

EXPOSITORY TEACHING ON THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

MESSAGE TEN: OUR SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION: Last week, “Christ, the mystery of God.”

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 2:6-15

- ❖ “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

1. GROWING IN CHRIST

- ❖ Colossians 2:6, “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

“Therefore”—in conclusion to what Paul wrote above.

“As you received Christ Jesus the Lord,”

- The emphasis in our day is to receive Christ Jesus as “Savior.” But the emphasis of the Bible is to receive Christ as the “Lord.”
- **C. H. Spurgeon:** “It is interesting to notice that the Apostles preached the Lordship of Christ. The word Savior occurs only twice in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 5:31, 13:23). On the other hand it is amazing to notice the title “Lord” is mentioned 92 times; “Lord Jesus” 13 times; and “The Lord Jesus Christ” 6 times in the same book.”
- “Savior” saves; “Lord” rules. Many want Jesus as their “Savior”, not as their “Lord”
- Did you receive “Christ” as your “Savior” or “Savior” and “Lord”? Is He the King and Lord of your personal life, family life, church life and work life?

“so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

So, walk in Him: Literally, “In Him be continually walking.” The following participles explain what it means to walk in Christ.

Four things mentioned:

- i. **Rooted in Him:** Get firmly established in the person Christ. (perfect tense)
- ii. **Built Up in Him:** Building our life in the person Christ. (continuous tense)
- iii. **Established in the Faith:** Becoming firm in the Faith in Christ (continuous tense)
- iv. **Abounding in Thanksgiving:** Six times in this short epistle Paul emphasizes on “thankfulness” (1:3, 12; 2:7, 3:15, 16; 4:2).
 - Paul doesn’t just mention about “thanksgiving”; he writes, “overflowing with thanksgiving.”
 - Cultivating a heart overflowing with thanksgiving to God is essential to our growth and maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - **Warren Wiersbe:** “A thankful spirit is a mark of Christian maturity. When a believer is abounding in thanksgiving, he is really making progress.”

Caution:

- a. **Observe:** “as you received Christ Jesus the Lord” and “just as you were taught.” The believers heard the true gospel and the apostolic doctrine.
 - The kind of gospel you heard and the teachings you learn determines your growth in Christ.
 - b. If you don’t get well rooted in Christ and grow, you will fall away.
- ❖ **Luke 8:13,** “And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.”

2. HOLDING ON TO CHRIST

- ❖ **Colossians 2:8,** “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

“See to it” — “Be careful” or “watchful”

“See to it that no one takes you *captive*” — in the bondage of error

“by *philosophy* and *empty deceit*” —

- Not all philosophy is wrong, but only deceitful philosophy. Deception appears to be true outside with lie hidden inside.
- The false teachers in Colossae were claiming to have secret/mysterious/superior knowledge beyond the knowledge of Christ.
- This philosophy is human opinions not based on the truth of Christ.

“according to *human tradition*”

- Not all traditions are wrong, but only the traditions that are against the teachings of Christ.

“according to the *elemental spirits of the world*,”

- Influence of demonic forces.

“and not according to *Christ*.”

- Not according to the person, work, and teachings of Christ.
- All false and deceptive teachings are either beyond and contrary to the Scripture or distort the true
- **Caution:** If you are not well grounded in the truth of the Holy Scripture, you are vulnerable to deceptions and lies.

Robert H. Schuller (1926): “I contend that his unfulfilled need for self-esteem underlies every act ...over and over again that the core of man's sin is not his depravity but a ‘lack of self-dignity’. Self-esteem is ... the single greatest need facing the human race today.”

Joyce Meyer: “His spirit went to hell because that is where we deserve to go... There is no hope of anyone going to heaven unless they believe this truth. You cannot go to heaven unless you believe with all your heart that Jesus took your place in hell.”

Joel Osteen: “God has already done everything He’s going to do. The ball is now in your court. If you want success, if you want wisdom, if you want to be prosperous and healthy, you’re going to have to do more than meditate and believe; you must boldly declare words of faith and victory over yourself and your family.” [Similar teachings are given by Creflo Dollar...etc]

- These teachings have influenced a lot of Indian preachers.

Lady at William Penn House: In 9Marks conference, we stayed in William Penn house. There the lady was so caring. She did daily meditation and invited us to join. She appeared so spiritual. Later, she confessed, “I don’t think Christ is the only way to heaven. There are other ways too.” Deceptive philosophy.

Note: The fundamental test of any teaching is this: Does it acknowledge Christ's humanity, His deity, His completed work on the cross, His lordship, His supremacy over everything and our sufficiency in Him?

3. SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST

Note: In Colossians 2:6-15 (10 verses), Christ is mentioned 14 times.

- ❖ “Therefore, as you received **Christ Jesus** the Lord, so walk **in him**, rooted and built up **in him** and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to **Christ**. For **in him** the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled **in him**, who is **the head** of all rule and authority. **In him** also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of **Christ**, having been buried **with him** in baptism, in which you were also raised **with him** through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised **him** from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together **with him**, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them **in him**.”

i. Christ is Our Source of Life and Growth

- ❖ **Colossians 2:6-7**, “Therefore, as you received **Christ Jesus** the Lord, so walk **in him**, rooted and built up **in him** and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

ii. Christ is Our Source of Truth from All Deception

- ❖ **Colossians 2:8**, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to **Christ**.”

iii. Christ is the Complete Revelation of God to Us

- ❖ **Colossians 2:9**, “For **in him** the whole fullness (*pleroma*) of deity dwells bodily,”

iv. We Are Complete (brought to fullness and satisfied) in Christ (Are you???)

- ❖ **Colossians 2:10**, “and you have been filled **in him**, who is **the head** of all rule and authority.”

The following is the explanation of how have we been brought to this fullness.

v. We Are Transformed (converted) by Christ

- ❖ **Colossians 2:11**, “**In him** also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of **Christ**,”

vi. We Were Buried with Christ and Raised with Him

- ❖ **Colossians 2:12**, “having been buried **with him** in baptism (*to old life, Rom. 6:4*), in which you were also raised **with him** (*to newness of life, Rom. 6:4*) through faith in the powerful working of God, who **raised him** from the dead.”

vii. We Were Made Alive Together with Him

- ❖ **Colossians 2:13-14**, “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together **with him**, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

What were we? Dead in our trespasses and the uncircumcision of our flesh (sinful life)

What did God do? God made alive (from the deadness of sin) together with Him.

How did God do this?

- By forgiving all our sins
- By cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands (just punishment)
- This he set aside, nailing it to the cross (putting our sin on Christ and punishing him in our stead)

viii. We Were Delivered from the Bondage of Evil Forces in Christ

- ❖ **Colossians 2:15**, “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them **in him**.”

John MacArthur: Having disarmed Satan (literally “stripping him”) and the rulers and authorities (fallen angels), He [God] made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him [Christ]. The imagery here is like that of a triumphant Roman general, parading his defeated captives through the streets of Rome. Christ’s victory on the cross halted the demons in their attempts to stop His redemptive work and stripped Satan of his powers.

Conclusion:

- Our sufficiency is not in becoming healthy, wealthy, and problem-free in life.
- Our sufficiency is in being transformed by the power of the gospel (work of Christ on the cross) from all sin and evil forces to Christ-centered life.