

Colossians: Christ Over All
The Culture of a Healthy Church
Colossians 3:16-17
Sunday, February 17, 2019

Introduction

Culture is a powerful thing. When we first arrive in a new culture the distinctions of that culture may be very pronounced, but the longer we stay in a culture the less pronounced the distinctions become. Over time we tend to take on the characteristics of our culture, for better or worse.

Different countries, regions and cities have different cultures and church cultures vary as well. Every local gathering of believers has its own culture – and that culture has an impact. It can impact the way we relate to God and the way we relate to other people – for better or worse.

With that in mind we should desire and work to have a culture in our church that is Biblical and that honors God. In Colossians 3 Paul helps us see a couple of ways that God calls us to live together as His people.

In A Healthy Church the Message of Christ is Central (3:16)- *As a church we should strive to have a culture where the Word of God is honored and constantly shared between people.*

- **Dwell Richly** - Paul uses this word *dwell* to convey the idea of letting something come in and live among us. We are to let the Word of Christ live with us, to dwell among us fully or completely (richly).
- **Word of Christ** – This is Paul’s way of speaking of the message about Christ and by extension His message of salvation (Colossians 1:25-28). We recognize that the entire Bible points to Jesus and is a means of describing God’s plan of salvation through Him.
- **The Word of Christ dwells richly among us as we teach one another**
 - The Scriptures have a lot to say about the public teaching of the Word of God, but that’s not primarily what’s in view here. Paul is calling all believers to let the Word of Christ live among us by teaching one another the truths of God and the Gospel.
 - This teaching may happen in formal ways, but it will most often happen informally through daily conversations and interactions.
 - As a church we should desire to have a culture in which we are constantly speaking the Word of God and the truths of the Gospel to one another, thereby teaching one another.

- **The Word of Christ dwells richly among us as we admonish one another**
 - When we teach we are telling someone the truth about Jesus and the Gospel. When we admonish we are warning someone who may be wandering from the truth. As believers we called to warn or admonish those who are straying from the truth (Hebrews 3:12-13; Colossians 1:28-29; James 5:19-20).
 - Admonition is often difficult but it essential to the health of the body of Christ. As a church we should strive to have a culture where we speak the truth to one another in love.
 - **Our teaching and admonishing is to be carried out in all wisdom** - In the Bible wisdom usually refers to the ability to take truth and apply it to life. Our teaching and admonishing is carried out as we apply the Scriptures to life (Colossians 1:9-10).
 - **The Word of Christ dwells richly among us as we sing with and to one another**
 - In this verse singing is being directed to God and to one another. (Ephesians 5:18-19).
 - **Singing is commended and commanded throughout the Bible** We are all supposed to sing
 - **Singing is a means of giving thanks and praise to God** – God is worshipped through our singing
 - **Singing is a means of teaching and admonishing one another** Our singing is a means of instructing and serving one another
 - **There are many different kinds of songs that we should sing** – Paul mentions several different kinds of songs that we should sing. While there are a variety of kinds of songs, the most important thing is that our songs are true and that they are used for the praise of God and the benefit of others.
- In a Healthy Church the Name of Christ is Supreme (3:17) –** *As a church we should strive to have a culture that exalts the name and reputation of Christ above all else*
- The phrase *word or deed* refers to what we say and to what we do. Everything we say and everything we do should be done in the name of Jesus, or for the sake of His reputation and fame.