what you sing?
- 2) An opportunity to warn, to correct, to change each other's lives from that which is contrary to His will.

Are these our objectives in singing?

C. What we sing.

1. "Psalms"--music with instrumental accompaniment, but undoubtedly it points to the Psalms of Israel.

The Psalms were born in experience, and contain marvelous revelations from God. We are not only to turn the Word into prayer, but we are to turn the Word into song.

2. "Hymns"--songs which are specifically designed to glorify and praise God.

"Psalms" are Jewish; "hymns" are Greek.

3. "Spiritual songs"--so-called for two reasons:
 - a. Because they have to do with spiritual truth--the truth of God's Word.
 - b. Because they have been composed by spiritual men--mature, godly, humble, men of the Word, etc. WHEN DID YOU EVER HEAR ANYONE ASK, WHO WROTE THAT MUSIC? This expression makes it very clear that it makes a great deal of difference to God as to who writes our music just as it makes a difference to Him as to who sings it!

D. How we sing: "singing with grace in your hearts."

The word "grace" may emphasize the fact that the singer is a believer, but it also is a word which is used in the NT for thanksgiving. In 1 Cor. 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," is GRACE be unto God . . .

Cf. also Eph. 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Cf. Psal. 100:4, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving . . ."

E. To whom we sing: "To the Lord." Some MSS read, to God.

When you sing, do you sing to Him? Do you know that He is listening? He knows whether you are paying any attention to the words, and whether or not you mean what you say!

Concl: What a verse! It starts with the Word--about Christ, and leads us to worship expressed in song!