

MATURING IN CHRIST WITH ONE ANOTHER

READ Colossians 1:15-29

1. Paul “*strenuously contends*” for the Church to be presented “*fully mature in Christ*”(v28-29).
 - i. What comes to mind when you think of a person being “*mature in Christ*”?
 - ii. On a scale of 1-10 how “*mature in Christ*” would you consider yourself to be? (10 being fully)
 - iii. Why might Paul see it as being so important that the Church becomes “*fully mature in Christ*”?
What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks of **not** being “*mature in Christ*”?
2. The NIV’s translation of Paul’s teaching says that the provision of us being reconciled through Christ and presented as holy (v22) is conditional. It says it is only “*if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.*” (v23). The Revised Standard Version (RSV) also translates it this way saying “*provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard*”. Some other versions don’t have the “if clause” but translate verse 23 as being the start of a new sentence, where Paul is simply instructing the Church of the importance of continuing, and being firmly established, in the faith.
 - i. Which interpretation of the two do you feel most drawn to?
 - ii. Do you think what Jesus offers us is conditional on us **continuing** to walk in faith, firmly established or is it offered unconditionally, regardless of how we live?
3. Paul present the Colossian Church with 3 images of Jesus to help them to become mature in their understanding of who Jesus is so that “*in everything he might have the supremacy*” (v18).

A. THE SON OF THE FATHER (v15)

Paul says that Jesus is the “*The Son*” who is the “*image of the invisible God*” (v15). The idea that God reveals Himself in 3 persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is a difficult concept to grasp. What has helped you to try and understand the doctrine of the Trinity?

B. THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION (v15-17)

Paul says that all things were created **in** Jesus, **through** Jesus and **for** Jesus (v16) and **in Jesus** all things “hold together” (v17).

- i. What might make us doubt that Jesus is “holding everything together” in the world? What can help us to believe that He is?
- ii. Paul says that part of the things that Jesus has created “*in heaven and on earth*” included “*thrones, powers, rulers and authorities*” (v16). What are the implications of this in terms of how Christians should view demonic forces in the spiritual realm and human governments on earth?
- iii. In the light of Jesus’ original involvement in creation and His ongoing commitment to all He has made, how should we as followers of Jesus respond to
 - a. The ‘green agenda’ to care for the planet?
 - b. The ‘social agenda’ to care for those living in need on it?
 - c. The ‘spiritual agenda’ to make Jesus known to those still in the “*dominion of darkness*” (Col 1:13)?

C. THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH (v18)

- i. What is the role/responsibility of anyone who serves as the HEAD?
 - ii. What are the implications for us as the Church, because Jesus is our Head? How should we respond to Him?
4. Paul says that all of God’s fulness **dwelt in Jesus** (v19) and that by having faith in Jesus, **Christ is in us** (v27). Ponder that for a moment and consider what that means for us as we go about our daily business, where we may be trying to solve difficult problems, encounter challenging people, need guidance concerning the right path to take, are feeling lonely or are required to do something where we feel we are ‘out of our depth’.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

As we didn't have any group study last week you may like to also consider a couple of additional questions based on the previous week's reading from **Colossians 1:9-14**.

READ Colossians 1:9-14

1. Paul prays that the Church would be filled with the knowledge of God's Will "*through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives*" (v9) so that they may live God-pleasing, fruitful and knowledgeable lives (v10), be strengthened in His power to endure and be patient (v11) and to be joyful and thankful people (v12). What a great prayer to pray for one another!!
 - i. How does the Spirit communicate God's wisdom and understanding?
 - ii. How do we know/discern that it is the Spirit who is speaking and not another voice?
 - iii. What has the Lord been saying to you recently and how has He been saying it?

2. Paul talks of the Christians in Colossae having been brought into Jesus' "*kingdom of light*" through the forgiveness of their sin (v12), having been rescued from the "*dominion of darkness*" (v13).
 - i. What do you think Paul means by saying that people are in a "*dominion of darkness*" prior to becoming Christians? What happens to those who die whilst still being in that dominion?
 - ii. Are all non-Christians in that "*dominion of darkness*"? What about those non-Christians who are regular church goers, or do lots of good deeds in their local community, or are generous with their money to support international aid or express kindness in other ways towards other people? Are they also in that "*dominion of darkness*"? If so, what should the Church do in response? If not, why not?