

Colossians 2.6-15, Know What You Have In Jesus

Paul so far has shown us who Christ is:

- That he is Creator of all things, Ruler over all things, Supreme over all things; that he is *“before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*
- Paul has shown us that we are alienated from Christ, hostile toward Christ in our disobedience and sin, and that we are hopeless. Yet we were not left without any hope. For Christ came down into the world he created to pay the penalties for our sins by dying on a cross. That by his blood we are forgiven, and by his resurrection we are also resurrected to new and eternal life.
- He has made it clear that proclaiming this is his purpose, so that we might know Jesus, grow in our faith, and be presented mature and complete on the day of his return. He says that all that we need is in Jesus.

And then, in 2.6, he says *“therefore...”* and he gives us a command. Because of who Jesus is, all that you have received from him and in him, do this:

I. Command, v. 6-7

You have received Christ. But that is not the end. You have received, so now walk.

If you were in a relay race and you were handed the baton, you wouldn't just stand there looking at it. No, you would take off running. And if you have received salvation in Jesus, take off running. Head towards the goal.

- Philippians 3.14, *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

There will be days when you forget that moment of salvation, when we received faith. But we can still look ahead with anticipation and excitement to the day when Jesus will be revealed in the heavens. When we will stand with him, face to face. Why should I live for him and not for myself or anyone or anything else? Because there is coming a day when this world will be done away with, all things will be made new, and this body will cease wasting away but will instead be made perfect.

So as you have received, so now walk. Or rather, live.

And, as you have been rooted, so now be built up and be established.

In Romans, Paul compares us to wild olive shoots that have been grafted into the main vine. As you have received, now start walking. And as you have been rooted—planted—in Christ, so now be built up and established.

We have a small garden. Well, actually two gardens. One is in the backyard and consists of a number of planter boxes. Since our soil is a dense clay. The other is in the woods next to the house where CT has planted all of our leftover plants that we didn't have a planter box or container for. It would be foolish, in either area, to simply stick the plants in the soil and walk away, expecting them to just magically grow. You have to water them daily. You have to keep them clear of weeds. You have to fence in some of them so that the cat doesn't use them as her personal litter box. If you want the best yield possible, you have to tend to the plants.

We have been rooted in Christ.

But now we must water ourselves—saturate ourselves—with his Word. Like a plant needs sunlight, we must maintain fellowship with our Lord through prayer. And just as it is best to plant several of the same plants next to each other, we need to support and encouragement of other believers. You have been rooted in Christ. Now be built up and be established in the faith.

My son Austin owns a sledgehammer. The other day he was out in the yard pounding on a pine tree root. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was trying to make the tree shake. I had to explain to him that that pine tree has big roots, and deep roots, and many roots. And beating on that one root won't cause that tree to be shaken. It might hurt it a little, but it wasn't going to move one bit.

And he says, be “abounding in thanksgiving.”

More literally, he says to be abounding *in it* with thanksgiving. May your faith be overflowing with thanksgiving toward Jesus who brought salvation to us. In this way you won't become arrogant, or near sighted, or try to uproot and plant yourself in your own garden of your own wicked desires. That's where you came from. Don't forget it.

So be abounding with thanksgiving. If you ever start thinking that God has to be tired of hearing you say “thank you,” you have only just begun saying it enough.

So Paul’s command is that as you have received so now walk. Since you have been rooted in faith, now be built up and established and abounding in thanksgiving for it.

Paul then gives us a warning as to why being so firmly established is important.

II. Warning, v. 8

By the way, the original Greek doesn’t have punctuation. So, just as we are to be abounding in thanksgiving for the faith we have received, we are also to be abounding in thanksgiving so that we will not be taken captive by worldly philosophies. Our thanksgiving keeps us rooted and connected, and is a great weapon against the enemy.

He says, “do not let anyone take you captive.”

Do not be lured away or pulled away from where you have been planted in Christ. The soil in that garden might look nice—dark, healthy soil. But it is filled with aphids, and white flies, and caterpillars.

He says that the world will come with philosophies, empty deceit.

These, he says, are according to human tradition and the elemental spirits of the world. We understand ‘human tradition.’ But what are the ‘elemental spirits’? This can also be translated, “basic principles.” Human nature wants to put us in the drivers seat. My salvation or higher achievement is up to me. I must do better and must do more. Paul says that these are of the world and not of Christ.

In v. 16-23, he points out some of these ‘traditions and principles’ that they thought they needed or had added over time....

And now we get to the meat of it. In the rest of this passage Paul lays out why we must reject all worldly philosophies and human traditions and cling to Jesus.

III. Paul's Reasons, v. 9-15

1. *Jesus is completely God, and you have been made complete in him, v. 9-10.*

- The “whole fullness” means the completeness or the totality. And “have been filled” is the verb form of the same word, which means to be made full or complete. If in him is all of God, and you have him with you and in you—as we are temples of his Spirit—then what more is there that you need to fill up? If you have 100%, how many more percents do you need?
- Now, let's be careful. Some will argue that if Jesus is filled with God, and we are filled with Jesus, then we have become like God ourselves. But this is wrong thinking. Jesus is God in the flesh.
 - I heard it described like this: imagine you are at Fernandina Beach. You have the entire ocean before you. If you take a jar, dip it in the water, and fill it up, what you have is completely the ocean; but it is not the complete ocean. In the same way, we do not have all that is God within us.

2. *Jesus is the head of all rule and authority, v. 10*

- You want to pray to or worship angels or saints or Mary? Why? They are all subject to him. He does not answer to them, they answer to him. And we have direct access to him. Remember Batman's red phone? Commissioner Gordon didn't have to call a secretary or a hotline. He had direct access.

3. *In Jesus, you have been born again, v. 11-12*

- “In him you were circumcised” is the main idea of verse 11 and 12. By the way, we have been reading through Acts with the boys, and there is debate with the Judaizers who say that believers must also be circumcised. So we had to have a lesson on what that meant. It was traumatizing for us all.
- Here, Paul is saying that the physical act is symbolic of the spiritual act. What was once used to physically designate the people of Israel is now used to spiritually designate the people of the Kingdom of God.

- In Christ, God has cut away the flesh. And this is how (v. 12):
 - As Christ died on the cross *for* your sins, so in him you have died *to* your sins. And as Christ was raised to new life, so in him have you been raised to new life. And he uses baptism as a picture of this.
 - Romans 6.3-5,
 - *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

4. In Jesus, ALL our sins have been forgiven, v. 13-14.

- We were dead and are now alive. We were once guilty and are now forgiven.
 - Paul writes in Romans that “*the wages of sin is death.*” Each of our sinful acts is like an IOU statement that we write out and give to God. IOU so many hours of service or prayers for each offense. But the record is so great that there are not enough hours in a lifetime to pay off what we owe him.
 - And legally, there has to be a payment by someone. If you cannot bail yourself out of jail, someone else can do it for you. So Jesus paid the penalty for us. The punishment we deserved he took for us. Paul writes that he set it aside, nailing it to the cross. In Jesus are all of our sins, nailed to the cross.
- If all my sins are forgiven, then what more do I have to work off? And if God declares me righteous because he has forgiven me of everything, then who in this world gets to say whether I am in or out? Through faith in Jesus my sins are forgiven, I am redeemed, I am reconciled, and I am raised to new life. And not you, not me, not a king, official, or the head of any church can change that.

5. Jesus conquers all, v. 15

- The “rulers and authorities” are the same ones Paul said Jesus created back in chapter 1. And are the same ones we are battling in Ephesians 6. It is not human rulers and authorities. It is spiritual rulers and authorities. Specifically, Satan and the demonic.

- Why worship spirits—good or bad? Or why be afraid of any of them? Jesus has disarmed them and put them to open shame.

Notice throughout this section all of the “in him” and “with him.”

Therefore:

We have been filled with Christ, who is God in the flesh, and in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In Christ we have died to our old ways of living and have been given new life by being spiritually born again. And in him we have received forgiveness for our sins, by his blood shed on the cross. And he has conquered all of his enemies, disarming them and putting them to open shame.

Therefore, just as you have received and been rooted in Christ, live out your faith daily, being built up and established and giving thanks for the faith you have received.