

Walk in Christ, Positive

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Date: 18 February 2024

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[0 : 00] All right, Colossians chapter 2. Colossians chapter 2 verse 6 and 7. And while you're turning there, let me tell you a couple things what's going on here. This really is kind of the center of Colossians. Everything that Paul's been aiming up to kind of hits right here, verses 6 and following. And then as we come out of this, it'll be kind of the application of the truth of these things that he's getting to. And the sermon today is walk in Christ. And I said positive. That's because he's going to tell us positively what we need to do to walk in Christ.

And then he's going to tell us in verse 8 things we have to sort of be aware of, negative things we need to take away from our lives in order to walk in Christ. And so that's that's where we're headed here. Beginning in verse 6, here's the word of the Lord.

Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude. As we pray this morning, I want to be praying for you who have taken up the challenge to do just this, to walk in him. Husbands that have taken up the challenge to read one-on-one with their households. And so as we pray for God to open our minds and to understand his word this morning, I want to pray for you as well, that God would keep you encouraged and strengthened in the task ahead. So let's pray. Father, we do thank you for those who have taken up the challenge to read the Bible one-to-one with those in their household. We pray, Lord, that you would strengthen them, that you would encourage them. We pray, Father, that you would help them to not give up in doing good, for in due season they will reap if they do not grow weary. And so we just pray, Father, that you would strengthen them. And we pray, Father, that even this word this morning that we are hearing from you from these two verses, Lord, may it be an encouragement to them, an encouragement to all of us that we may walk in a way that is pleasing to you. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. So it's no secret, you know, that the Bible talks about the Christian life as like a walk, a journey. It's a journey through valleys and across rivers, over mountains, forests. It's down rough paths. It's down paths that sometimes might be smooth. It's a journey in which we're going to pass people who are going the same direction. Sometimes we're going to meet people who will seek to convince us that we're headed in the wrong direction. And sometimes we're going to meet people who will try to convince us that there is a better way to go. We will face despair, discouragement, and troubles.

We may even face our own fears and failures. Sometimes it becomes extremely difficult to walk the Christian life. It is not a walk that's for the faint of heart. It's not a walk that is your best life now. It's down a road of nothing but trouble with an enemy that hates us because he hates the master that we follow. So Paul tells us that we ought to walk. That's the command in verses six and seven.

[3 : 50] And all of the things surrounding it give us a glimpse as to what that looks like. And you'll remember that Paul is saying, listen, there's false teachers in your church. There's people teaching false doctrine in your church, Colossians. Don't listen to these false teachers. Instead, walk. And this walking that they're going to do is going to help prepare them to be able to withstand the false doctrine that they're being taught. And I would say in our day and age, because you can get online and you can find any number of false teachers that you want. They are out there. There's a bunches of them.

We need to be prepared and ready. And so I want us to look at the three things that he tells us about walking, living this Christian life, and what we need to do. The first thing he says is this, that we need walk like you received. Walk like you received. Now what Paul's doing is he's making the comparison in verse six, as you received, therefore walk in this way. So the walk has to be like the receiving.

So we need to talk about what it is to receive Christ Jesus, the Lord. This receive is something in their past. It's something that's already happened to them. So they have to look in their past to know how to live in the present. The second thing about it is that it says receive Christ Jesus, the Lord.

Now here's the truth about Paul. Okay. And, and this is one of those things that you just got to know this word receive. Every place that Paul uses it, except this one is clearer. Is it clearly? It's super clear that what he means is to receive truth, to receive doctrine, to receive thoughts, ideas, theologies.

Okay. Let me give you two examples. First Corinthians 15 verse one. Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel, which I preached to you. So it's a gospel. He preached his truths that he preached, which also you received and in which you stand. There are certain truths that are divine truths that are always true and they never change. And a part of the Christian life is receiving those truths.

[6 : 33] You can see it again in Galatians chapter one, verse nine, as we have said before. So I say again, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed. How can you know if he's accursed? If you don't have doctrines that you've received so you can compare what's being preached to you. Every place that Paul uses this word, it clearly means to receive doctrine, to receive truth. The only place it's not clear that that's what he means is right here in verse six, because here it varies clearly to me means the idea of receiving a person or welcoming a person, welcoming Christ Jesus the Lord. So the question is, is Paul meaning for us to think of both? And I think he is.

I think he is. When we receive, we are to receive, first of all, truth about who Christ Jesus the Lord is. Because if you don't receive that truth first, you cannot receive the person second. If you don't understand who he is, you can't receive him. So we receive doctrine and we welcome a person. And in this case, it's Christ, the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the anointed one of the Lord coming to put an end to sin. Jesus, the divine, become human, taking on human flesh, being the one born of a virgin, the one who died upon the cross and who was raised from the dead, the Lord, the Lord, Christ Jesus, the Lord, Yahweh, the divine covenant promise fulfilling God, the self-sufficient, eternal and unchangeable God. That's what Paul is saying is, listen, you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, and as you received him, so walk in him. The walk is to be like the receiving. You see, what Paul's getting at is that he's focused on the total person receiving the total person. That's what he's focused on here. You can't just take a little piece of Jesus because, you see, the Gnostics would have you believe he had no humanity. And many of the false teachers of Judaism would have you believe that he's not the Lord. And Paul is saying, no, you received Christ Jesus the Lord, therefore walk in

Christ Jesus the Lord. I was taught growing up, and maybe you were taught this too, I was taught that when you're young and you first become a Christian, you could receive Jesus as your Savior, and then maybe one day down the road when you're, you know, a little bit more mature, and maybe you're kind of into this a little bit more, you could receive Jesus as Lord. Hmm. I'm looking at you, and most of you are shaking your heads like, that sounds crazy. Well, I'm so glad that that sounds crazy to you, because, like, I was really worried. Because like most Baptist churches in East Texas, that's exactly, that's exactly how it goes. So, you know, you would have your loved one that when they were, went to vacation Bible school, and they prayed some sort of prayer, and they got dunked, and everything, and they're on the church roll, and then they moved off to college, and then they got a job, and they never moved back here. They never moved their membership anywhere else. They never go to church, and they're not even serious about who the Lord is. I was told, well, they received him as Savior, but they just haven't received him as Lord yet. And the answer to that is, if you do not receive all of who he is, you have not received him. He, if he is not going to be Lord of your life, he will not be

Savior of your life either. And so this walk that we're supposed to have is a walk in him as we received him. And how did that happen? We, we understood the truths, right? Think about the truths we understood. We understood that we were sinners. We understood that we deserved death and hell. We understood that there was nothing in us that was good. Then we understood the truth of who Jesus was, right? That he's the Son of God. He's the Son of Man. He's the King of all. He's the Lamb of God. He's the promised Messiah. He's the Lord and Master over all things. And in seeing that, and seeing ourselves, we humbled ourselves, we repented of our sin, and we trusted in Christ Jesus, the Lord, to save our souls, to be covered in his righteousness, and to be his, for him to be our boss, our master, and our Lord. That's how we received him. So when we walk, when we live the

Christian life, it ought to be a Christian life in which we have a strong sense of our sinful state. I understand I'm a wicked sinner. I know sometimes it's a joke because Dave Ramsey says it. You ask me, how am I doing? And I say, better than I deserve. And I know that can be kind of a tongue-in-cheek thing to say. But the truth of the matter is, is that to live the Christian life is to live in such a way that understands that the only reason that hell doesn't open up and swallow me right now is the mere grace of God. And if I live with that, understanding and believing it's true, not just a fun little Christian thing to say, that is what it is to live the Christian life. I believe not only my sinful state, but I have to maintain believing Jesus is my only hope.

[12 : 53] that it's not going to be in anything else. Maintaining a life of humility, where the problems between you and me are more my fault than your fault. And I'm willing to take the blame. And so it means I live a life of repentance, a life of faith. You see, it's the same humility, the same admission of guilt that saved us that we have to have as a Christian. Because it's the same grace, the same grace that saved us is the same grace that keeps us saved. The same blood that covers our sin is the same blood that purchased the promise of the Holy Spirit so that the law would be written upon our hearts to empower us to live this Christian life. And the same faith that I use to trust Jesus for salvation is the same faith and repentance that I need every single day. Now that is why when I preach,

I preach and I try to get to what I say the big massive gospel truths to remind us of our sin, to remind us of what Christ has done. That's why we're studying the Ten Commandments during the middle of the week. Because the Ten Commandments help us to understand why the gospel even exists. Right?

The church is built and formed by gospel. Your maturing as a Christian is dependent upon the gospel.

Your growth in your knowledge, your growth in your holiness, your growth in humility depends upon the gospel. And it means this. Number one, you got to be sure you're saved. Are you really saved?

Have you come to a place in your life that you have turned from your sin and trusted in Christ to pay the penalty for your sin? Because without that, there's no moving forward. You can't walk the Christian life if you never started the Christian life. And for those that say, yes, I am. Then the second thing you need to do is go back to the basics. Remember again, the truths of the gospel and how that forms up all of life. Now, I'd love to spend a little bit more time talking about what that means, but that's a big picture idea. And we'll come back to it at some point. But today, I want to move on to the next thing.

[15 : 48] I want to move on to the next thing. And that is that we need to walk towards maturity. We need to walk towards maturity. So this is what Paul does in this verse. Because if you're reading this verse, just kind of like verses one through five, like if you had just sat down to read that, you might get up and walk away kind of going like, what? Because Paul can be that way.

Paul can be a little confusing. As a matter of fact, Peter, the apostle says in second Peter, that some of the things that Paul wrote are difficult to understand. So if you find Paul difficult to understand, you're in good company with Peter, the apostle, because he thought Paul was a little difficult as well. So what does it mean to walk towards maturity? Where am I seeing this in the scripture? Well, so Paul takes the first part of verse seven, connecting it to the walk command, and gives four words to describe sort of how this walk is supposed to happen. And the way that the words read are something like this. So walk in him, having been firmly rooted, that's the first word, now being built up in him, that's the second word, established in your faith or the faith, and we'll get to that. That's the third word. Just as you were instructed, that's the fourth word.

Let me illustrate it this way. I'm going to talk about building a house instead of walking, because maybe we'll all kind of get the flow of how this passage works. Here's the command.

Build your house, having secured your loan and hired your crew, following the plans, just as your permits were approved. You understand what I'm saying? Like all of those things are different things that need to happen. All of those things have all kinds of knowledge behind them, but they all help to come together for that one thing of to build the house. So let's take a look at these four words real quick. The first one is firmly rooted. Yeah, that's the roots of a tree, right? The roots of a tree, they go down deep. They're looking for nutrients. They're looking for strength to be able to hold on for that tree to withstand and be there for a long time. Paul is saying that the Christian life is one that's rooted in Christ. You see, you once were rooted in lust.

You once were rooted in greed. You once were rooted in disobedience to parents or once rooted in serving after other idols. You've been plucked up from that and you've been rooted in Christ.

[18 : 27] And now those roots are to grow down deep. They're to continue to grow strong. That's that first word. That's what it means to walk, right? You need to walk rooted in Christ. Not some other religious system, not some other idea, but Christ. The second word is the word built up. Built up.

This Paul changes his metaphor from agriculture to construction. Built up is taking, you've got a foundation and so you add to it. You build up on this thing. You frame up the walls. You put on a roof.

Your life is being built up with the things that you are learning and understanding. Paul's life before he was a Christian was built upon the traditions of men. He was built on pride.

It was pride as his sole dominating force in his life. It was pride that led him to drag Christians before the Sanhedrin. It was pride in which he boasted as his religious rigor. But now he's being built up in Christ. So his whole life is about Christ. There's a new force in his life. There's a new family. There's a new identity. And he's telling the Colossians, as you walk, walk rooted in Christ with this new identity. Then he says the word established in the faith. Established in the faith.

Let me see if I can explain to you what the word established means. It means established or confirmed. But in this particular word, it's got a progression to it. So let me say it this way. If you had a senior in high school and we said to that student throughout your schooling, even to this day, you are being constantly established and confirmed in the truths and the ways of math.

[20 : 29] What we mean by that is that in age appropriate ways from first grade through kindergarten, they have learned the truths about math and every year it's been confirmed. So it's been it's building upon each year because he doesn't learn about multiplication in third grade to just be told in 10th grade that there's no such thing as multiplication. It builds, right? So that's what this idea is that we are built up, confirmed and established in the faith. Now the NASB, for some reason, has the word your faith and the word your, there is no Greek word behind it. The Greek word your is not there. There is a Greek word for your. It's just not there. The word is the. So this is not about my subjective experience of faith, which is an important thing. Without that subjective experience of faith, I'm not trusting

God personally myself, right? But this is about the objective idea of faith. It's truths that exist outside of me. I feel like I've said this like three times this week already, but these truths exist outside of me, whether I believe them or not, whether I know them or not, they're not like Tinkerbell. They don't need me to believe them to be true. They exist outside of me. Paul is saying that as you walk, you are being constantly established and confirmed in the faith that you are learning truth after truth as the truth of the truth of the truth built upon one another. And that's the way we walk. And the fifth and final, or not the fifth, the fourth word is the word instructed, instructed.

And this word is often translated doctrine in the New Testament because it's about the content of what you know. So the instructed is not about the fact that somebody said something to you, the method, but it's what you were taught. It's the doctrine. Okay, so here's those words real quick. What do we mean? What's going on here with these words? Well, here's what you have to understand. All four of these words are passives. And what that means is that somebody else is doing something to you.

That if you're going to live the Christian life the way that you came into the Christian life, then a lot of what's going to happen to you is going to happen to you because somebody else is going to do that thing to you. Somebody else is going to root you. Somebody else is going to build you up. Somebody else is going to establish you. Somebody else is going to instruct you.

And it is God himself who does these things in your life. And he does it through means. He uses the pastor to help root your life and to build your life and to establish your life and to instruct you in the way that you should go. He uses the Sunday school teacher. He uses the book that somebody wrote. He uses all of these things to do these things in you. It is God who's at work in you to help you walk toward maturity. Your role is to let him do it. Your role is to put yourself in the place of doing this. You have to stay connected to Christ for these things to work. In other words, you can't just go out, never read your Bible, never darken the door of a church, never read any book about the Bible or anything else and expect that your life is going to grow the way Christ wants it to grow. That's like not feeding your animals and expecting them to survive. It's just not going to happen. This right here is my iPad. I use it to preach from because I can make the text really large here so I can see it. But right here is the little place that you plug it in. It's a USB-C port. I'm glad it's not the other weird one, but it's a USB-C and so I can plug it in. And when I plug the USB-C right into that and then I can plug it into the wall to charge it, I can plug it into my laptop.

[25 : 06] And here's what's interesting. When I plug it into my laptop, not only can I charge it, but anything on it that I don't want it, I can take it off. Anything that I want to put on it new, I can put on it. But if I plug it in and it won't charge and I can't put new content on it, something's wrong. The Christian life is this. He's the one who's working in you. You must stay plugged into Christ so that he can take off of you the bad things, put on you the good things, and charge you up so you can live how you're supposed to live. And if there's no charging happening and there's no new content getting downloaded and there's no bad content being taken off, then something's wrong with your Christian life. And what are you going to do about that? So yes, staying connected to the Lord means reading your Bible. It means attending worship.

It means listening to the sermons. It means listening to the sermons, maybe like you've never listened to them before. I remember, I remember back in the day that, you know, the way that I would listen to a sermon is see the passage read, close my Bible, set it down, and just begin to count ceiling tiles.

But what you've got to do to listen to a sermon is that the things that I'm saying, I'm trying to take them right out of the passage. So part of what I'm doing as I'm talking is I'm trying to prove to you that the conclusion that I have came from that passage so you can follow my logic. Sometimes my logic's not very good and sometimes I'm hard to follow.

Sometimes I got way too many words and you're going like, wow, he says so much. But the fact of the matter is, is that this is what we got? Like, this is the best you got right now, okay? So like, there's nobody else. So I might as well do it, okay? So you just have to put up with it and live with it for a season. And while you do, you learn how to listen to what the Word says. Because the important thing is not me. The important thing is what did God say in that passage? You know, you do know that the worst Bible study question to ever be created in the world is what does this passage mean to you? Because it's immaterial what the passage means to you until we find out what did God mean by that passage, right? That's what we're trying to do as we preach. You are supposed to walk toward maturity, which means you've got to stay plugged in to the Lord. Well, let's talk about the final thing, walking with gratitude. There's one final word, and it's right there at the end of verse 7, and it's the word overflowing, and it's connected to the previous words. But here's the interesting thing. This is the only word besides the word walk that tells you something you've got to do. These other things, as long as you stay connected to

Christ, they're going to happen in your life. This is something you've got to work at. This is something you have got to do, and that is you must overflow with gratitude. You have to overflow with gratitude. This overflow is this idea that you have a surplus, you have leftovers, you have an abundance of gratitude that you're giving to God.

You're giving to God this gratitude for all that He is, for all that He has done, and for all that He is doing. And this word gratitude, it's literally the word good grace. Good grace. In the Greek, it's the word karis, which is grace, and eu, which means good. Eu, like eulogy. A eulogy is eu. That's good word.

[29 : 22] You get up at a funeral, and you give a eulogy, which means you're giving a good word about the person that you're celebrating their home going. This word is Eucharist. It's the good grace.

So your life is to overflow with gratitude. It's to overflow with good grace, that grace you've received from God, and grace you give back to Him. Grace doesn't come from you, but it comes from God.

And so gratitude is this natural outflow of the heart that God has been rooting, establishing, building, and instructing. A heart that receives the truth of God. The heart that's plugged into Christ, staying plugged in, that gets taught the truths and the doctrines of the Word, that understands who God is. The natural outflow is a heart of gratitude. A heart that speaks out this good grace.

Let me say it this way. If grace were a substance, it would probably be light. And if it were light, then being grateful would be that light would emanate from your eyes.

Light would shine out of your mouth. Light would glow from your teeth. Light would glimmer from all of your skin. You would be giving back to God what He gave to you because you are thankful, you are humbled, and you are pleased with what He's doing in your life and in your heart. And remember, Paul is telling them this, that they ought to overflow with gratitude because there's false doctrine around them. How does gratitude have anything to do with fighting false doctrine?

[31 : 21] You know, bacteria gets into your system. Bad bacteria. Sometimes it can multiply so fast that the body can't keep up with it. Sometimes the bacteria kills good cells. Sometimes bacteria makes toxins.

Those are all the ways that it can harm you and make you sick, maybe even kill you if you're not careful. And so what do we do with bacteria? What does our body do? The hope is that our immune system will fight the bacteria. That's the hope. But sometimes our immune system is not working the right way.

Something's happened to our immune system and it's just not functioning. Sometimes maybe it's because we've got other diseases going on that make it difficult. And so sometimes we need a little boost to our immune system to fight the bacteria. But the hope is that we can treat our bodies in such a way, that we can live in such a way as to keep bacteria from hurting us because we do the preventative maintenance. We do the things to neutralize the bacteria.

And without that work, we'll take over. So here's the analogy. False doctrine is spiritual bacteria.

False doctrine is sometimes called by Paul doctrines of demons. False doctrine wants to penetrate your life. It wants to get into your heart. It wants to make you sick.

[33 : 08] And one of the things that false doctrine always does is it increases your pride. It makes you think more of yourself or it makes you think of yourself more.

It makes you think more of yourself or it makes you think of yourself more. Both of those are pride. And Paul, in trying to help them fight false doctrine, gets down to this place of saying, overflow with gratitude. Why? Because gratitude is the antibiotic.

Because as you're fighting your own pride, you're not going to believe things that are false that would encourage your pride. It's pretty easy to see if you think about the whole LGBTQ movement. They have a whole month dedicated to sin. The sin pride.

If anything that anybody were to teach about any of that were true, it would never yield pride. But it always yields pride. It is the most selfish thing you can do.

He says we're to overflow with gratitude. We're to turn our eyes to the Lord and see all that He has done.

[34 : 34] And turn our hearts to give Him thanks. As Christians, this is how we walk. But maybe you're not a believer. Maybe you've never trusted Christ.

And so what you need today is seeing these things about Christians. Maybe that spurs your mind on to say, well, what about me? And the answer is this.

You have to receive Him first to be able to walk in Him. You can't just walk with Him. And so at some point in your life, you have to see your sin.

You have to admit that it's wrong. And you have to admit that it's a violation of who God is. And then you have to see Jesus as the payment for that sin. And then you throw yourself in trust and hope upon Him that He will save you.

Then you can walk in Him. Let's pray.