

March 3

Scriptures: Read Colossians 3

Key Verse: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

Overview

There are two ways of interpreting “the word of Christ”. The first is fairly straightforward: the word(s) which Christ spoke — His teaching. The other is a bit more complicated but no less probable: the “word” is the prevalent Greek concept “logos”, which referred to the divine essence imminent in the universe and present in the individual soul. Paul uses this concept but gives it teeth, as it were; he personalizes it and calls it, “the Logos of Christ” or “the Logos, which is Christ” (See John 1:1). But both interpretations apply. Both refer to the “substance” of Christian faith: Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and Christ is to “dwell in you richly...” The question is “How”?

Here’s how: “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...” Two things stand out here. One is the assumption of Paul that everyone in the church has a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of his brother and sister in Christ (see 1 Cor. 12:7). The other is a remarkable comment on the richness and depth of early Christian music. Their music was substantial — it was full of lyrical theology and literally taught the people.

This singing is to be done “with grace in your hearts”. It is to be characterized by beauty — a beauty which accompanies all things that are genuinely done “unto the Lord”.

A question we should ask whenever assessing the relative value of Christian teaching and music is not, “Do I like the style?” Your personal taste is not the issue. The question is: “Is Christ the substance of this teaching or music, and is it directed to the Lord?” If the answer is “Yes,” then sing with all your heart.

Prayer

We pray our key verse. Help us to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.