

Colossians 2 - Rooted in Christ

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[0 : 00] So it's page 1182 on the Church Bible, Colossians chapter 1, verse 1 to 13, and then verse 6 and 7 from chapter 2. So page 1182.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae, grace and peace to you from God our Father.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love you have for all the saints, the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven, and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you.

All over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all of its truth.

You learned it from the Papyrus, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

[1 : 27] And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord, and may please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints, in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

And then chapter 2, verse 6 and 7. So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as the Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in faith, as you were taught, and overflowing in thankfulness.

Thank you, Stephen. Let's just pray.

We've just heard God's word. Alex will be coming up to speak. So let's just bow our heads, and just commit this time of teaching and learning, and committing Alex to your care.

[2 : 45] Father, we do thank you for your word. We thank you that it is the very words of God. Thank you that you have caused it to be written, caused it to be kept safe throughout the generations, to be given to us.

We thank you for those you have raised up to preach your word. Thank you for Alex. Thank you that his desire is to be a workman approved unto you, as somebody who can correctly handle the word of truth.

I pray that as he speaks from this letter to the Colossian Church, I pray that he might stick closely to your word, I pray that he might be excited about preaching, that indeed even that his heart is warmed as he even reads scripture to us.

I pray that our hearts might be open to your word, that we might have a deep, deep desire to know more about you, to understand more about what it means to be in Christ, and also to live a life worthy of you.

Help us not to be distracted. Help us in perhaps the things that are in our minds, things that would be getting in the way. I pray that you might help us in this time, just to be able to hear, to be able to think clearly, and Lord, to be able to take in your word that you would have for us this morning.

[4 : 03] In Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, Alex. It's interesting that Jonathan prays that my heart would be warmed.

It feels more like beating really, really fast. But I think that's a good thing. I think it's good to stretch ourselves and to get opportunities to really get stuck into one little passage and to unpack it, to apply it to our own lives, and then to try and put that into words and hopefully encourage you to apply it to your lives.

So it's good to be here. Growing up, I, like most of you, I went to church. In church, I went to Sunday school.

And at home, I was read Bible stories and would say my prayers every night. As I get older, got older, I didn't kill anybody. And as far as I know, I didn't rob any banks.

And I didn't do those things as a kid either, by the way. That's where you're meant to laugh. I said, pause for a giggle. I lived a pretty good life.

[5 : 24] And if I did, on a rare occasion, do something wrong, I usually said sorry. So I was okay. As I grew up, I started going to summer camps at which they spoke about Jesus.

Now, I had been to church. I had been to Sunday school. So I knew Jesus. I knew about Jesus. I knew about the baby. I knew about the healer. The guy who turned water into wine.

The martyr. The one who came back from the dead. But at these camps, I started to hear the story of the Bible. Not just Bible stories.

I heard God's story of rescue. At these camps, and over time through secondary school, I heard the Bible explained clearly.

I heard that believing in God or Jesus wasn't enough. Knowing the things that he did in the Bible wasn't enough. I began to realize that I needed to receive the gift he offered me.

[6 : 34] To let him be my Lord, my King. I needed to kneel, either figuratively or physically, before him and worship him with my life.

I also learned that I needed Jesus as my Savior. Recognizing the truths of the Bible, that on my own, I am rebellious, selfish, and if I was honest with myself, sinful.

I realized that this behavior and attitude separated me from God. And that I needed to help. I needed the help that he was offering me.

Jesus, a Savior. No amount of trying harder to be better, or to help more people, or to be nicer, or to even follow the Ten Commandments better, would make me right with God.

The scary reality of the Bible dawned on me that these sinful attitudes and behaviors actually separated me from God. And would ultimately separate me permanently from God.

[7 : 48] And all that was good. The Bible calls this hell. And that's what I needed saving from. Now obviously this didn't all come as a lightning flash one evening sitting around the campfire at summer camp.

Having received Christ Jesus as Lord, I needed to continue in him. This wasn't just a one-off. This was a continuation. These truths have come to me slowly over time.

When I went to college, I met other believers, followers of Jesus. We studied the Bible together. We attended Christian Union meetings together.

We had the Bible, God's Word, explained and unpacked for us. We looked at it and asked how our lives matched up with what was written. We prayed the truths of the Bible into each other's lives.

We challenged each other to become more like Jesus. As I've been involved here in this church, I have grown in my knowledge and understanding of God and his purposes.

[8 : 56] I am still learning the magnitude and the cost that comes with being a follower of Jesus. I have been challenged to continue in the faith as I was taught.

That's my story. The Colossians have a similar story. Let's look with me in Colossians chapter 1. We're going to pick it up in verse 21. And we're going to see how Paul describes them. He says, Once you were alienated from God.

Were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior? Chapter 2, verse 13, elaborates in describing what they were like. When he says, When you were dead in your sins.

So to paraphrase, Paul said that they were unchurched, uncircumcised, not baptized. They were rebels against God, involved in idolatry.

[10 : 05] They were hostile to God in their minds and their behaviors. Their thoughts and actions were contrary to God's design. Paul paints a pretty, he paints a picture of a pretty godless group of people without hope, without Christ.

However, God changed their lives as he changed mine. Let's carry on and look at chapter 1, verse 22 again. But now, he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body, through death, to present you

wholly in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

What a transformation. Let's list those things. They were alienated, they were hostile, and they were evil. But now, they are reconciled, holy and free.

chapter 1, verse 20 goes on to say, and through him, speaking of Jesus, to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth, or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

that's how God did it. By Jesus' act of sacrifice, on the cross, their sins were forgiven, and the debt which they owed for their sins was cancelled, wiped out, forgotten.

[11:40] And this happened, as we look at, in verse 7 of chapter 1, that they learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ, on our behalf.

They heard the word of truth, they received the good news, of the gospel, and they heard it from Epaphras. So we see that their story, has brought them from a place of separation from God, into a place where they possess redemption, and forgiveness of sins.

Armed with that redemption, and forgiveness of sins, that comes with life in Christ, the Colossians had a secure hope, as verse 5 says, the faith and hope, or the faith and love, that spring from the hope, that is stored up for you in heaven.

Paul then encourages them, to kick on from there. Not to rest on their laurels, and sit tight, but to kick on. Not to get comfortable, that they have received salvation, that they are saved, and they don't need to worry about life, but they are to continue, to continue to live in him.

And this is where he says it again, in verse 22. But now he has reconciled you, by Christ's physical body, through death, to present you holy in his sight, without blemish, and free from accusation, if, if, you continue in your faith, established, and firm, and do not move, from the hope, held out, in the gospel.

[13:29] And so that is how we come, to today's passage. Today's passage is the kick on, the continue, the action, following the theory, for those who are followers of Jesus.

So let's read today's passage again. Chapter 2, verse 6 and 7. So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Now according to the more studious people, who write commentaries, and books, and clever things like that, there's a, received is a technical term, and it means, to receive a tradition, and that indicates that, they welcome both the person, and the authoritative teaching about him, about Jesus.

So, to try and understand that, to receive Christ Jesus as Lord, is to embrace Jesus, the person, and the authority, of his word, the scriptures, or the Bible.

To continue to live in him, is to walk with him. Where our doctrine, reflects our behavior, where theology, and ethics, go together.

[14:54] Where we back up with our life, what we say, we believe. So let's think of a couple of examples, that might apply to us. Maybe, we pride ourselves, in being honest people.

We don't steal. We hand money, into the guardie, if we find it on the street. Because of course, that's what Jesus would do. And that's what he would want us to do.

However, when it comes to filling in our tax returns, we can slightly exaggerate, our tax liabilities, maybe. Or we can exaggerate, our expenses, to reduce our tax liabilities.

Because that's just, shrewd accounting, isn't it? Or maybe, when we come here, on a Sunday morning, we speak a certain way. When we meet our church family, during the week, we choose the words, that we say, quite carefully.

However, when we get caught off in traffic, or the slow driver in front, makes you miss the lights, when you're already running late, well then, we have some choice descriptions, for that person.

[16:04] Don't we? But it's okay, because, we're just, we're late for work, and Christians need to be good employees, and they need to be on time, because we don't want to be robbing our, our employer, by being late.

And anyway, they probably deserved it, didn't they? What about our behaviour, or our choice of words, on the soccer pitch, when we get tackled without the ball?

Well, maybe that's just me. But nobody likes hypocrisy, do they? We hate feeling like we've been fooled, or that somebody has got the better of us.

We have trust, that we have trusted someone, and found them out to be a fraud. We too, need to be careful, if we call ourselves, Christ followers.

Because, that comes with responsibility. We need to live, our lives, for Christ. There's no point in saying, that Jesus is my Lord, and my Saviour, if I continue to worship myself, and put myself first.

[17:16] Lord, in the dictionary, is defined as a person, or a deity, who has authority, control, or power, over others. A master, a chief, or a ruler.

So let me ask you, and myself. Does Christ, have authority in your life? When you hear his word, the Bible read on a Sunday, or over the radio, during the week?

When you read it, yourself at home, or discuss it, at home group, during the week? When you listen to the weekly sermon, given either by the full-time preacher, or the fill-in ones, do you take it seriously?

Do you take it, as God's words, speaking to you? Applying to you? Do you take it, as Jesus' authority, in your life?

Or do you listen, and think, that all sounds fine, but it's not really for me. I preferred last week's message anyway. But I do hope, that the person sitting next to me, is listening, because they really need to hear it.

[18:26] Do you comfort yourself, by thinking, that this is just the way I am? God made me like this. He doesn't make mistakes, and so this talk of change, isn't really for me. And anyway, I'm a Christian already, I'm a Christ follower, I don't need to change.

I'm saved. Do you leave the Bible study, and think, well that did nothing really for me. I didn't really get anything out of that.

I've thought, all of those thoughts as well, to my shame. Do we really submit, to God's word? I know I need to wake up.

I know I need to be active. I know I need to kick on, to continue. To receive, or to continue in Christ, as I received. Here in Colossians, Paul is writing to a church.

So, we can assume, that they are followers of Christ. Their place is already, secure in heaven. They're saved. So, we're not talking now, about salvation.

[19:34] But Paul still encourages them, to continue. I need to keep going. I need to back up my life, and actions, with what I say, that I believe.

So, we've spoken about, continuing. Let's look at, what it means. If we say, that Jesus is our Lord, how do we live it?

What does it actually look like, to live under the authority, of Jesus? And once we have discovered that, do we submit to it, or do we pick and choose, which parts we apply? Let's look again, at the passage, to see how this, continuing is achieved.

What does it say? So then, just as you received, Christ Jesus as Lord, continue, to live in him, rooted, and built up in him, strengthened, in the faith, as you were taught, and overflowing, with thankfulness.

Now, some of you, who know my job, will understand, that I love trees. I love how they change, over the seasons.

[20:48] I love planting them, into gardens, knowing that most likely, they'll outlive me. I love how they change, yeah, how they just change, how a garden looks, and feels, over the years.

I have favourite trees, and I have trees, which I really don't like. There's a common tree, which was planted, a lot in the past, called the, Leylandii.

Many of you will know it, some of you might even, have it in your gardens, and you probably call it, a palm tree. It was planted in the past, because, for its quick growth, and its foliage, because it made a good, quick hedge, or fence, between gardens, or as a windbreak, in exposed sites.

I usually come across this, when it's been neglected, and got out of control, and I have to come in, and try and fix it, or just cut it up, for firewood. But these trees, are a menace, and a nuisance, and once the wind, gets into them at all, they can just fall, like dominoes.

They have a poor, and a shallow root system, and as soon as, a storm comes, they can be ripped, out of the ground, so they rarely, live past the age of 50. On the other hand, I love the mighty oak, the elder statesman, of the woodland.

[22:06] A good oak, will see, lots of Leylandia, grow, and fall, and will probably, see a lot of us, come and go as well, and our children, and possibly grandchildren.

The oak, will not be blowed down. In fact, because the wood, in the oak tree, is so hard, and the roots, are so deep, and so firm, the tree can die, and remain standing, for years, while still dead. When Paul, was writing, to the Colossians, he knew the difficulties, the storms, that were going to come, in their life. And we are, guaranteed, difficulties, in life as well.

Whether it be, the death of loved ones, whether it be, troubles at work, peer pressure, in school, or college, bad habits, getting out of control, stresses at home, with young children, or spouses, the list goes on, and all, and yet Paul, writes this message, for us, today, here, now.

Paul tells us, in chapter 2, verse 6, to continue, to live in him, rooted, and built up in him. As we put down, deep, deep roots, we grow, we become firm, we grow up.

[23 : 31] As a mighty oak, puts down, deep roots, and gets into, gets its nourishment, it becomes unshakable. We need to be rooted, in Christ Jesus, as Lord, if we are to continue, to live, in him.

As Christians, to be rooted in him, is to be like the roots, of the oak tree. As they wander, around the soil, they are searching out, food and water.

To be rooted, in Christ, is to be searching out, the word of truth, which nourishes us. Jesus, and his authority, through the Bible, should be our firm foundation.

Roots, in a healthy tree, cannot be seen. They are deep, and underground. Who are you, when nobody is watching?

What do you do, when nobody is watching? What do you feed your eyes, or your mind, when nobody is watching? What roots, are you putting down?

[24 : 40] Who you are, when nobody is watching, will influence your faith, when a storm comes along? Be rooted, in Christ, and in his word.

As the roots go down, the tree grows up. As we are rooted, deeper and deeper, in Christ, our lives, will be built up, in him. Be rooted, in Christ, and in his word.

As I mentioned earlier, in my story, when I went to college, I grew in my knowledge, and understanding, of God, and his will, because I spent time, with his people, and together, we studied his word.

I've said it before, from this very place, that I'm not much good, on my own. That I need people around me, to strengthen me, in my faith. I noticed, that when I, break my good routines, and good habits, that I tend to wander, or drift off, from the word of truth.

Meeting together, isn't just something, that is good to do. Meeting together, is essential, for our growth, and being strengthened, in the faith. Don't give up, meeting together.

[25 : 53] This new term, how will you, continue to live in him? How will you be rooted, and built up in him? How will you be strengthened, in the faith, as you were taught, or as you received?

The good news, is that God, has given us the answers, if we accept them, and the authority, with which they come to us. God works today, through his Holy Spirit, through his words, the Bible, and through his people, the church.

So let me make, some suggestions, looking ahead, at this new term, in the life of the church. Firstly, whether you are a believer, or not, receive, Christ Jesus, as Lord.

Daily embrace, Jesus the person, submit your life, to him, and the authority, of the scriptures, the Bible. Put down, deep roots, when nobody is watching.

Pray, making your heart, known to God. Let him know, how you feel, how you struggle, what you are thankful for, or what you are scared about.

[27 : 17] Commit, to being at Sunday morning meetings. Change your work rota, where possible. Say to your team coach, or your captain, at the beginning of the season, that you are unavailable, for selection, for Sunday morning games.

Make meeting, with other believers, a priority. Put Wednesday evenings, into your diary, and commit to being there, this term. We have a weekly home group, as Jonathan has already mentioned, where we meet, to encourage each other, and to pray God's truths, into each other's lives.

Speak to Johnny, Ralph, or Jonathan, afterwards, if you would like to know more, about that. Why don't you, try and find somebody, or a couple of people, whose schedules, fit yours, and meet for coffee, once a week, over lunch.

Use that time, to open a book, of the Bible. See what it says, together. If you are in college, or if you are in school, commit, to meeting others, in your college, or in your school.

Go to CU, the Christian Union, a great place, to meet people, to encourage each other, a little oasis, in the desert, that is college. Meet with each other, and encourage them, and you will be encouraged.

[28 : 32] chapter 2, verse 7, concludes with, overflowing, with thankfulness.

Now, Paul doesn't just, add this little bit in, to pat us on the back, and say, there, there, everything will be okay. All we have to do, is say, thank you God, and everything will be fine. No.

As we are rooted in Christ, as we are built up in him, we are strengthened, in the faith. We realize, more and more, our desperate state, without him.

We see our sin, and how much, we have been saved from. chapter 112, says, joyfully, giving thanks, to the Father, who has qualified you, to share in the inheritance, of the saints, in the kingdom of light, for he has rescued us, from the dominion, of darkness, and brought us, into the kingdom, of the son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We have been rescued, from the dominion, of darkness. That's the price, that Christ paid, on the cross. We have been rescued, from this pit of despair, and we have been brought, into the kingdom, of the son he loves.

[29 : 53] We have so much, to be thankful for. Yes, life is hard. We have struggles, we have frustrations, every day. But we have so much, to be thankful for.

Life would be worse, if we didn't have Christ. Now all these things, that I've listed out, all these good recommendations, all these suggestions, for the term ahead, they won't make you, a Christian.

Only God can do that. However, I would dare, to suggest, that a Christian, cannot survive, without these things.

Long distance relationships, don't work with God. Following Jesus, is a relationship. Like any relationship, there needs to be talking, prayer.

There needs to be listening, reading his words, or the words he speaks, through other people, who are rooted, in his word. This new term, let's commit, to continuing, with Jesus Christ, as Lord.

[31 : 11] Let's root ourselves, in his word. Let's encourage each other, at every opportunity, to continue, to live, in him.

And now, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you, for your word.

Thank you, for your Holy Spirit, who unveiled this, to us. Father, forgive me, when I pick and choose, which parts I listen to, or which I choose, to apply.

We are so, in need of your grace, thank you, for your forgiveness, which is available, to all of us, through Jesus. Thank you, that through his, selflessness, our selfishness, can be forgiven.

Please Lord, would you show, me, show each of us, this coming week, how we can change, to be more like Jesus. Help me, help us, to be daring enough, to make those changes.

[32 : 28] Be gracious, to us as we try. We pray this, for the sake of Jesus, his kingdom, and for your glory. Amen. thank you Alex a lot to think about for the coming week when we're thinking about the sermon this morning just making notes Alex I just thought maybe we might just pause for a moment or two and just for ourselves just to think, just to pray to God about these things that we've heard so just some quiet reflection just for a minute, just between yourself and God some things I'd written down about submitting your life to the authority of Jesus putting down deep roots when nobody's watching praying, encouraging in the new term and what's going on, committing ourselves to continue in Jesus just before, in a few moments we're going to be singing in Christ alone, just let's pause for a moment and just between ourselves and God just ask God about these things do we submit ourselves to the authority of Jesus, are we willing to be continually rooted in him and to be seeking ways of being more deeply rooted and committing ourselves to continue with Jesus, let's just pause for a moment in Christ's and my hope is found let's stand and continue our worship by singing this song of praise

Jesus and he is Tell me because of the work of Jesus