Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting
Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: September 20, 2009

Having Been Made Complete... To Be Completed

by Dan Trygg

"...in Him you have been made complete..." **Col. 2:10 NASB**

"Of this church I became a minister... to make full the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been made evident to His saints, ...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, ...Whom we proclaim, reminding every person and teaching every person in all wisdom, in order that we might present every person complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."
Col. 1:25-29 NASB

The proximity of these two passages makes it easier to notice the recurrence of the word "complete" in both texts. I have reversed the order in which these verses occur to clarify a logical point, to be addressed in a few moments. Before going there, however, if you were to read them in the order that they *actually* occur in Colossians (the reverse of what we have above), you might assume that the completeness which Paul was striving to bring about in 1:25-29 has been established by 2:10, ..end of story. When you read the entire context, however, that does not seem to fit, either. The problem, the source of confusion, lies with the limitations of our English translation. **The kinds of "completeness" alluded to in these two passages are *entirely different***, though they are related to one another.

In Col. 2:10, it says that in Jesus we *have been made* "complete". The Greek word used here is a form of the word, pleroō ("play-rah-o"), which means "to fill, to make full, to fully supply, to fulfill (as in 'to bring about', or 'to bring to completion')". **The particular form of the word in this verse emphasizes action that has taken place in the past with ongoing results**, i.e., "you have been filled (and are still full)", or, "you have been fully-supplied (and are still fully-supplied)", or, "you have been brought to completion (and are still completed)". Which definition we are to understand as the one Paul intended must be understood by the context. **In the immediate context following 2:10, the emphasis is upon what *has happened* to us because we are "in Christ".** Christ is described as the "head (source, origin) of all rule and authority". The thrust of this statement is that **Jesus is a *source* of supply, an *origin* of power and ability.** After making this general statement, Paul describes how it came to be that *we* "have been made full" in Christ.

In Christ, we were circumcised with a non-physical circumcision, a "putting off" or "setting free from" the body of the flesh. How? "In the circumcision of Christ". What? How can Christ's circumcision affect me?

Paul goes on, *without explanation*, to say that **we were separated from our past lives and identity, buried together-with Christ**, "…having been buried together-with Him ('co-buried') in baptism…"

The passage says **we were also resurrected to a new life and identity in Jesus.** "… in which also you were raised together-with Him ('co-raised')…".

How did this happen? Not by anything *we* did. Rather, **we trusted in *God* to act**. We believed He would work in us. In fact, Paul states it this way, "God was the One arousing Jesus out from the dead ones; …and *we* ourselves *were dead* in our transgressions and the uncircumcision of our flesh. By means of faith in the inworking of God, *He made us alive* together with Him ('co-quickened together with Him'), having forgiven-by-grace to us all the transgressions, and wiping off the inscription consisting of charges against us, which was opposed to us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross. Disarming the rulers and the authorities, He openly displayed them, triumphing over them in Himself" (2:11-15). Did you catch all of that? **We were spiritually dead. God made us alive in Christ.** In order to bring that about, **He forgave us and removed *every* charge or accusation against us. Satan has no basis to attack us any more!**

Wow! That is a lot that was accomplished in Christ on our behalf! **So, how are we to understand the word, pleroō? *Our own experience* indicates that we are *not* "complete", in the sense of being a finished product, fully mature, or without need to grow**, so probably "complete" is not the best translation, at least not without some further qualification. When I read Paul's description of what was done for me "in Jesus", …much of which I was totally unaware, since it took place without my conscious involvement…, **the definition that makes most sense to me in the context is that I *have been* fully supplied** (and am *still* fully supplied). It appears that *His life in my place* has much more incredible, far-reaching ramifications than I ever thought possible. It seems to have covered all the areas that might hinder my relationship with God. **At the heart of it all is the message that somehow I was put into Jesus so that His actions have had an effect on me.** My uncleanness has been removed (symbolized by the spiritual circumcision). My fleshly nature has also been put away from me in this same symbolic act. I can no longer use the excuse that God does not find me acceptable, or that I am just a fallen human being, bound to keep sinning. No. In