

# Perfect In Christ Jesus

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**Bible Text:** Colossians 1:28

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Colossians 1:28,

“Christ, Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Draw your attention to this verse. In the first chapter in Colossians that we've considered recently, Paul's intention in writing and presenting the believer's position in Christ is to demonstrate to his hearers, to demonstrate to those Colossians just where they are, where they are in Christ, what God has done for them in saving them and delivering them from everything which is earthly, everything which is temporal, everything which is passive, everything which is of the flesh, which is of the here and the now. And that God has brought them in Christ, he brought them into Christ, into that which is heavenly, that which is eternal, that which is everlasting, of the Spirit, that which is in that world which has no end, that which is in the heavens.

So he opens his epistle to the Colossians in order to counter that which has come in at Colossae, by pointing the hearers to their position in Christ, just where they are in him in the heavens. In so doing, he declares unto them the all-sufficiency of Christ, the pre-eminence of Christ, the completeness of Christ, that they have everything in Christ and that outside of Christ, they need nothing, that they lack nothing, that Christ is everything to the child of God, that they need look in no other place for anything, no other place for any wisdom, strength, guidance, teaching. All is in Christ, all begins in Christ, continues in Christ, ends in Christ. The child of God is in Christ and remains in Christ. Christ is all-sufficient.

So Paul opens this epistle by reminding the hearers of this and he does this in order to counter those problems that had come in amongst the Colossians. Here was a church, here was an assembly, a company of people who sadly, as with many and as with many in our own day, and as we can so easily be, this people had been sadly deceived and spoilt by philosophy, by vain deceit, by the traditions of men and the rudiments of the world. They drifted away from Christ and only Christ towards other things. They had begun to add to Christ; they had begun to think that Christ was not entirely sufficient. Yes, they believed they needed Christ and his salvation but they thought that they should

also have this, or they thought that they should also not have the other. They thought that they should also do this or not do the other.

So they had become beguiled. They were beguiled and they gazed that it dropped from heaven, it had dropped from looking upon Christ alone and had dropped down to the earth beneath to the flesh and things of the flesh and the things of time. It is this fact that the people had become beguiled and had turned from knowing that everything they needed and everything they were is in Christ. It is this fact that lies behind Paul's introduction to the epistle and was behind what he writes in chapter 1 and what he goes on to write in chapter 2.

For Paul will have things otherwise. The Spirit of God will have things otherwise and, indeed, we would have things otherwise. We would have it otherwise and turning aside from Christ. Paul would have his hearers to be in Christ and to find that Christ is all.

So here in verse 28, Paul emphasizes three things with regards to every man to whom he preaches: he preaches Christ warning every man, he teaches every man in all wisdom in order that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. As he preaches Christ, warning every man, teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. How does he do this? Does he do it in his own strength? Is he preaching of Christ in his own strength? No, the basis upon which he does this in verse 29, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

Paul was the preacher perhaps, Paul was him who many heard preach the gospel. Paul was the one who writes to the Colossians here but he's just the messenger. He's just the laborer. He strives, yes, but it's according to Christ's working and God's working who worked in Paul and by his epistle, mightily.

Let's briefly look at Paul's upcoming arguments in chapters 2 and 3 as he continues his epistle by which he warns, by which he teaches and through which, ultimately, he presents every believer perfect in Christ Jesus. By which all who are outside of Christ, even those who think they are in Christ yet aren't, ultimately, resting on their own wills, efforts or works of salvation. By which all who are outside of Christ are warned of the danger they're in.

Here Paul preaches, warning every man. He preaches, warning every man and was sent to preach to warn every man that except you are found in Christ, you are lost. You are in great danger. You are in great peril. You may think that you live and yet, really, you live a life that is dead. You may think that your life will go on forever but your life is finite. You are mortal. The days of your life are numbered. Man lives but seventy years or a little more if God is pleased to give him endurance and then he's cut off and he's taken out of time, out of this world, out of those things in the flesh which he can see and taste and handle and he's taken into another world, taken into eternity and then whether he's heeded the warning or turned from it, he will have to stand before his Maker and give an account.

If you're outside of Christ, you're in great danger and Paul was sent to warn every man by preaching Christ and preaching the consequence of being out of Christ, of the danger that every man is found in if he's not in Christ and if he knows nothing of Christ's salvation. I warn you this day: if you do not know Christ and what it is to be in Christ and to be washed in his blood and saved by his salvation, to be redeemed by him upon the cross, to be washed by his blood from your sins, that you remain yet in your sins, that you remain yet in the deadness of sins and trespasses in sins, that you remain yet under condemnation and the wrath of God abides upon you. An eternity in hell awaits for either you are in Christ and saved by him alone or you are not.

Be warned, for Paul preached this warning to every man and this warning applies to every man for there is no perfection outside of Christ. If we are to stand before God on that day of judgment when we come before him, when our life is taken away and we come to stand before him on the brink of eternity, we must have perfection. We must be righteous. We must be spotless, without sin, that our deeds and our works might be judged and there might not be one work or one deed which we have ever committed in our lifetime by which we might be judged. We must have a clean copybook. We must have a clean record. There must be not a single blemish which God in perfect justice can point to and declare that thou art guilty.

Yet the sad reality is that outside of Christ, by nature, we are all guilty. We are all entirely guilty. Not only is there a blemish, but there is not a spot that is without blemish. Not only are we guilty, but we are guilty through-and-through. Not only do we have sins in our record, but we are entirely sinful. We have a multitude of sins with which we come to stand before our Maker. Not only are we not right in our hearts but we are sin itself. We are corrupt in our very being and we come before our Maker on that day if we are not in Christ, if we know nothing of his saving grace, we come before our Maker on that day utterly condemned, entirely guilty, in complete condemnation and the pronouncement of judgment upon us in that state will be guilty. Guilty. Take him away. Bind him up. Hands and feet. Cast him into everlasting fire. Send him away into outer torment where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Yes, that's where we are by nature. Abiding under condemnation. Abiding under the wrath of God. For outside of Christ, outside of him and his life, there is nothing but eternal death and eternal judgment. Outside of the one who is eternal life, there is nothing but death. So Paul preached and so Paul warned every man of their state before God outside of Christ.

Be warned this day. Hear this day. Be warned. You need Christ or else you die. For except God in the power of the gospel preach the gospel to you this day, except God come in the gospel and reveal Christ the Savior of sinners unto you and in you and except he make you a partaker of his life, of his salvation, of his righteousness, then that's where you remain. Dead. Outside. Lost forever.

But God in grace has a people whom he warns, people to whom he sends the gospel. A people to whom he sends a preacher of the gospel, a preacher of Christ. God has a people to whom he is pleased to send the sound of his gospel, to send the sound of Christ and him crucified. A people to whom he sends a preacher who warns that people and warns them of their condition and of their state by nature. A people to whom he sends a preacher to warn and to point away from condemnation, away from judgment, away from the wrath to come. To point a people to him in whom is life. To him in whom is salvation. To him in whom there is peace and reconciliation. He sends a preacher to warn and to teach. To teach every man to whom that preacher is sent. To teach them of Christ. To teach them of him in whom there is salvation. Not just for the present but for eternity. Not just for now but forevermore. Not just salvation from the trials and the troubles that we find in this world. Not just salvation from temporary things. From polity, from illness, from troubles but salvation from those things which are eternal. Those things which concern the soul. Those things which last forever. Salvation from sin. Salvation from death. Salvation from judgment. Salvation from our sins, from our judgment. Salvation.

So he sends a preacher like Paul who warns and who teaches and in teaching of Christ, he brings those who are given an ear to hear. He brings those who are found in Christ, who are taught in Christ. They are brought to know that they are perfect in Christ and that there is perfection to be found. There really is perfection to be found. There is righteousness to be found. There is salvation to be found and that it is found in a person. It's not found in us. It's not found in our efforts. It's not found in our reason or in our wisdom but it is found in Christ and in Christ alone.

So Paul preaches Christ and he preaches Christ alone, that every man who is found in Christ might be found perfect in Christ Jesus. Have you heard? Do you know? Are you in him? For this must be experienced. It must be a reality. It must be a reality of which you are certain, of which I am certain. It is one thing to be warned with the outer ear, it is one thing to be taught of Christ with the natural mind and the natural understanding. It is one thing to hear the gospel with the ear by nature but it is another thing to have the heart opened and to have the understanding opened, that we really understand who Christ is and we really hear with the heart and we really are given faith to see and to hear and we really know what it is to be found in Christ and to be in Christ and to know who he is and what he has done for us. Not just what he's done for sinners but what he's done for this sinner. What he's done for this sinner. What he's done for me.

What has he done for you? What do you know of what Christ has done for you? Do you know whether he came to die in your place for you? Yes, our profession must be real. We must experience Christ. We must know him. We must be taught in all wisdom that we may be perfect in Christ. The mere profession of Christ won't do. A mere profession with our lips and our tongues won't do. It's not good enough. It won't do now and it won't do on that day when we come to stand before our Maker, before Christ. Merely standing before him and saying, "Lord, Lord, I've done this and I've said this. I've gone here and I've gone there. I went to church every Sunday morning. I heard these things said. I read the Bible. I did these good things for others." A mere profession won't do. "Lord, Lord," won't do. "Me, me," won't do.

We must know that he is ours and that his grace has been shown unto us and that his blood was shed for us and that his blood has washed us and that our sins have been washed and that he is our Savior and that we have been taught of him not just with the ear but in all wisdom. Not in man's wisdom. Not in the wisdom of this world but in God's wisdom. In all wisdom which comes from above. We must have faith. We must have Christ. We must have Christ. We must be in Christ and he must be in us. He must be Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Are you in Christ this day? Is he your hope? Is he your perfection? Is he your salvation? Are you in Christ? Are you? For only those in Christ will receive such a warning. Paul preached, he warned every man, he warned them of their state by nature. He warned them that they were dead before God. That they were guilty sinners who needed an answer for their sins. Who, left to themselves, would stand before God in filthy rags. That their works and righteousnesses would not do. That they needed an answer outside of themselves to make them just before God. That they needed to be washed from their sins. That they needed to be righteous. That they needed to be perfect.

He warned every man of that need and he taught every man what God had done in Christ to make a people perfect. To wash a people from their sins. To make them righteous before God. To make them just. But there is only one people who will heed such a warning. There is only one people who will receive such teaching. Many hear it with the outer ear. Many will reject it. Many will go away. Some will take it in an outer profession. Some will think it applies to them when really there has been no change in the heart and when they still have a stony and a cold heart. They think of the things of God when they come into the meeting. They think perhaps of the things of God for five minutes every day when they utter a prayer or read a few verses in the Bible but the rest of their affections, the rest of their thoughts and their affections and their passions and their strength is spent on the things which concern the flesh, the things which their flesh seeks after, the lusts and the desires of this world and they have a mere profession and it won't do.

But there are those who do receive the warning. Have you been warned? Do you hear? There are those who do. There are those who have been warned and they heed the warning. And on hearing where they are by nature, they fall to the ground, they fall before the Lord and they cry out. It matters to them. It matters to them where they are before God. It's not a mere thing that they turn on, on a Sunday. It's not a mere thing that they may speak about in the company of other professing believers. It's not just a subject, an interest, which they turn to at times and then they turn to their other interests at other times. It's not a mere interest that they talk about when they are, as it were, in the club that they attend on a Sunday and then they go to their golf club on a Monday and their football club on a Tuesday and a whatever other interest and club and things that take up their thoughts and attentions on other days. It's not something that they merely talk about with great interest when they're in the company of the religious. But those who are warned of God of the state of their soul before God, take the warning. Not just in the mind but in the heart.

I say to you again: has this warning penetrated not just your head but your heart? Have you fallen on your knees before God knowing that you need him? Knowing that you need your sins to be washed? Knowing that if they're not, you are in peril and you are in danger? Well, my friend, heed the warning. For unless you have that blood washing you and unless you are washed by the blood of Jesus Christ, not just that you claim it, not just that you think it's yours but unless the Spirit of God has taken that blood, unless he's come unto you in power and he's opened your ears to hear and he's opened that hard heart of yours and he's taken that blood and he's sprinkled it upon your heart and in your conscience and you can say that you know that Christ is your Savior, you can say that you know that he died in your place, you can say that you know that your troubled conscience has been soothed and that blood has brought peace, unless you can say that, then you remain in a lost condition and the warning is still sounding.

But there are those who hear. There are those who know what it is to be warned and they come before their Maker and they cry out for mercy and they hear an answer. They hear the teaching and they gladly receive the teaching and they gladly hear of Christ the Savior and they gladly hear of what he did to save and they gladly embrace him who loved them and gave himself for them. Yes, there are those who receive the warning. There are those who receive the teaching and these are those who Paul and any preacher of the gospel, may present perfect before God in Christ Jesus.

So Paul warns, he teaches, that he may present and to this end, in chapter 2, and as he goes on in the epistle, he goes on to emphasize again a number of the truths which he set before us in chapter 1. He reminds us again that the fullness of God is found in Christ. In verse 3 and verse 9 of chapter 2, he says, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Verse 9, "For in him," in Christ, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He reminds his hearers, again, that he preaches unto them that having "therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." And he brings these reminders again of the same things he set before them in chapter 1, in order for this cause, in order to address those things of which he will bring before them of the dangers in which they stand if they turn from Christ and only Christ and the sufficiency of Christ.

In verse 8, he warns them, he said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For here was a people who had begun in Christ. Here was a people who had heard the warnings of the gospel, who had heard the teaching of Christ and his salvation, who fled from the wrath to come and fled into that refuge which is Christ. Fled into the arms of the one who died for them. The one who died for his own. The one who gave his life that his people might not die but have everlasting life in him.

Yet in the meeting at Colossae, there are those who would come in to beguile them and spoil them with philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions of men and the rudiments of the world and they turned them from Christ unto something else. So Paul writes to warn them of the dangers they face. Elsewhere in chapter 2, he says other things, he warns them. Verse 18, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men?”

He warns them of the results of turning from Christ and after the deceptions which they are led into. This is why in verse 28, this is the reason, why he preaches Christ, why he warns, teaches, in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. For the way that they would be kept from such deceits, from such philosophy, from such deceptions is to be reminded of where they are in Christ. Only in Christ. Always in Christ. Sufficient in Christ. Hence Paul’s warnings. In so doing, with Paul preaching such a message, we also are warned. We also are warned of the danger of being both outside of Christ and of the danger of turning from Christ. In any way. In any shape. Or in any form. For everything is in Christ.

So Paul has warned all men. Now he teaches every man in all wisdom. Having so warned them, he then strengthens his argument by teaching us clearly where we are in Christ, where we are in him as a result of his work. How complete this work is. How finished the work of Christ is. Here we see the wisdom of God presented to us, the wisdom of Christ. Paul teaches every man in all wisdom. As it says in 1 Corinthians 1:30 of Christ, that Christ “is made unto us wisdom.” Christ is the wisdom of God. And to teach every man in all wisdom is to teach every man Christ. To preach Christ. To preach the wisdom of God in Christ.

The wisdom of God. As 1 Corinthians 1:30 teaches us that “he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” Here is the wisdom of God in Christ: righteousness, sanctification, redemption. All God’s people righteousness is found in Christ and nowhere else. All their sanctification is found in Christ and nowhere else. And all their redemption is found in Christ and nowhere else.

So in chapter 2, Paul reminds them of these things to counter these deceptions which have come in, to counter the temptations to turn away from this wisdom in Christ, for his completeness. To turn away in some way from his righteousness. To turn away in some way from his sanctification. To turn away from his redemption. He reminds them of various facts. In verses 10 and 11, he tells them that they “are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power.” They are complete in Christ for in him “also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” They are, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us,

and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Here Paul teaches his hearers all those who are found in Christ, all those who are believers, all those who are in Christ, he teaches them the wisdom which is in Christ. He teaches them that he alone is their righteousness, their sanctification and redemption and he does this by reminding them that in Christ they have been circumcised with the circumcision without hands, that circumcision of the flesh, that taking off the body of sins in Christ in his death. That they've died with Christ. That they were buried with Christ. That they rose with Christ. And in so doing, that they have been delivered from all that was against them for not only did they die in Christ and rise in him, but Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against them, which was contrary to them and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. In so doing, he spoiled principalities and powers and he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

When Christ died he died completely and he did everything to save his people. His people died in him. They were buried with him. They rose in him. They were delivered by him from all that was against them. From all that was against them. Their sins were taken away through that circumcision of the flesh. Their sin was cut off and the handwriting of ordinances, that law which condemned them, was taken out of the way. It was satisfied completely. There was not a single charge which could be laid against them which could ever be brought back against them. It was nailed to his cross and taken away. And in so doing, rising from the dead, triumphant in his salvation of his own, Christ spoiled principalities and powers. He took away everything that Satan and his army, his legions of devils, of spirits, could lay against the child of God. He spoiled every principality and power which was set against his people, Christ's people.

He made a show of these powers openly. He triumphed over them for not only did he take this people out of their sight, out of their clutches for that law which Satan, the accuser, knew inside out, which he was happy to bring in condemnation against every child of God, which he would bring with his accusations against them to bring them down, to bring them low, to seek to crush them and to take their strength and their confidence away, Christ made a show of them openly. He triumphed over the accuser. He triumphed over him because he took that very law which the accuser would take and he nailed it to his cross and he took the law itself out of sight.

Not only have Christ's people died in Christ, not only did their sins become dead by God in Christ, not only were their sins washed away by his blood when he shed his blood upon the tree, not only were they buried with him when he was laid in the grave, not only did they rise in him when he rose triumphant on the third day, but that law which once condemned them, that law which would once have laid them in the grave and kept them in the grave had been taken away. There was nothing to keep them in the grave.

So they rose and rose in Christ. Their mighty conqueror. Their mighty victor. Their mighty Savior. They rose victorious and he triumphed over principalities and powers and they triumphed in him for there is nothing to condemn. They died. They were



circumcised. Died, buried, rose again and delivered. All who are in Christ. If you are in Christ, then you, we, died, buried, rose and have been delivered all in Christ and none other.

Christ did this for his own but outside of Christ, outside of Christ, that burial, that debt still remains. Outside of Christ that condemnation of that law still hangs over your head. Outside of Christ be warned, there is still the condemnation. But Christ died for his own and they died in Christ. They died in him and they rose in him. This is what God did for his own. It's what God does to save. You can't make this happen. It's what God did. He died and he rose again. We died when he died and we rise when he rose. It's in what he did and note that Paul connects the two things: the same people who died in Christ, rose in Christ. The same who died, rose. Then all who died in him, all rise in him. All who have died with him are all saved by him.

Then how can you say that Christ died for all men when all men do not rise? If Christ died for all, if his blood was shed for all, then all will rise in him and all will be saved by him. But we know that not all rise and not all are saved but those who are Christ's, those who are given faith to live. Yet, here Paul reminds us that all who died also rose. Then he died for his own and his own alone and he died for everyone whom he would save and everyone for whom he died, everyone whom he would save, did die and they did rise and they have been delivered.

Was that you? Was that you? For all God's people have been circumcised in him. They have died in him. They have risen in him. They have been delivered by him. Was that you? Then how on earth, if that's you, if that's what he did for you, if that's how complete his salvation is, how on earth can you return to carnal things and carnal ways? To adding something to these ways that the Colossians turned to?

So Paul teaches them of these things. He teaches them to this end: that he might present his hearers perfect in Christ Jesus. Perfect. This is the end of this teaching, or chapter 3 is the end. But, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Your life is hid with Christ in God.

This is the end of this teaching that we might be brought to see that we are risen in Christ. If he is our Savior, if we died in him, that we are risen in him. That he is our all, in all. Paul preaches, he warns, he teaches that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To bring them to see in every greater clarity, every more perfectly, what they already are. What they already are. That they already are perfect in Christ Jesus. Not that they need to do something to become perfect but that they already are perfect in Christ Jesus. Paul here isn't trying to perfect his hearers but to perfect their knowledge of what God has already done for them in Christ and to have them walk in the light of that. To demonstrate to them, to teach them with all heavenly wisdom that they are perfect in him. That they are alive in him. Risen in him. That they are perfect in Christ Jesus. That he is their all-in-all. That he is perfect and so are they. That this one who was conceived in

Mary, that holy thing, that perfect thing that was born a babe in Bethlehem, perfect. That never sinned. That was separate from sinners, holy. That man who lived on earth that never once sinned. That perfect Lamb of God who died, who took upon him the sins of his own that he might take away their sins, that he might swallow up the wrath of God against those sins and put their sins away and then rise. Having taken those sins away that he might present that people perfect. That not only is he perfect but so are they for he took their sins away and they are found in him and he is their righteousness. He is their perfection and they are perfect in him. Not one day but now. Now.

So Paul writes. So Paul teaches. So he warns. He teaches in all wisdom that he may present every man perfect for if we are risen in Christ, if we're without sin, that sin which brings death, if we're without sin, if we are risen, then we cannot be with sin for sin brings death and sin keeps us dead. But those who are risen from the dead are no longer dead. If no longer dead, they must be without sin. If without sin, then they must be righteous. If they are righteous, then they are in Christ for he is righteousness. If they are in Christ, then they are perfect for he is perfection. He is their righteousness and their perfection.

Do you hear that? All you who believe in Christ, do you really hear that who are in Christ? That all those in him are perfect. Perfect. Perfect in Christ Jesus. Then what can you add to such perfection? How can it be better? How can you add anything to the fullness of God? How can you add anything to that which is already full? How can you add anything to that which is already complete? What of our pathetic works? Our effort? Our strivings? Force? Wills? Opinions? Judgments? What of anything of our doing can be added to, can improve upon that which is already complete and already full? What can we do? What can we turn to? What can we add to Christ who is complete? Who is perfect? What can we add to his complete and his perfect work?

O friends, hear this wisdom, hear this warning: nothing can be added to Christ. Nothing can be added to grace. If you add anything, God will leave you to yourself without anything. You either have Christ this day and only Christ or you have nothing. Whatever the appearance of will worship, whatever the appearance of many in the flesh, many who are religious, who touch not, taste not, handle not, many who turn to this way and to that way, whatever the appearance, anything which is not Christ and Christ alone is nothing. It is less than nothing and it will damn. It will damn you and yourself for eternity. But Christ is all. He is complete. He is all-sufficient. He is all our needs. Christ is life. He alone is righteousness. He alone is perfection. He is all our need. He is all. He is all-in-all.

Do you hear me? He is all. Yes, that's the gospel. That's the gospel and that gospel today, this morning, this hour, that gospel warns and teaches every man in all wisdom that Christ alone is our salvation. That Christ alone is the only Savior. And all who are in him, every man who is in Christ Jesus, is perfect. In Christ Jesus, perfect.

Praise God. Amen.

