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MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

CHRIST—THE CONSTITUENT OF THE NEW MAN

IV. HAVING PUT ON THE NEW MAN

In verse 10 Paul declares, “And having put on the new man, who is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.” To put on the new man is like putting on a new garment. The Greek word for new in this verse means young, new in time. This is different from the word used in Ephesians 4:24, which means new in nature, quality, or form.

The new man is of Christ. It is His Body, created in Him on the cross (Eph. 2:15-16). It is not individual, but corporate. According to the clear vision in Ephesians 2:15, the new man is a corporate entity. This is proved by the fact that it is created out of two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles. Furthermore, Ephesians 2:16 indicates that the new man created out of these collective peoples is the Body of Christ. Hence, the new man and the Body are synonymous terms and may be used interchangeably.

The fact that the new man is the Body and that the Body is the new man is a strong indication that the new man is not an individual entity, but a corporate entity. Therefore, it is a serious mistake for some versions of the Bible to speak of putting on the new self. The New American Standard Version makes this very error in Colossians 3:10 by adopting the rendering, “have put on the new self.” This is a very serious error. It goes beyond interpreting the Bible to actually changing it. The Greek word means man, not self. Thus, it is altogether wrong to talk about putting on the new self. According to Colossians 3:10, what we have put on is the new man, not the new self.

A. Being Renewed unto Full Knowledge according to the Image of Him Who Created Him

In Ephesians 2 we are told that the new man was created, but in Colossians 3:10 we are told that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. Although Ephesians and Colossians are sister books, what they say concerning the new man is not exactly the same. How can we say that, on the one hand, the new man is created and that, on the other hand, the new man is renewed? Because we who belong to the old creation were involved in the creation of the new man, he needs to be renewed. This renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase “unto full knowledge.” In our spirit the new man has already been created. Before the new man was created in our spirit in resurrection, we did not have the Spirit of God or the life of God within us. Although we had a spirit, our spirit did not contain the divine life. But at the time the new creation took place in our spirit in resurrection, the Holy Spirit with the divine life was added into our being. This

addition of the Spirit and the divine life to our spirit produced a new being, the new man. For this reason we can say that in our spirit the new man has been created.

However, there is still the need for renewing in our soul and even in our body. Our mind, which represents our soul, needs to be renewed. Eventually, when our body is transfigured, it also will be renewed. Therefore, our spirit has been regenerated, but our soul is being renewed. On the one hand, in our spirit the new man was created with new elements, the elements of the divine life and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, in our soul the new man is being renewed.

The problem with the believers in Colosse was not with the spirit, nor with the new creation. Because they had accepted various philosophies, their problem was in the mind. They were in error not with respect to the new creation, but with respect to the mind. Therefore, they were in need of the renewing unto full knowledge.

In 3:10 Paul says that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge “according to the image of Him who created him.” The image here refers to Christ, God’s Beloved, as the expression of God (1:15; Heb. 1:3). It was God the Creator who created the new man in Christ (Eph. 2:15).

In Ephesians 4:24 Paul says that the new man “according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Here there is no mention of the image. We are only told that the new man was created according to God Himself, whereas in Colossians 3:10 we see that the new man is being renewed according to the image of the One who created him. In Ephesians 4:24 the new man is created according to God, but in Colossians 3:10 the new man is being renewed according to the image of God. The renewing of the new man results in full knowledge, and this full knowledge is according to the image of God. In some of the foregoing messages we pointed out that the image in 1:15 refers to the expression of God and to the fullness of God. The image of God is His fullness and expression. This, of course, is Christ Himself.

I do not have the assurance that very many of us have been renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of God. Concerning this, we need much more growth. We are like the Colossians in that the new man has been created in our spirit, but our mind has not yet been renewed unto full knowledge. We need to be renewed in our mind unto full knowledge according to the expression of God, that is, according to Christ as God’s image. This means that we need a renewal in our mind according to what Christ is. This can take place only as we are renewed unto full knowledge.

In Colossians Paul uses the phrase “full knowledge” three times (1:10; 2:2; 3:10). The problem with the Colossians was that they had the wrong kind of knowledge. They had taken in philosophies that were not according to Christ. In 2:8 Paul speaks of philosophies that are according to the tradition of men and according to the elements of the world, but not

according to Christ. Now in 3:10 he speaks of full knowledge according to the image, the expression, the fullness, of God. Concerning the new man, our mind needs to be renewed unto such a full knowledge according to the Christ who is the expression of the invisible God. Our mind needs to be renewed to such an extent that we have a clear view of Christ as the image of God. Few Christians have a proper understanding of the Christ unveiled in the book of Colossians. Their minds have not been renewed unto such a full knowledge of Him. As a result, many Christians today have been misled, deluded, and defrauded, just as the Colossians were. The Colossians could be deluded because in their minds they did not have the full knowledge according to God's expression. The same is true of Christians today. Some have been carried away because in their minds they were not renewed unto full knowledge according to the all-inclusive Christ as the image of God.

In Ephesians we see that the new man was created in our spirit with the elements of the divine life and the Holy Spirit. These elements have been added into our being to produce a new creation. In Colossians, however, the new man is being renewed in our minds unto full knowledge according to Christ as the image of God. When our mind is filled with the knowledge of the all-inclusive Christ, our emotion will be influenced. This will cause us to have a greater appreciation of the Lord Jesus. For example, a child may have a greater appreciation for a velvet box than for the diamond ring in the box. In the child's mind there is no knowledge of the value of the diamond ring. But as the child grows, he will have a greater appreciation for the ring. Eventually, he will want to keep the ring and throw the box away.

Love is a matter of the emotion, and the emotion is related to the understanding we have in the mind. If we have little understanding of a certain thing, we shall not have much appreciation of it. This will make it impossible for us to love that thing. But when our mind concerning that thing is renewed, our emotion with its love will be renewed also. When the mind is renewed, the emotion is spontaneously renewed as well. Our experience confirms this. Both in spiritual experience and in human experience, the mind affects the emotion, and the emotion affects the will.

We need to be renewed in our mind in order to have a proper love for the Lord in our emotion. Many saints are cold toward the Lord because in their minds they do not have much knowledge of Him. The more we have the knowledge of the all-inclusive Christ, the more we shall appreciate Him and love Him. Although we still need a great deal more renewing, we nevertheless have a certain amount of knowledge of the Lord Jesus. This knowledge of Him causes us to love Him. Out of our love and appreciation for the Lord, we exercise our will to decide to be for Him, to follow Him, and to live Him, grow Him, and produce Him. We decide to live for Him and for His testimony. This decision comes out of the emotion, and the emotion is in turn influenced by the proper knowledge of Christ.

The central point of Paul's word to the Colossians concerns the renewing of the mind unto the full knowledge of Christ. The Colossians needed a full knowledge, not according to philosophy, Gnosticism, Judaistic observances, or heathen ordinances, but a full knowledge according to the image of God. As we have pointed out, this image is the wonderful,

glorious, all-inclusive Christ. We need a renewing that results in full knowledge according to such a Christ.

When I was a young man, I was captured by the dear Lord Jesus. The more my mind is renewed unto the proper knowledge of Him, the more I love Him. I can testify that, even though I am an elderly person, my love for Him is fresh. In fact, I love Him more today than ever before. As I speak of Him, a fire is burning within me. The renewing that has taken place in my mind unto full knowledge according to the image of God has created appreciation within me for the Lord. This causes me to love Him. When we have such a love for the Lord, we shall say, "Lord Jesus, I want to follow You at any cost. I am willing to pay any price, even the price of my life, to be one with You and be for You. Lord, I want to take You as my life and as my person. I want to live You, grow You, and produce You. Lord Jesus, I am here for You and for You alone."

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for Spanish speaking work
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- Pray for the enjoyment of reading Colossians.
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- Pray for Russian speaking saints for their needed shepherding from past co-workers.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: Colossians chapter 3 I:1~4, II:5~11, III-12~15, IV-16~17, V-18~25, VI-review, Life Study 27~45.
- YP Bible Reading this week: Colossians chapter 3
- Prayer meeting 7:30PM at Tien's house, 19070 Dagmar Dr., Saratoga, CA 95070.
- Bay Area Summer School of Truth will be held on July 24-29 at Alliance Redwood. South Bay YP pursuing program starts on 6/11. Please register ASAP via brother Tai.
- Blending activities (BBQ) with Palo Alto young people will be held on 6/25 from 10 am to 3 pm at Palo Alto Foothills Park. Parents, young people saints and friends are welcome to join the blending.