



Functions of the Word of God

October 7th, 2020

Building Up

Acts 20:32 — And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.

Jude 20 — But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

Romans 10:17 — So faith *comes* out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Colossians 3:16 — Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

Building Up

Furthermore, the word of God builds us up. As members of the church, the Body, we all need to be built up. Because we are peculiar, it is difficult for anyone to deal with us, much less to build us together. However, the word of God can touch us inwardly and make it possible for us to be built up in the church. Because we are peculiar in ourselves, we cannot be built up in this way unless the word of Christ inhabits us. Although the peace of Christ arbitrates within us, it is not the peace which builds us up. The peace keeps us in the proper situation for the building work to be done by God's word. Because it is the word of Christ which builds us up, I bear a

heavy burden to release God's word. The more the word of God is released among us, the more building up there will be.

In 20:32 we see the function of the word of God's grace. First, this word is able to build up the saints. To build up the saints requires the growth in the divine life, and the growth in the divine life needs the nourishment of the divine element and the edification and equipment with the divine knowledge. All these can be afforded only by the word of God's abundant grace, which is the Triune God Himself who went through all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension and who has been given to the saints for their enjoyment.

IV. LETTING THE WORD OF CHRIST INHABIT US

In verse 16 Paul goes on to say, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ. In His New Testament economy God speaks in the Son, and the Son speaks not only directly in the Gospels, but also through His members, the apostles and prophets, in Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation. All these may be considered as His word.

In this passage, the infilling of spiritual life that overflows in praising and singing is related to the Word, whereas in its parallel passage, Ephesians 5:18-20, the infilling of spiritual life is related to the Spirit. This indicates that the Word and the Spirit are identical (John 6:63b). A normal Christian life should be one that is filled with the Word so that the Spirit may bubble from within us in melodies of praise.

Colossians is focused on Christ as our Head and our life. The way for Him to exercise His headship and to minister His riches to us is through His word. Hence, the emphasis is on the word of Christ. Ephesians is concerned with the church as the Body of Christ. The way for us to live a normal church life is to be filled in our spirit unto all the fullness of God. Hence, the emphasis is the Spirit. In Ephesians both the Holy Spirit and our spirit are emphasized again and again. Even the Word is counted as the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). In Colossians the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once (1:8), and the human spirit is also mentioned once (2:5). In Ephesians the Word is for washing away our natural life (5:26) and fighting against the enemy (6:17),

whereas in Colossians the Word is for revealing Christ (1:25-27) in His preeminence, centrality, and universality.

We have pointed out that in Ephesians the emphasis is on the Spirit, whereas in Colossians the emphasis is on the Word. Ephesians takes care of our living, but Colossians takes care of the revelation of Christ. Paul's concern in Colossians is for the revelation of Christ unto full knowledge. For this, we need the word of Christ.

The word of Christ includes the entire New Testament. We need to be filled with this word. This means that we should allow the word of Christ to dwell in us, to inhabit us, to make home in us. The Greek word rendered dwell means to be in a house, to inhabit. The word of the Lord must have adequate room within us so that it may operate and minister the riches of Christ into our inner being. Furthermore, the word of Christ must dwell in us richly. The riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) are in His word. When such a rich word inhabits us, it must inhabit us richly. The word of Christ should have free course within us. We should not simply receive it and then confine it to a small area of our being. On the contrary, it should be given a free course to operate within us. In this way the word will inhabit us and make home in us.

References: (*Life-study of Acts*), (*Life-study of Colossians*)