



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERMON SERIES: THIS WE BELIEVE • WEEK 1

COLOSSIANS 2:6-15 • 1/8/2023

MAIN POINT

Continue to grow in your faith by being rooted and built up in the truths you know.

INTRODUCTION

What was your favorite subject in grade school?

How did concepts “stick with you” in school (i.e. memorization, note taking, lectures, hands-on activities, etc.)?

The Christians at Colossae faced a major threat to their orthodoxy. Like many letters, Colossians countered a specific movement threatening to remove the church from Christ. Paul affirmed the centrality of Christ in both doctrine and practice.

UNDERSTANDING

READ COLOSSIANS 2:6-7.

What does it mean to “walk in Him,” that is, Jesus Christ (v. 6)? Give specific examples of what this looks like in your life.

Before we can withstand false teaching, we must know what we believe, and in Whom we believe. With false teachers threatening to persuade the people of Colossae away from doctrinal Christianity—that is, the truth of the message of Jesus Christ—Paul urged the Colossians to know who this Jesus was that they served. At one’s moment of conversion (v. 6a), believers are invited on a journey with their Savior. Such a journey forms a relationship based upon the truth and lordship of Christ. Only believers can truly “walk in Him” (v. 6b), because the ways of Christ are unnatural to those who do not believe.

Look at verse 7. Why do you think Paul chose the word “rooted”? What does such imagery convey about the nature of the believer?

“Rooted” denotes firmness. To be rooted in Christ is to be secure in your identity as His child. Such an identity is secure and unshakeable. “To be built up” entails a gradual and continual process of sanctification. “To be established” in the faith involves a legal term meaning “confirmed.” Paul assures believers in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” Christians are forever sealed with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 echoes this truth, “In Him, you also, after listening of the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Note the progression of one’s faith walk with the Lord. You must have roots before you can be planted. Once planted, you have the foundation to be built up, and once built up, you become established in the faith.

What do you think being built up or established looks like in a person's life (v. 7)?

READ COLOSSIANS 2:8-15.

Are competing philosophies to the faith easily recognizable? Why or why not?

Paul issued a strong warning to watch out so believers are not taken captive and enslaved to false doctrines through philosophy and empty deceit. The false teachers of the day threatened the finality of the work of the cross, the process of sanctification, and the development of personal purity. False teachers threatened the identity of believers by trying to persuade them to find their identity in their salvation in other places, such as through good works or through magical practices.

What are some ways people try to add to the gospel? How might we guard ourselves against teaching that would add to the gospel?

Why is verse 10 the believer's response when threatened with false doctrine or philosophy?

According to this passage, what role does identity play in combatting false doctrine?

In response to the threats of false doctrine, Paul urged the Colossians to remember their identity. "You have been filled" or "you have been made complete" denotes a completed act (salvation) with ongoing results (sanctification). If indeed "in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority" (v. 10), then a believer does not need to cling to false beliefs for security. If one has been sealed with the truth, then all other lies prove worthless. Understanding your

identity in Christ and the fullness of who He is safeguards a believer from turning to other sources for completion.

Why is remembering the great act of God at the cross necessary for us to walk with Him?

Look at verses 11-12. What two acts does Paul mention? What is the significance of each of these?

The reference to circumcision indicates the Jewish nature of this false philosophy. Circumcision was established and mandated by God for entrance into the covenant community of His people. But the circumcision of the Messiah was spiritual and associated with “circumcision of the heart” (Deut. 10:16; 30:6). Many Jews still believed they needed to be circumcised in order to be saved, which conflicts with the nature of the gospel as a free gift (Romans 3:27-28; 11:6). Paul also referenced baptism, which relates to Christ’s death and burial (Romans 6:3-8). Believer’s baptism symbolizes union with Christ in death and complete separation from the former way of life.

How does verse 15 give us comfort when false teachers try to turn us away from the truth of Christ? Who wins in the end?

Why does knowing that Jesus has all authority important for combatting false doctrines and philosophy?

APPLICATION

How have you been completed in Christ?

What does our walk with God look like if we fail to remember the gospel?

Reflect on John 17:17. How might studying the Bible and its essential doctrines prepare to you respond to false teaching? Are reading and studying the Bible regular practices for you? If not, what can you do this week to begin to immerse yourself in the Word of Truth?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the truth of Your Word. Thank you for salvation and the free nature of such a glorious gift. Thank You that salvation not only means forgiveness of sins, but also a permanent marking of the Holy Spirit and identification as Your sons and daughters. May we remain steadfast in the truth when we face the opposition of false beliefs or practices.

COMMENTARY

COLOSSIANS 2:6-15

2:6-7 Paul's primary concern was that believers would grow in spiritual maturity. The basis of their conduct is Christ's lordship (1:15-20) and indwelling (1:27). The command to walk in Him, as in 1:10, is followed by expressions of what this involved: (1) being rooted (denoting firmness; cp. Eph 3:17); (2) built up; (3) established in the faith (a legal term meaning "confirmed"); and (4) overflowing with gratitude (cp. 1:3,12; 3:15-17; 4:2).

2:8 Be careful is a strong warning to watch out so believers are not taken captive and enslaved to false doctrines through philosophy and empty deceit. "Human tradition" implies human origin (whether Jewish or Gentile) as opposed to the divine nature of the gospel. The elemental forces were most likely astral deities, spirits, and/or angels commonly associated with pagan worship, astrology, and magical practices.

2:10 You have been filled denotes a completed act with ongoing results (see notes at 1:9 and 1:18).

2:11 The reference to circumcision indicates the Jewish nature of this false philosophy. Circumcision was established and mandated by God for entrance into the covenant community of His people. But the circumcision of the Messiah was spiritual and associated with “circumcision of the heart” (Dt 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; Ezek 44:7; Rm 2:29). Here the reference is to the death of Christ, not the literal OT practice of circumcision.

2:12 Baptism relates to Christ’s death and burial (Rm 6:3-8); it is not the NT equivalent of OT circumcision. Believer’s baptism symbolizes union with Christ in death and complete separation from the former way of life. Likewise, believers are raised with Him through faith (1:23; Gal 2:20) according to God’s power.

2:13 Prior to their faith in Christ, the Colossians were spiritually dead in trespasses (cp. Eph 2:1-3) and cut off from God’s people because they were Gentiles (Eph 2:11-12). However, in Christ, God made them alive and forgave all their sins (Eph 2:4-8).

2:14 The certificate of debt may refer to a handwritten document or to the Mosaic law. Paul typically viewed the law’s purpose as revealing the guilt of sinners (Dt 27:26; Rm 7:13; 1Co 15:56; Gal 3:10). Some Jewish writings, likewise, speak of God keeping records of people’s sins as debts against them. God, however, has abolished those records through Christ’s substitutionary atonement that was accomplished when He died on the cross.

2:15 The phrase disgraced them publicly relates to God humiliating these spiritual rulers in a public spectacle of shame and defeat. The word triumphed (see note at 2Co 2:14) evokes the imagery of a triumphal procession where a victorious general would lead a parade to display the booty and prisoners of war from his conquest.