

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory
Walk in Him
Colossians 2:6-7

We are continuing our study of the book of Colossians. And, for those of you who are visiting let me give you a very brief idea of what is going on here. This is a letter from the Apostle Paul to a group of Christians in the city of Colossae. Paul is deeply concerned for them because false teachers were attempting to infiltrate their community and lead them away from true Christianity.

So, Paul writes this letter to clarify the truth about Jesus and to make an appeal for these believers to remain in the faith. Last week, we saw that he effectively said that we are living in a war. We have an enemy who is seeking to take us captive and steal us away from the life Jesus came to bring us, an abundant and victorious life. And the only way we can avoid being captured is through the power of Jesus. That's where we left off last week. Which means that's where we will pick up this morning.

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

If you are familiar with the writings of the Apostle Paul, you likely know that he loves the word "therefore." He's a master at building logical arguments that build to an important conclusion. That's what the word "therefore" is there for. It's an indicator that he is drawing everything he has just said to a point.

And this is the first time in the book of Colossians that he uses that word. Essentially, he is saying that these verses are the logical conclusion to everything he's said so far in this letter. I'm tempted to read everything he's written so far, but for the sake of time, let me just give you a few highlights from chapter 1.

Colossians 1:3–5

These believers had heard the truth of the gospel of Jesus and had received it in faith.

Colossians 1:13–14

Since they had placed their faith in Jesus, Paul reminds them that they are forgiven of all their sin. And they are transferred by God's power from living under the domain, or the rule and power, of spiritual darkness. That's the realm of God's enemy in which this whole world is living in captivity to sin. But, through faith in Jesus, we are no longer slaves to sin or Satan. We are now free to enjoy the abundant, victorious life Jesus came to bring us through His life, death, and resurrection.

Colossians 1:27

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

When we place our faith and trust in Jesus, a miracle occurs. Jesus comes to live within us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The way we enjoy the abundant, victorious life is by the work of Christ in us. That's the hope we have of attaining the glorious future that God has for His people, a future where we will become just like Jesus as the children of God and spend eternity with Him in perfect joy and eternal pleasure. It's all because of the power of Christ living in us.

But, like we saw last week, we have an enemy who is trying to rob us of the life Jesus desires to give us here and now. That's where the false teachers enter the picture. They were introducing lies in the form of plausible arguments and religious traditions in an attempt to draw these believers away from simple faith in Jesus.

And that's what the therefore is there for. Paul is urging these believers, and us in turn, to fight against the schemes of the enemy. And what does he say?

Look back at verse 6 of our text:

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,

The word "walk" is one of the most common metaphors in the bible for living life. The Christian life is a step-by-step journey. And how does Paul say we live that life? The way we received it: through faith in Jesus. How do we experience the abundant life of Christ? Through faith in Jesus. How do we experience the victorious, resurrection life of Christ that enables us to defeat sin and obey God? Through faith in Jesus.

And that gives us our Big Idea for today.

Big Idea: We live in victory as we walk in Christ by faith with thanksgiving.

The main command of our text is to walk in Christ. We receive Jesus by faith and that's how we walk in Him – by faith.

Remember where we are in this letter. We have an enemy who wants to rob us of all that Jesus desires to give us in this life. The enemy is a liar who is trying to deceive us any way he can. He uses lies that we are inclined to believe in an attempt to take us captive as prisoners of spiritual war.

And one of the biggest lies that the enemy tries to perpetuate on Christians is a lie that sounds so close to the truth that many of us actually are deceived by it. The lie is this: you have to live the Christian life.

That sounds pretty believable, doesn't it? You have to live the Christian life. You have to be holy. You have to obey God. You have to put away sin. You have to tell the truth. You have to show people grace. You have to love your enemies. You have to forgive the people who have sinned against you. You have to shine like a light in a dark world. Husbands, you have to love your wives like Christ loved the church. Wives, you have to submit to your husbands as unto the Lord. Parents, you have to raise your children to know the truth about Jesus. You have to live the Christian life. That's a powerful lie.

It's so powerful and so believable that some of you might not even know why I'm saying it's a lie. Everything I just said is found somewhere in the Bible as a command. All those things are part of the life God desires us to live. So, why am I saying it's a lie from the enemy?

Remember, the power of a lie is in its proximity to the truth. Unbelievable lies aren't believable. Most of us would know it's the voice of the enemy that tells us to live just like the rest of our world, to disobey God, to be unfaithful to our spouse or unloving to our neighbors. We can spot those lies a mile away. The power of this lie is that it's so close to the truth that many of us are in danger of living the rest of our lives believing it. We trust in Jesus to forgive our sin. We trust in Jesus to take us to heaven. But then we roll up our sleeves and try our best to live the Christian life. We try our best to be good little boys and girls who do what's right. And we fail to enjoy the true victory only Jesus can bring.

The truth is that we can't live the Christian life. That's why we need Jesus. The truth is that our only hope for glory is Christ living in us. And that's exactly what He promises to do when we place our faith and trust in Him. He promises to live in us as we trust in Him. We can live the Christian life when we rely on Christ's power to flow through us.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This is the key to living the Christian life. We receive Jesus through faith. And we continue in Jesus through faith.

That's what these little wristbands are all about. Not I, but Christ. Every day, we are either living by faith in Christ or we are putting faith in our own strength.

And there are two critical elements to faith.

First is BELIEF. Faith is what occurs when we believe the truth about Jesus, the gospel.

Colossians 2:7

rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught...

A man named Epaphras had learned the truth about Jesus and taught it to these believers. Faith was what happened when they believed the core truths about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

The second element is TRUST. Faith isn't just mentally affirming truth. Faith is trusting in, or depending on, Jesus to actually do what He's said He will do.

So, faith is what happens when we believe the truth about Jesus and trust in the power of Jesus.

When my kids were young, they loved jumping from places and having me catch them. It started when they were really little, and I would have to coax them into doing it. I'd tell them to jump, and they would hesitate. So, I would promise to catch them. And they would look at mom like, "Is this guy telling the truth?" Finally, I would get them to jump. I caught them 100% of the time. They believed what I said in a way that they trusted me to catch them. It got to the point that they wouldn't think twice to jump off a swing set. They were like a bunch of flying squirrels taking leaps of faith because they believed me in a way that trusted me. So they stepped out of perfectly good trees into thin air and loved every minute of it.

And that's how we live by faith in Jesus. We step into every part of the Christian life - all the commands that are impossible for us on our own. And we believe Jesus will live in us and actually trust Him to do it. It's not something we do for Him, it's something we trust Him to do in us.

That's what Paul is calling these believers to do. To walk in obedience to God's word BY believing and trusting Jesus to be Jesus in them.

But Paul doesn't leave it at that. He gives us four descriptions for how that takes shape in our lives.

Colossians 2:6

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Let me give you a little language lesson. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. So, our English New Testaments are translations of the original Greek manuscripts. And, in Greek, there's only one command in our text. It's the word "walk." But there are four participles attached to that command.

Participles modify the command. They describe how you are supposed to do it. And the four participles in verse 7 are: rooted, built up, established, and abounding in thanksgiving. They describe how we are supposed to walk, or live, by faith in Jesus.

Let's go through them one at a time.

ROOTED

That's a term that describes a plant that is firmly rooted in soil. And, in the original language of the Bible it's in the passive form. That means it's something that happens to us, not something we do. It's also in the perfect tense. In English, we think of verbs in the past, present, or future tense. I ate. I am eating. I will eat. But, in Greek, the tense of a verb or participle isn't as much about when the action occurs as much as the kind of action it is. And the perfect tense describes an action that has already been completed but its effects are still being experienced in the present. For instance, when Jesus died on the cross, He said, "It is finished." There's a tense called aorist that describes something that's over and done. But that's not the tense Jesus used. He used the perfect tense. He said His work was completed but it's effects would continue to be experienced in the present.

And that's how the word "rooted" is being used. Paul is saying that you walk by faith in Christ when you believe that you have been firmly planted in Him. When you believe that the soil of Christ is supplying you with nutrients and life to enable you to bear fruit.

In other words, you live in Christ when you believe you are already in Christ and Christ is in you, providing you with life and power to produce fruit.

Imagine that the Bible commanded you to dunk a basketball. For most of us, that would be an impossible command. And we could spend the rest of our lives trying our best to obey it. We might even try to invent ways to convince ourselves that we were actually doing it, like lowering the rim to 5 feet or using a ladder to get up to the hoop.

But what if the Bible promised that if we trusted God, He would allow the power of Michael Jordan to flow through us? If you really believed that was true and trusted in Jordan's power and not your own, you could step into that command and produce the fruit of dunking the basketball.

And that's how Paul says to walk in Christ. Believe that something has happened to you. Believe you have been firmly rooted in the life of Christ. Stop lowering the goal. Stop using man-made supports.

What would change about your life today if you truly believed that your life is firmly rooted in Christ? Who would you forgive? How would you treat your spouse? How would you go to work or school tomorrow? Who would you share the gospel with?

Friend, if you are trusting in Jesus, you have all the power you need to obey every command of the Bible. You are rooted in Christ.

The second description Paul uses is...

BUILT UP

Paul changes the metaphor here and goes from the farm to a construction site. To be built up is to build a building on a foundation. And this word is also in the passive voice. That means it's happening to you. But it's in a different tense than the word rooted. This is in the present tense. That means it's ongoing. It's happening now.

Paul is referring to the ongoing work God is doing in building you up. You are like a house that is under construction. God is making you into something that isn't completed yet. And what is that?

Romans 8:28–29

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

The thing God is making you to be is a person who is just like Jesus. That's the good thing God is working all things together to accomplish.

And just think how different your life would be if you saw everything through that lens. God is using everything in your life to make you more and more like Jesus. Nothing is wasted. You walk by faith in Jesus when you live like everything in your life is part of God's blueprint to make you more like Jesus. Every pain or hardship. Every trial or disappointment. Every illness or loss. Every promotion at work. Every layoff. All of it is part of God's blueprint that will result in something glorious He will reveal when you pass from this world into His presence in Heaven.

When all is said and done, the Bible says there is going to be a great unveiling. God is going to reveal His glorious masterpiece and all of heaven will erupt in worship and praise at how awesome He is to make such a thing. And do you know what He is going to unveil? You. You are His masterpiece if you are trusting in Christ.

Think about the thing you are walking through right now. Think about the week that's coming up. Some of you have meetings at work that you dread. Some of you have doctor's visits you don't want to have. Some of you have hard conversations with loved ones. How differently would you see those things if you stepped into them believing they are part of God's blueprint to make you more like Jesus? I think next week I might add something to our wristbands. I think I'm going to make signs for all of us to wear around our necks that say, "Pardon the mess, I'm under construction."

The next word Paul uses to describe how we are to walk by faith in Christ is...

ESTABLISHED

That word means to make something firm. It's like concrete becoming harder over time. And this is also in the passive voice. It's something that happening to you. It's in the present tense. It's occurring right now. God is strengthening you in the faith. He's firming you up. That's part of making you more like Jesus. That's what Paul is urging us to believe and live like we believe.

In the midst of life's trials, God is using the hardship to harden you, to strengthen your faith and confidence in Him.

James 1:2–3

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

As you encounter the various trials that are inevitably part of life, you can face them with joy. Not because you are glad about the trial but because you are grateful that God is using it to produce something in you. He is using it to make your faith strong and steady so that you will stay the course and finish the race and win the battle by the power of Christ in you.

And that brings me to the last word Paul uses to describe how we walk by faith in Jesus...

ABOUNDING IN THANKSGIVING

The word "abounding" means "overflowing." It's what happens when you pour a gallon of water into an 8-ounce cup. It overflows and runs out all over the place. And there's an important change in the

way Paul uses this word. The other three participles are in the passive voice, they are something we believe God is doing in us. This word is in the active voice. It's something we do. And it's in the present tense. It's ongoing all the time.

We walk in Christ by faith as we overflow with thanksgiving. And this is the natural outflow of believing everything we've been talking about. When you believe Christ has not only forgiven you but has come to live in you, you are thankful. When you believe God has firmly rooted you into Jesus, you are thankful. When you believe God is using everything in your life to make you more like Jesus, you are thankful. When you believe the trials you are walking through are making you stronger so you can finish life's race and win the prize, you are thankful.

And remember the context here. Paul is talking about how we avoid living in captivity to the enemy. He's talking about how we live in victory. And He says it happens when we are thankful at all times for all that God is doing in us.

Practically speaking, that means we need to stop living with an obsession with what the enemy is doing. Here's what I mean. Many of us walk through life and all we see is one big attack from the enemy. We read the headlines, and we grumble and complain about what the enemy is doing. We look around our lives and we think, "Man, the devil is really at work today." And that's certainly true. The devil is at work today. But so is God. And God's work is bigger and stronger and better than anything the enemy is up to. And when you really believe that, do you know what you have a tendency to say? "Thank God."

And that's how we live in victory over the work of the devil. We stop giving him all the credit and we start giving God all the glory. We say, "Man, the devil is really giving it his all, but I'm so thankful he's no match for Jesus." Our lives begin to overflow with thanksgiving, and it spills out on the people all around us.

We live in victory as we walk in Christ by faith with thanksgiving.