

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Propheying Message One : The Will of God concerning the All-inclusive, Extensive Christ

I. Overview:

God is a God of purpose; we need to know the purpose, His will, which is what God wants to do, is God's good pleasure, is His determination out of His purpose, is the mystery through His revelation in Christ, and His counsel of the way to accomplish. Colossians is a book concerning the will of God; which reveals what His great and eternal will is according to His desire and intention in many different stages of creation, redemption, the present age, the coming age, and in eternity. We need to be filled with the full knowledge of God's will, walking worthily of the Lord. We need to stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. The will of God for us is that we know the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, experience Him, and live Him as our life; Christ is everything in the will of God, Christ is the Firstborn of both the old and new creation, Christ is the centrality and universality, we should walk in Christ having our being in Him, also should estimate and evaluate everything according to Christ, and we need to be infused, saturated, and permeated with Him.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. State God is a God of purpose.

God has a will of His own pleasure. He created all things for His will that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose. The book of Revelation, which unveils God's universal administration, shows us the purpose of God. In eternity God planned a will. This will was hidden in Him; hence, it was a mystery. In His wisdom and prudence He has made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ.

B. Explain in the new creation Christ is everything.

Christ is the Firstborn from the dead; He is the first in resurrection. As such, He has the first place in the church as God's new creation. Christ is not only the Firstborn of the new creation but also the Head of the church, the Body. Moreover, He is the constituent of the Body. Hence, in the new creation, the church, Christ is everything.

Day 2 —

A. Expound what the will of God is in Colossians 1:9.

The will of God mentioned in Colossians 1:9 is not His will in small matters. It is not merely for us to know what school to go to, what house to buy, or whether or not to marry. These things are too minor. The will of God mentioned here is the eternal will of God, the great will of God. It is related not to the things in our daily life but to God's purpose, God's intention.

B. Why do we say needed all spiritual wisdom and understanding to know the will of God?

Spiritual wisdom and understanding are of the Spirit of God in our spirit. Wisdom is in our spirit for us to realize, sense, and perceive the spiritual things, and understanding is in our mind to interpret what we perceive. Christ is everything in the will of God. We must know this and realize this with spiritual wisdom and with our understanding in a clear, renewed mind.

Day 3 —

A. How can we have the full knowledge of God's eternal plan.

We all need to spend time to read the Scriptures, to meditate on the Lord's Word, and to pray concerning these matters until we are filled with the truth and with the full knowledge of God's eternal plan. When this happens, we will have wisdom in our spirit and heart and spiritual understanding in our spiritually enlightened and renewed mind.

B. Explain the way for Christ to increase in us.

After we have received the vision and revelation concerning Christ, we have to walk according to that vision and revelation of Christ. Thus we will walk worthily of the Lord and partake of the Lord more and more. This is to gain the real, subjective, and experiential knowledge of God, by which we grow with the increase of Christ.

Day 4 —

A. Explain the revelation concerning Christ as the all-inclusive and extensive in Colossians.

Colossians reveals that Christ is everything. In the new man there is room only for Christ; Christ is all and in all. This shows His all-inclusiveness. However, the fact that He is the Firstborn of all creation indicates His extensiveness. In the words of Ephesians 3, Christ is the breadth, length, height, and depth.

B. Expound what the significance of receiving Christ is in Colossians.

Receiving Christ can be compared to breathing. Just as breathing is a continual process, so our receiving of Christ should take place continually. Regrettably, however, a great many Christians have had only the initial receiving of Christ. They do not receive Him continuously. If we do not receive Christ continually, we shall not enjoy the full benefit of the Christ we have received initially.

Day 5 —

A. Explain that Christ is both the centre and the circumference of God's economy.

As the all-inclusive One, Christ is the centrality and universality of God. This expression was first used by Brother Nee in 1934. He pointed out from the book of Colossians that the all-inclusive Christ is the center and the circumference of God's purpose. Christ is both the centrality and universality of God's purpose. He is the hub and also the rim. In other words, Christ is all.

B. Expound what it spiritually means to let Christ live in us.

In the church life, God does not want us to be doing so much; He simply wants Christ to live in us and grow in us. If we have a vision of Galatians 2:20, we shall spontaneously cease from all my trying. If we give Him the ground, He will come in to be everything and to do everything. This is what it means to let Christ live in us.

Day 6 —

A. State in Colossians 2:4 Paul specifically refers to "persuasive speech."

Beware of eloquence; instead of being taken in by a speaker's eloquence, we should ask if there is reality in his speaking. When he was young, Brother Nee thought that a certain preacher's message was marvelous.

Nevertheless, Sister Barber still pointed out that the message was void of life and reality. From that time onward, Brother Nee no longer appreciated the empty speech of eloquent preachers.

B. What kind of result will it produce when we concentrate our entire being on Christ?

If we see this vision, we shall concentrate our entire being on the extensive Christ, who will then fill us and occupy us. Because we are filled with the extensive Christ, we shall have no need of Judaism, Gnosticism, mysticism, or asceticism. Our being will be occupied with the vast, unsearchably rich, extensive Christ. Spontaneously this Christ will come in to replace every aspect of our natural human life with Himself.

III. Conclusion:

After man fell and lost God, the culture takes the place as a substitute for God in his life. Christ's redemption not only saves us from many negative things, but also from our culture. We should not be out of our culture, but be reconciled to Christ and accept Him as the factor that makes our lives meaningful and purposeful. In Colossians, we talk about how receiving Christ can be compared to breathing. Just as breathing is a continual process, so our receiving of Christ should take place continually. When we keep breathing Him in, joining with Him, and remaining in the fellowship with Him, we will spontaneously live Christ out. We will be out of the culture, and our living Christ automatically replaces the culture. This is the revelation in the book of Colossians.