

Talk It Over

Filled, Complete, Whole

(Week 3)

Because of this Mystery

SMALL TALK

1. What have you noticed about how messed up the world is? What people or forces were at work?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Colossians 1:19-29.** If the world is messed up, and there are wicked people and forces at work messing it up, how can we still say everything is under Christ's authority?
3. Where does Paul get his "energy" 1:29? What does he use this energy for?
4. What is the "mystery"? (1:26, 27) Is it still a mystery? (1:26)
5. Paul speaks of "Christ in you" (1:27) to help you become fully mature "in Christ" (1:28); how do you understand these two phrases?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Have you ever sensed "Christ in you", working through you with "energy", as he powerfully works in you (1:29)?

7. What “hope of glory” do you have? How or where do you need to set your focus and energy?

PRACTICE!

8. What else struck you from your personal “Training in the Word” through Colossians this week?

November 21, 2021

Filled, Complete, Whole (Week 3) Because Of This Mystery

How many of you agree with the following statement? Are you ready?

This world, as it is now, is messed up!

It is messed up. It doesn't take long to see that it is. From small things to large things. You don't have to travel far to see that the world is messed up! For instance, this is a video from my own backyard.

Show my home video of Tarantula Hawk.

- They get their name because adult female Tarantula hawks hunt tarantulas as food for their larvae.
- An adult female will paralyze a tarantula with its stinger, and then transport the spider back to its nest. Once there, the female lays an egg in the spider's abdomen, then covers the entrance of the burrow to trap the spider.
- Once the egg hatches, the larvae will feed on the still living spider for several weeks, avoiding vital organs to keep the spider alive until the larva fully pupates into a wasp.

I. MESSED UP

In this messed up world we have become so used to it that we have become confused by it. We are confused to think the way it is messed up is “normal” and so we think it is the way it is supposed to be. Just because it is “normal” does not mean it is supposed to be like this.

- Was it God who made the strong to prey on the weak?
- Was it God who caused cats to not only eat mice but to toy with them and torture them even when they are not hungry?

Some people turn away from God over questions like these, but more frequently over questions like...

- How could a loving God allow “such and so” to happen?
- How could he allow the pandemic? etc...

I believe we are too quick to call natural disasters an act of God.

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4, Jesus “rebuked” a storm. So, apparently, that storm was not an act of God, but something that deserved God’s rebuke! Something dark was at work behind that storm.

In Romans 8, we read that all of creation is groaning and waiting for its release from its bondage to frustration, death, and decay.

The Bible consistently presents us with the truth that our world is messed up because it is a fallen world. At the heart of the fallen world is rebellion, seen and unseen.

II. **CLEANED UP**

God reveals to us that he has a plan to redeem His creation. We are given prophecies of God’s completed plan. Here is one.

Isaiah 11:6–10 (NIV) The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra’s den, the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

I don’t think this is just poetic imagery. I think these are examples of what God's restored creation is going to look like when Jesus gets done with it. Jesus is Lord of all creation, and he is redeemer of all of creation.

We are just getting oriented in the larger biblical context as we continue in Paul’s letter to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:19–20 (NIV) For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

This is the trajectory of his good plan. **Jesus is Lord of ALL CREATION.**

Through Jesus “all things on earth and in heaven” will be reconciled to God. But what does that mean?

All things? All things on earth and heaven! This is describing what will be, and is still not yet now.

Earth and heaven (2 realms reconciled) There is a third realm not mentioned here but already mentioned in 1:13 the “domain of darkness.”

That third realm is Hell, and it will be populated by those who refused to be rescued. They wanted a life without God, and that is what they will receive.

As we keep reading in Colossians,

- Look for the description of what we **were** (alienated from God)
- Look for the description of what we **are now** (reconciled)
- Look for the description of what we **will be**. (holy, without blemish, and free from any accusation)

Colossians 1:21–23 (NIV) Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

What God did was powerful enough to break our formerly rebellious hearts, and cause us to respond. Which reminds me of an old story (perhaps you have heard it).

A man and his wife driving down the road in their car. The man was driving and his wife was sitting on her side by the window. She noticed a courting couple in a passing car. It set the thoughts running through her mind.

“Fred,” she said, “do you remember when we was courting?”

“Yep!” he said, “Sure do!”

“Do you remember how you would hold my hand?”

“Sure do!”

“Do you remember how close we used to sit when we went out in that old car of yours?”

“Yep! I remember.”

“Do you remember how you would put your one arm around me and drive with just one hand, Fred?”

“Sure do,” he said.

“Well,” she said, “how come we don’t sit like that no more?”

He said, “I ain’t moved!”

It wasn’t God who moved. We did. And yet, God moved to reconcile us. Reconciliation is available to those who respond to his great love!

Let’s look further into “this mystery.”

III. **MYSTERY**

Colossians 1:24–29 (NIV) ²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶ **the mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **this mystery**, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

What is the mystery? The main subject of this revealed mystery is Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Specifically, *Christ in you, the hope of glory.* (1:27)

There are two surprise revelations here:

1. As members of his body, they had his life within them!, and
2. SURPRISE!!!--mystery upon mystery--Christ (the Messiah) is King and deliverer of the Gentiles also!!

²⁷ *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **this mystery**, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

These are important truths in the context of the controversy **THEN** in Colossae and **NOW** in the continuing controversies today.

- The hope of our glory is not in Jewish practices.
- It is not in rituals of religion.
- It is not in other “mysteries” (or secrets) whatever these may have been for them, or might be presented to us.
- Our hope of glory is Christ. It is still a mystery to outsiders, it is revealed to us, yet it is not a secret, This GOOD NEWS is available to you!

Christ invites all of us who are messed up to come to him to be cleaned up!