

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE WILL OF GOD—ONE, PERSON, ONE WAY, AND ONE GOAL**

Message One

Being Filled with the Full Knowledge of God's Will

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:9; 4:12

- I. God's will is God's wish; God's will is what He wants to do—Eph. 1:9.**
- II. God's good pleasure is of God's will; His good pleasure is embodied in His will, so His will comes first—v. 5.**
- III. God's will is His determination for the carrying out of His purpose—v. 11; 1 Cor. 1:1.**
- IV. God is a God of purpose, having a will of His own pleasure, and He created all things for His will that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:9:**
 - A. God's will is His heart's desire, His mingling with man, and the fulfillment of His eternal plan—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 5:17.
 - B. The will of God is to obtain a Body for Christ to be His fullness, His expression—Rom. 12:2, 5; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23.
- V. Colossians is a book concerning God's will—1:9; 4:12:**
 - A. The will of God mentioned in this book is not His will in small matters—it is the eternal will of God, the great will of God.
 - B. Colossians reveals what God's will is according to His desire and intention in the whole universe, in creation, in redemption, in the coming age, and in eternity.
- VI. We need to be filled with the full knowledge of God's will—Col. 1:9:**
 - A. God's will in Colossians 1:9 is His will regarding His eternal purpose, regarding His economy concerning Christ—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11.
 - B. To have the full knowledge of God's will is to have the revelation of God's plan so that we may know what God plans to do in the universe—Rev. 4:11:
 1. God's plan is to make Christ everything in the divine economy—Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:15-18; 3:10-11.
 2. The revelation of God's plan opens the way for us to have more experience of Christ—2:16-17; 3:4, 15-16.
 - C. The will of God for us is that we know the all-inclusive Christ, experience Him, and live Him as our life—1:9, 15-18; 3:4.
 - D. Walking worthily of the Lord issues from having the full knowledge of God's will; such a walk is a walk in which we live Christ—1:10; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- VII. We need to stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God—Col. 4:12.**

Message Two

One Person

(1)

Christ as the All-inclusive, Extensive, Preeminent One

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:9, 12, 15-18, 27; 2:2, 8-9, 16-17

- I. **The will of God is in Christ, concentrated in Him, and for Christ; Christ is everything in the will of God—1:9.**
- II. **The Christ unveiled in Colossians is the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent One, the centrality and universality of God's economy—vv. 15-18, 27; 2:16-17; 3:4, 10-11:**
 - A. Colossians reveals the all-inclusive Christ—the One who is God, man, and the reality of every positive thing in the universe—2:9, 16-17.
 - B. For Christ to be the Firstborn of both the original creation and the new creation means that He is both all-inclusive and extensive—1:15, 18:
 1. The extensive Christ is the Christ who is more vast than the universe and who is everything to us—Eph. 3:18.
 2. Christ, the Savior in whom we believe, is limitless and inexhaustible; since He is without limitation, the revelation concerning Him must also be without limit—vv. 2-5, 8.
 - C. Christ is the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in everything—Col. 1:18:
 1. Both in the old creation and the new creation, both in the universe and in the church, Christ occupies the first place, the place of preeminence—vv. 15, 18.
 2. If we have a vision of the preeminence of Christ, our living and our church life will be revolutionized, for we will realize that in all things Christ must have the first place—cf. Rev. 2:4.
 - D. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the centrality and universality, the center and circumference, of God's economy—Col. 1:15-27; Eph. 1:10:
 1. In God's economy Christ is everything; God wants Christ and Christ alone—the wonderful, preeminent, all-inclusive Christ, who is all in all—Matt. 17:5; Col. 3:10-11.
 2. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the center of God's economy; God's dispensing is altogether related to Christ and focused on Him—Eph. 3:17a.
 3. God's intention in His economy is to work the wonderful, all-inclusive, extensive Christ into our being as our life and our everything that we may become the corporate expression of the Triune God—Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11.
- III. **The will of God is that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ be our portion—1:9, 12:**
 - A. In 1:9 God's will refers to Christ; the will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living the all-inclusive, extensive Christ.
 - B. God's will is that we know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, be saturated with Christ, and have Christ become our life and person—3:4.

Message Three

One Person

(2)

The Indwelling Christ as Our Hope, Life, Person, Constituent, and Peace

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11, 15

I. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ dwells in us as our hope of glory—Col. 1:27:

- A. We worship the enthroned Christ in the heavens, but we experience, enjoy, and partake of the indwelling Christ in our spirit; we are one with Him in a very subjective way—3:1; 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The Christ who indwells us is not a small, limited Christ but the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—the One who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, the Head of the Body, and the embodiment of the fullness of God—Col. 1:15-16, 18-19.

II. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is our life—Col. 3:4:

- A. The expression *our life* is a strong indication that we are to experience the all-inclusive Christ, the One who is the reality of every positive thing—2:16-17.
- B. The extensive Christ has become our life; universally, He is extensive, but in our personal experience, He is our life, our being.
- C. Because Christ is our life, all He has and all He has attained and obtained become subjective to us—Rom. 8:34, 10.

III. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the unique constituent of the one new man—Col. 3:10-11:

- A. The content of the church as the new man is Christ alone; in the new man there is room only for Christ, for He is everyone and in everyone.
- B. In the church as the new man we are in Christ, through Christ, and unto Christ, and we subsist in Christ to be God's expression in Christ—1:16-17.
- C. God's ultimate goal in His economy is to gain the new man constituted with the all-inclusive, extensive Christ—Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11.

IV. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is our peace—1:20; 3:15:

- A. For Christ to reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things; this was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ—1:20.
- B. The peace of Christ is Christ Himself—3:15:
 - 1. By this peace the two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, are one new man, and this peace has become part of the gospel—Eph. 2:14-18.
 - 2. We should let this peace arbitrate in our hearts for the Body life—Col. 3:15.

Message Four

One Way—the Cross of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:20-22; 2:11-15

- I. **Christ, the unique person, is versus all things, and the cross, the unique way, is versus all ways—Col. 1:20.**
- II. **The one person—Christ—is the center of the universe, and the one way—the cross—is the center of God’s government—1 Cor. 2:2; 1:17-18, 23; Gal. 6:14:**
 - A. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.
 - B. By the cross God has dealt with all the negative things in the universe, and He is still governing everything through the cross—Eph. 2:14-16.
- III. **The book of Colossians teaches us that in the church life Christ must be all in all; everything that is not Christ must go to the cross—1:18; 3:10-11:**
 - A. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing.
 - B. If we avoid the cross, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23.
- IV. **“Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens”—Col. 1:20:**
 - A. Because of the rebellion of Satan, the archangel, and the angels who followed, the heavens were contaminated; therefore, not only things on the earth but also things in the heavens needed to be reconciled to God—v. 20b.
 - B. As sinners, we needed redemption, and as enemies, we needed reconciliation—vv. 14, 21-22.
- V. **“Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross”—2:14:**
 - A. *Ordinances* refers to the ordinances of the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship—Eph. 2:15.
 - B. *Nailing it to the cross* means to abolish the law of commandments in ordinances.
- VI. **“Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it”—Col. 2:15:**
 - A. Activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic rulers and authorities were brought to a focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God’s eternal, central, and unique way—vv. 14-15:
 1. By His crucifixion Christ labored to accomplish redemption, and God the Father was working to judge sin and nail the law to the cross—v. 14.
 2. At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in close to God and Christ; thus, a warfare was raging at the cross.
 - B. God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame—v. 15.

Message Five

One Goal—the Church as the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:15; 4:15-16

I. Christ is the Head of the Body, the church—Col. 1:18a:

- A. We must see that the church is the Body of Christ, which is an entity constituted with the Triune God and His chosen and redeemed ones—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6.
- B. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church; if there were no Body, the church would make so sense and have no meaning—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; 1:2.
- C. It is crucial for us to realize that Christ is the Head and that we are the members of His Body—Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16:
 - 1. To live in the Body is to live corporately with the members under the Head.
 - 2. To live the Body life, we must be under the Head and take the Head as our life, the principle object, and the center of our whole being—Col. 1:18; 2:19.
 - 3. The first principle of living in the Body of Christ is to obey the authority of the Head—Eph. 4:15:
 - a. Christ is the Head of the Body, and life can flow freely only when He is in full control—v. 16.
 - b. The Body's only duty toward the Head is obedience and submission without any opinion, idea, or proposal—John 21:20-22; Acts 13:1-4a.

II. The Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19:

- A. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Eph. 4:16.
- B. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way—3:16-17a.
 - 1. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 2. The more God is added to us, the more growth He gives—Eph. 4:15-16.

III. In the one Body of Christ we were called to the peace of Christ, which is Christ Himself—Col. 3:15:

- A. By Christ's abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances, that is, His slaying the enmity, and by His creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all the believers—Eph. 2:15.
- B. For the Body life we should let the peace of Christ decide all things in our heart in our relationship with the members of His Body—Col. 3:15.

IV. As members of the Body, we need to have the consciousness of the Body and have a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:25-26; Rom. 12:15:

- A. Like Paul, we should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling; this is most necessary for our living the Body life—Phil. 1:8.
- B. Whatever we do involves the Body; thus, in all that we do, we should care for the Body, taking the Body as the rule in our mind, thoughts, words, and actions—1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2 Cor. 8:21.

V. The unique Body of Christ is expressed in many localities as the local churches—Col. 4:15-16; Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11:

- A. The one Body is the one church of God, manifested in many localities as many local churches—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- B. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a certain locality—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32b, 17; 12:12-13, 20, 27.