

#3 - LIVING MEANS CHRIST (Living From the Center)

When Living Means Christ, We Live in Communion with Him and Our Fellow Believers - 1:21; 2:21

- We no longer live unto ourselves
- Barriers contraceptive to His life...
 - ...self for self-ness, humanistic autonomy, self-interested relations, egocentric thinking

APPEALING TO THE CENTER - 2:1-4

Paul Appeals According to Their Condition - 2:1-2

- Inner realities consistent with God-Life
 - ..."encouragement": called alongside to strengthen
 - ..."persuasion of love": passion for oneness
 - ..."fellowship of the spirit": each is non-disposable, irreplaceable
 - ..."affection and compassion": meaningful expressions that bring warmth
- Objectives that tend to draw one another together

Union with Christ Is No Individual Ethic

- participatory (not entered into from a distance)
- heterocentric (not egocentric)

To Refuse to Be for Others Is to Miss the Center

- Self-interest is not the deepest place in us - 2:3
 - ...renounce self-determination to abide in God's determination
- Humility is the antidote to most all carnal "poisons" - 2:3-4
 - ...non-demandedness; submission; bowing to One Will
 - ...it goes low, not high
 - ...it puts others in the spotlight
- The test of Union Life? "Will we descend?" - 2:5

GOD AT THE CENTER - 2:5-11

Time and Eternity Form a Union in the Person of Jesus Christ

- The climax of God's covenant is revealed in Christ and His "Cross"
 - ...God's ultimate "No" to sin and separation
 - ...God's ultimate "Yes" to righteousness and union
- Revealing He is love in action; life for others
 - ...He voluntarily chooses self expenditure, not self acquisition - 2:6-7
 - ...He voluntarily chooses to pay the price so we may go free

The Truth of What It Means to Be the People of God

- Cooperative agents with the heart and mind of Christ
 - ...our oneness cannot be exploited for personal gain
 - ...the nature of union is sacramental: convey the nature of God
- Our oneness with God is not for display; it is to be "poured out"
 - ...the true Christian self is the "poured out" self
 - ...we pay the price so others go free

GREED OR GRACE ?

Eden (Greed)

lie of independence/self help
arrogance/pride
mind of natural man: self preservation
taking/seizing way of life
"My will" (self-determination)
...cast down (Satan)
...cast out (Adam)
= death as necessity (Ro 6:23)

Gethsemane (Grace)

dependence/derivation
humility
mind of Christ: self expenditure
emptying/poured out life
"Thy will" (God-determination)
...exalted (resurrection)
...exalted (Christian perspective)
= death as choice (Jo 10:18)

(We will only see and live as God sees and lives from Gethsemane!)