



Patristics and Christian Learning with Dr. Jordan Wood

Lecture 9: The Word Incarnate in All Things: Maximus the Confessor's Vision of the World

Outline:

The Word Incarnate in All Things: Maximus the Confessor's Vision of the World

- “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”
- There is tension between the revelation of Divine wisdom in Christ and suspicion of human wisdom as a result of the fact that the world crucified that Christ.
- There are layers of paradoxical dimensions embedded into the gospel itself.
- Education is participation in the great divine pedagogy which creation is as it unfolds.
- Education is getting beyond curiosity into the depths of things where you will find Christ within (also within yourself).
- Maximus the Confessor's Biographical Information
 - Lived from 580 – 662 AD.
 - He dies a confessor (not quite a martyr, but as one who is tortured).
 - Maximus was not a leader in the church, he was a monk. He was so impressive that everyone cared what he thought.
 - He is considered one the greatest theologians in Christian history. He is one of the most brilliant.
- Maximus the Confessor's Vision of the World
 - The mystery of his incarnation which is still being born in everything and in every time. That mystery isn't just a vague presence, it is that God the Word is personally presence in and as everything (similar to St. Justin Martyr's sowing Logos).
 - Christ is in all things, and what he wishes to accomplish is his own incarnation in those things.
 - The mystery of his incarnation for Maximus is the same thing that has been achieved in the middle of history in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth.
 - The beginning and end of all creation emerged in the middle of creation (time/history and space).
 - Colossians 1:15-21: Christ is called the beginning of all creation.



- In the middle of concrete finite space and time appeared the very beginning and end, the very logos through which all things were made appeared as the person of Jesus of Nazareth.
- This is what even all things are tending towards.
- The entire Cosmos is stitched together as if it were only one single human being.
- You become perfect as the limb of Christ's body that only you can be.
- In Christ, divine and human wisdom are one reality.
- The mystery of the incarnation contains the potential of you to understand scripture's truth, and the potential to understand all creatures. And then the one who knows the power of the resurrection will know the purpose toward which God has created and established all things.
- The idea that that Word's own death somehow reveals the principles of creation.
- The pedagogy theme: When the perfection comes, what is partial is annulled. The perfection of creation will be a face to face encounter between God and the world. That face to face is where we are all headed. This is the raising and perfection of persons.
 - This world is the world where God became an infant, the world has been born and needs to be reared as an infant.
 - This whole creation is one long instruction and pedagogy.
 - **All of creation is like an education, and that through being educated creation occurs.**
 - **When we participate in teaching/learning, when we are students and teacher all of this is a participation in God's being our Father. His goal in creation is nothing less than the adoption of children into his family.**
- The hope inspired by Maximus's vision:
 - We can learn that there is no such thing as properly receiving the traditions.
 - You can't actually receive the tradition without seeking to creatively extend that tradition. There is no passive reception of the truth. You have to actively seek in order to passively receive.
 - "Blessed are those who scrutinize His testimonies, they seek him out with all their heart (Psalms)." The letter kills and the spirit gives life.
 - There is no such thing as a purely passive reception of any tradition. This means a continual searching out of God everywhere in the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the traditions.
 - Receiving is a beautiful cycle of constant searching out and understanding.



- **The preeminent task of a Christian teacher is to guide his or her students in training their eyes to see Christ in all things.**