
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

October 4, 2015

Complete in Christ

*“All the fullness of deity lives in Christ’s body.
And you have been filled by him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.”*
Colossians 2:9, 10 (Common English Bible)

John Leith, author and teacher of Reformed Theology, once commented to me that the single greatest threat to the church is amnesia – the church forgetting that she is complete in Christ. That comment was made to me nearly thirty years ago! With clarity and uncommon wisdom, Leith removed the clutter of the thousand reasons given for the decline of the church in the United States. Since his death, the church has continued on its downward trajectory, both in membership and worship attendance. If we are concerned about this current state of the church, as we ought to be, what should we be doing about it?

The apostle Paul offers insight in these few sentences: *“And you have been filled by him.”* Any vessel, any person, any heart that “is full” lacks for nothing; it is full. Paul teaches here that we have been filled with Christ – that Christ alone is sufficient for all our needs. Nothing more needs to be added. Every book in the New Testament announces this truth yet the church today often fails to offer it with authority and in a compelling manner. When people, whose emotional resources have been depleted, approach the church, it seems rare that the individual is directed to Christ and Christ alone. Physical needs may be addressed – which Jesus affirms is important – but asking them to lean into the arms of Christ is absent.

Once this truth is reclaimed – that we need nothing more than Christ to satisfy a heart that is desperate – it follows that we will draw our inspiration for daily life from his life. Guidance for our decisions, the pattern for our behavior and the manner in which we love one another will flow organically from our communion with Christ. As Christ continues to occupy our thoughts and heart, we become agents by which Christ’s continued presence and ministry is experienced in the world. Christ changes us as good mentors change for the positive those under their supervision.

What does this lesson from Paul mean for the church? What is primary, I believe, is that the church cannot offer what it lacks. I speak of a deep conviction that the testimony of the Bible is sure; that Christ can be trusted and with that trust comes spiritual power that is palpable. We begin with ourselves. We begin to fully recognize once again the Kingship of Christ who is the Head of the Church, to read the Bible and actually do what we are instructed to do – to live as we understand Christ calling us to live. One life changed is infectious. It can change the church.

Doug Hood