

COLOSSIANS PART 9 – THE SPIRITUAL HEAD AND BODY OF CHRIST

Colossians 2:19

Tuesday Night Bible Study, March 20, 2012

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, **2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love**, and attaining to **all riches of the full assurance of understanding**, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of **the Father and of Christ**, **3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. **4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words**. **5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ**. **6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him**, **7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving**. **8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ**. **9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power**. **11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ 12 buried with Him in baptism in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead**. **13 And you being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh He has made alive together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross**. **15 Having disarmed principalities and powers He made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them in it**. **16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ**. **18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God**. **20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

--As we saw in the previous study, one of Paul's central points in Colossians is the profound transformation in a person's heart – the circumcision of the heart – that occurs when they turn to God in faith; yet in spite of this transformation, Paul gives repeated warnings in Colossians about spiritual dangers that everyone is susceptible to.

--Why are we still susceptible to spiritual dangers after our heart has been transformed through spiritual circumcision?

--in the words of Jesus, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**" ([Mark 14:38](#))

--the most important step to safeguard against spiritual dangers...

--in the words of [Colossians 2:19](#) – **"holding fast to the Head..."**

--"**...holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.**"

--in other words, the most important safeguard is staying close to God.

--scriptural concept of the Head and body of Christ...

--Scripture pictures God's children as having an intimate connection to God that is characterized by total dependence, like the connection of a body to it's Head; and God's children have an inter-dependent connection to each other, like different parts of the body connected to each other.

--illustration of strength and protection related to our dependence on each other through the body of Christ... in this picture these three people are holding onto each other so they don't get blown away by a 100 mph wind! Together they weigh more than the wind can lift.



--**Ephesians 4:15-16**: "...Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

--**Colossians 1:18, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

--when we follow our own will and lose touch with our Head – Christ – then our actions become contrary to the will of God and we end up hurting ourselves and others and could even go so far as to become the false teachers... it was particular false teachers that Colossians referred to as people "not holding fast to the Head." (Colossians 2:19)

--the essence of living under the headship of Christ is simply being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who is also called "the Spirit of Christ." (**Romans 8:9**)

--when God the Son emptied Himself and became a man, He lived a life that is the ultimate example of being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit – an abstract, mind-bending derivative of the relationship He had with the Holy Spirit and Father in the Godhead through eternity past!

--in "emptying" Himself (**Philippians 2:7**), God the Son seemed to stop functioning in His own divine powers, thus limiting Himself to a human body and relying solely on the Holy Spirit for supernatural power according to the will – the headship – of God the Father; and in this He brought Himself as close as possible to our human experience and gave us an example to follow.

--**1 Corinthians 11:3**: "...the head of Christ is God [the Father]."

--**1 Peter 2:21-22**: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps..."

--**Hebrews 2:14-16**: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might

destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

--**John 1:1-14**: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

--misc commentary about Jesus "emptying" Himself...

--excerpt from New Uger's Bible Dictionary about the Greek word "kenosis" which is translated "emptied" in reference to Christ: *Kenosis: A Greek word used in theology with reference to the self-denial of the Son of God in becoming incarnate and entering into His state of humiliation. This use of the term is based upon Philippians 2:7, where the phrase heauton 'ekenose, "emptied Himself," occurs. The same idea of self-deprivation, or the laying aside of something that Christ possessed as a divine person in His pre-existent state, finds expression in other places in the Scriptures. For example, in John 17:5 the Lord speaks of the glory that He had with the Father "before the world was." Paul says of Christ, "though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9). The profound and difficult question naturally raised is, In what sense did the Son of God lay aside His divine riches in becoming the God-man? Of what "glory" did He divest Himself? What are we to understand by the kenosis, or "emptying of Himself"? The question is inwoven with the mystery of the incarnation. And the inquiry soon leads to depths that are unfathomable because of the incomprehensibility of God and the inability of the human mind to conceive adequately the divine mode of existence. And yet, fidelity to the Scriptures and the proper demands of the intellect foster the attempt to penetrate the mystery as far as possible, even though the result may fall far short of the full solution.*

--quote from John Owen, the famous 17th century scholar: *The only singular, immediate act of the person of the Son on His human nature was the assumption of it into subsistence with Himself. The Holy Spirit is the immediate, peculiar, efficient cause of all external divine operations, and hence He is the immediate operator of all divine acts of the Son Himself, even on His own human nature; whatever the Son of God wrought in, by, or upon the human nature, He did it by the Holy Spirit.*

--While our sinful nature often interferes with our being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was sinless and lived in absolute 100% perfect step with the Holy Spirit! He did not miss a single step or a single thought the Holy Spirit wanted Him to have.

--the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism (**Luke 3:21-22**) elevated His daily life (that appeared fairly ordinary to most people) to a level of divine function that had not been seen in His life up to that point.

--and thus people said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (**John 6:42**)

--perhaps the reason Jesus was able to go through somewhat of a normal childhood was because His supernatural knowledge was limited to a gradual increase through the Holy Spirit, ultimately leading to the kind of supernatural knowledge He demonstrated in situations like that with the Samaritan woman at the well during His ministry years. (**John 4:1-26**)

--**Luke 2:52**: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

--Jesus' "increase in wisdom" as a child makes sense in light of His knowledge being limited at that time.

--after His baptism, Luke records: "Then Jesus, **being filled with the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil..." (**Luke 4:1-2**)

--Satan's first temptation of Jesus was for Him to make bread – "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." (**Luke 4:3**)

--Of course Jesus could make bread, since the entire universe was made through Him! But He would not do anything that the Holy Spirit did not lead and empower Him to do.

--In essence, Satan was trying to get Jesus to turn around and abandon His incarnation and the path to the cross and return to living in His divine nature... and likewise, in our lives, Satan tries to get us to abandon living in the Spirit and return to living in the sinful nature of our flesh! Satan wants to stand between us and God – he wants to take the place of God and be a false god to us.

--**Luke 4:14-15**: After His 40 days in the wilderness, "Then **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues."

--**John 8:28-30**: "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that **I do nothing of Myself**; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And **He who sent Me is with Me [through the Holy Spirit]**. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.'" As He spoke these words, many believed in Him."

--while preaching, Peter said, "**God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit** and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (**Acts 10:38-39**)

--**Ephesians 5:17-19**: "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit..."