

**“Christ Is All and In All”
Paul’s Call to Be Controlled by Christ
(Col. 3:15-17)**

Intro: Paul’s teaching in Colossians three is some of the most practical teaching of the NT about discipleship. In this chapter Paul exhorts disciples to experience a renewal in Christ according to His image. That means that they put off anything that Jesus wouldn’t do and that they put on His heart or attitudes in their daily lives.

As we do this we must understand the Christ-centered controls that enable us to live this renewed and Christ-like life. We’ve considered Paul’s call to be renewed in Christ; now let’s consider Paul’s call to be controlled by Christ.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:15-17)

In this brief but remarkable paragraph Paul gives us three controlling influences in our daily lives as Christians—Christ’s peace, Christ’s word, Christ’s name.

Controlled by the peace of Christ

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

The expression “peace of Christ” might suggest peace in more than one sense:

First there is the peace we have with God through the forgiveness of sins.

Second there is the inner peace that we having within ourselves because we know we are at peace with God.

Third there is a resulting peace with one another that comes from knowing that we all have been accepted by God.

To this peace we have been “called in one body”.

Christ’s peace has become for all of us a unifying factor. It is the object of our calling by the gospel. God has called us to peace (1 Cor. 7:15).

To it we have all been united into one body, the church.

We must let this peace rule in our hearts.

The expression “rule” translates an unusual Greek term meaning “to act as an umpire”. The figure seems to be taken from the Games. Here is the idea of control; when there is the possibility of peace or discord we instead yield to the overruling peace to which we have been called.

Thus, the whole verse suggests that the first control of disciple's life is the peace to which God has called Him. Instead of allowing differences and disagreements to cause problems with other believers, he yields to the control of Christ's peace. The control of Christ's peace keeps us harmonious. If Christians are to be controlled by Christ's peace, they are also to be...

Controlled by the word of Christ

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

The "word of Christ" is surely here what Christ has taught either personally or through His chosen apostles.

The expression "richly dwell" suggests the controlling influence of Christ's word in our lives.

The word "dwell" suggests the idea of having a permanent home in hearts.

The word "richly" suggests that the word is abundant in us, filling us with its truth.

Through the controlling influence of Christ's word we can be an effective source of blessing to one another.

In all wisdom teaching—The word of Christ gives us the wisdom to instruct each other.

Admonishing—The word of Christ gives us the wisdom to correct each other.

One way that we do this is through singing.

Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs suggests the kind of songs that will result in spiritual blessing.

We commonly use this text to discuss the kind of music that we should use in worship (vocal and not instrumental). Beautiful melodies may entertain, stimulate, or relax us, but they can never instruct us. Only words can do that.

We can see then that one of the goals of our singing together is not only to praise God but also to encourage each other.

So then, the controlling influence of Christ's peace keeps us harmonious; the controlling influence of Christ's word keeps us helpful.

Controlled by the name of Christ

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)

Paul searches for the most comprehensive expression of our spiritual activity—"whatever you do in word or deed", that is, everything we say and everything we do!

Do it "*in the name of Christ*".

To do something "in the name" of another is to act in their behalf and with their permission. It is the language of representation.

The "name of Christ" stands for all that He is and all that He has said and done. To do something "in the name of Christ" is to act

compatibly with the Lord's own command or permission. That's why preachers have often explained this verse with the expression "by the authority of". Ironically a lot of people do what they want and then try to give the Lord credit for it!

But it seems that Paul has more than this in mind. He has already emphasized the "word of Christ" as the controlled in influence in our teaching. Perhaps here the thought goes beyond this to cause to think about who is getting the glory for our teaching and actions.

There are times when it is tempting to become too self-focused even when doing good and right things. Here we need to submit to the third control which says that all that I say or do should be intended to bring glory to God and His Son. I am acting as their representative in my actions.

The control of Christ peace keeps us harmonious; the control of Christ's word keeps us helpful; the control of Christ's name keeps us humble.

But one might ask, on what basis should a Christian surrender control of His life to Christ? Why should we give up control and come under His control?

Gratitude enables control

It is one of the most remarkable features of this paragraph that Paul while talking about coming under Christ's control in every verse makes a reference to the gratitude that we should have while doing it (three verses in a row!) Surely Paul's repetition is important here.

We are able to give up control because of the gratitude that we have for Him. He gave Himself sacrificially and fully in our behalf. His actions should fill us with gratitude and cause us to willingly surrender to His love.

Conclusion: One of the most difficult things we do in life to trust the Lord enough to give up control of our lives to Him. But Paul suggests that when we do we will never regret it. In fact, we should be thankful that He is in charge of our lives and that we are not! For if He is in control, we can be sure that we have fulfilled the purpose for which we were saved—so that Christ is all and in all!