

MESSAGE MINDER

October 31, 2010

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment--that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

Ephesians 1:9-10



All Things Summed Up in Christ

By Jonathan Stone

What is the meaning of life? For whatever reason this question has been universally stupefying. In every age and in every culture people get stuck on this question. For us the answer is given quite clearly in Scripture. That is, all things are being summed up in Christ (Eph 1:9-10).

Sin brought corruption into the world, which means life became fragmented. The word corruption literally means to tear apart. But through Jesus God is putting all things back together again, making all things new (see Rev 21:5), just like all things were made through Him in the beginning (see John 1:3). So, we see that this epic story called life begins and ends with Jesus. Indeed, He is "...the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13).

So, God has and will sum up all of life in Christ, a theme clearly seen in Scripture. Salvation is summed up in Christ (Gal 2:20; Acts 4:12), the promises of Abraham are summed up in Christ (Gal 3:29), the Law is summed up in Christ (Matt 5:17), the prophecies of Scripture have been summed up in Christ (Luke 4:21), the rule of God has been summed up in Christ (Col 2:15), all revelation is summed up in Christ (John 1:1-5, 14), the cleansing of all things is summed up in Christ (Heb 9:11-28), the future of all things is summed up in Christ (Rom 8:19-22), the judgment of God is summed up in Christ (Rom 2:16), the blessings of God are summed up in Christ (Eph 1:3), the glory of God is summed up in Christ (John 1:14), and all things are made alive in Christ (1 Cor 15:22), to name a few.

This is more than an idea. The purpose of all of life is found in Christ. We wrestle with questions such as *What is God's will for my life?*, *What should I do for a living?*, and *Who should I marry?* While God's direction is necessary for these and other questions in life, it should be noted that no matter which paths we choose in relation to our education, careers, family, and other decisions, all things grow out of and grow into the same thing, Jesus Christ.

While the world agonizes over such decisions we can rest in the realization that our choices are ultimately secure in the person of Jesus Christ. No matter which paths we choose we know that as long as we are found in Him we have reached the highest calling in life, we have found the meaning of life.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

A Vocational Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the gifts You have given me, especially for life, love, family and friends. I know that every good gift comes from you, and for that I am grateful. Help me to know myself better and to know my talents, as I pray, study and decide on my life's work. Help me to see and understand the path You open for me. Help me choose a life's work which will be in response to my potential and your love for me. In whatever area You invite me to follow You into I pray that you would give me a generous heart to respond to your challenging call and the strength to follow You wherever You lead me. Amen.

Finding Our Calling

The word *vocation* comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means “to call.” It is also the word from which we get the English word *voices*. Figuring out one’s calling and choosing a vocation is a process of listening to all the “voices” that are “calling.” That includes listening to both inner and outer voices. The inner voices help us answer questions such as, *What makes me happy? What makes me fulfilled? What could I sit around and do for hours on end? What do I feel like I’m good at doing?*

However, the external voices in our life help us clarify all of these voices. Others around us help us identify our gifts. They also help us understand what things are most needed. Often the people around us can recognize the value and usefulness of our gifts more quickly than we do. The community around us recognizes our gifts and calls out to them. When multiple people begin to identify a certain gift in our life we should pay attention! It is there that the world’s deep need and our deep joy are about to meet.

Where our deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet, we hear a further call.

Frederick Buechner

