

## Rooted - Part 2

### “Keep It Simple, Saint”

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV

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The Book of Colossians in the New Testament was written by the Apostle Paul from of a Roman prison cell. Timothy was with him taking dictation and then took it to the Church in Colossae, a city that Paul had never been to, and a people that he'd never met. He had spent two years planting a church in the city of Ephesus, and one of the people who got saved in Ephesus was a man named Epaphras who returned to Colossae and started a church there.

Paul had heard about the new believers in this city of Colossae and was writing a letter to help them, because even though they were just recently saved, they were already receiving threats against their newborn faith. The Gnostics were a blended group of cultural and Jewish people who were bringing outside knowledge into the Church that was in addition to, and apart from, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was saying to this church, *"Hey, things are already getting complicated for you and some people are coming in from the outside saying you need to add this thing, this practice, and this idea to your faith if you really want to be saved."*

Paul could see this was leading to a dangerous situation as these Gnostics came in and said they had special knowledge - privileged knowledge - supernatural knowledge that was necessary to really be saved. This is something that's a common and recurring theme even in our culture today where there's a tendency in the human heart to want knowledge or secrets that other people don't have. It's a very tempting and juicy idea of knowing something "special" that no one else knows. But we need to understand the way God works - the way the gospel works - that what we actually need is not a secret.

In fact, what we need is *simple*, and not only is it simple, but God is shouting it from the rooftops. He's shouting it through creation. He's shouting it all around us. He's not trying to hide the real knowledge we need. So, whenever somebody comes to us and says they have the "secret," that's probably not Jesus. That's probably not God and it's probably not the Gospel. That's what Paul's trying to address with the Colossian church here. There's *true* knowledge and there's *counterfeit* knowledge. There's true wisdom and there's counterfeit wisdom.

The only real way that the Bible says we can tell the difference between what's true and what's counterfeit is through the fear of the Lord, which comes only out of a relationship with him. Then, we're able to differentiate between the simple truth of the gospel and everything else that tries to creep in and crowd in and complicate it. The simplicity of what God has for us is to recognize, submit to, and embrace the reality and the totality of who Jesus really is. Scripture tells us that Jesus is supreme and he is all-sufficient. He's supreme over all things and everyone for all time, and he has everything we need for every situation we will ever face.

It all begins and it ends with Jesus and everything holds together because of him, and without him there is nothing. Without Jesus, there's nothing, and apart from him, we can do nothing of any value. At the end of the day, all we really need is Jesus, the Word of God, and the help of the Holy Spirit, that reveal who Jesus really is - the only true knowledge we'll ever need. Nothing needs to be added to it and nothing should be taken from it. *"Keep it simple, saint"* is what Paul was trying to tell the Colossians, and he's still saying it to us in the Church today.

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV

*"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*

Paul's fear was that they were going to let Satan complicate the Gospel, deceive them, and draw them away from the simplicity of knowing, following, and loving Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these other things will be added to you."* But Satan's very first temptation of Adam and Eve was that they didn't have *all* the knowledge they needed - that God was somehow withholding some privileged and profitable information that they deserved - *then* they'd really have the full package and they'd get *everything*.

Many still buy into this lie today that maybe Jesus isn't enough - the gospel and the Word of God isn't enough, and we need something else to go along with it. It's the oldest trick in the book and is what sets us on a collision course with sin and disaster as we draw away from Jesus and into a wisdom and a knowledge that is not from God. We often make confusing the things that God has made very clear. We complicate what God has made simple for us. We do that so that we can ease, avoid, or excuse our own need to change - that we're a special case - that our situation is different - and we complicate what God has made simple.

1 John 3:2 NKJV

*"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

When Jesus appears, we will appear with him and we will be just like him. Every saved and redeemed Christian who ever lived will be just like Jesus. That means one of us has got to change, and it's not going to be *him*. That means we need to change. God is working change and transformation in our lives through the simplicity and the power of his gospel that he's delivered to us.

1 John 2:6 NKJV

*"He who says he abides in him [Jesus] ought himself also to walk just as he walked."*

Scripture wouldn't tell us to do this unless it *meant* for us to do it and that it was actually possible to live like Jesus lived on this earth by his grace, his power, and in the simplicity of his gospel.

Colossians 1:9 NKJV

*"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding..."*

After Paul heard about how they'd become born again and were thriving as new Christians - he heard about their newborn faith - he immediately began to pray for them, asking God to fill them even more. Paul had his own stuff going on in prison and he had every reason to be focused on himself and not thinking about praying and blessing other people. He didn't know these people personally, and he'd never met them before but he was drawing near to them in spirit by praying for them.

God does something when we pray. He connects us. He restores things. He heals things when we pray. He forges new things when we pray. That's why it's critical that we don't pray only when we feel like it, or just for those we already know and love. We probably ought to pray most for those in our lives where there's a disruption in the relationship. The shortest distance between two people to reconnect a relationship is when one person starts to pray for the other. God begins to move and shift and change things in our heart as we engage in his process of prayer.

Paul understood this simple practice of prayer and was demonstrating it to the Colossian church. God closes the distance gap between people through prayer. He doesn't *need* our prayers, but he *commands* us to pray ceaselessly. We need what comes out of prayer. God changes us and he creates a heart and a mind and a spirit-shift on the inside of us where we're able to engage people at a level we could never do on our own because God gives grace to his people when they pray from a heart that is like his heart.

The pressures of life reveal what's really in our hearts and we see Paul under tremendous pressure, and it revealed what he had on the inside - the Holy Spirit and the power and the grace of God. When he got squeezed, out came the Holy Spirit and prayer and wisdom and counsel and knowledge from heaven. When we get squeezed, it reveals things we've been depending on other than the simplicity of Jesus himself. Paul is dealing with a church that was adding in things to that, an attitude of whatever worked for them, not what worked for God.

The Book of Proverbs says that wisdom is the principle thing and that it comes from the fear of the Lord. But, not all knowledge produces wisdom, and not all knowledge produces understanding. Like in the garden, the serpent tricked Adam and Eve into some legitimate knowledge that didn't lead to wisdom, but it led to their death and their destruction. Knowledge apart from God is not what we want. We want the knowledge that comes *from God*. The Greek word used in the New Testament for *knowledge* is *gnosko*, which means “*knowledge by personal relational experience.*”

The only knowledge we really need is the knowledge that comes out of a relationship with God. As he shows and teaches and reveals things to us through his Word and through his inter-activity in our life, real knowledge is produced that then produces wisdom and understanding from heaven, not from this earth. That's the type of wisdom and knowledge Paul is praying that they would be filled with, and it's hard to know the difference unless we're leaning into the simplicity of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:18 NLT

*"The message of the cross, the gospel of Jesus is foolish to those who are headed for destruction."*

1 Corinthians 3:19 NLT

*"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God."* We're either a fool to God or a fool to this world, but we have to choose which one it is. We can't impress both. Whose praise do we really want at the end of the day? Whose acceptance matters most to us? Paul continues to pray for them in Colossians 1:10 - *"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him. Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."* If we want to please God, we have to know God, and there's only one way to walk *worthy* of the Lord and that's to walk hand in hand with him.

Jesus is worthy, and he said, *"Follow me."* It's not that *we're* worthy, but if we'll follow *him*, if we'll take his hand, he said, *"I'll make you worthy. I'll cover you with my shed blood, with my sacrifice, and you'll get to wear my righteousness. I'm going to put a clean robe on you. I'm going to send my Holy Spirit to live on the inside of you. I'm going to pour My grace and power and favor and sufficiency on you."*

Jesus says, *"I will make you worthy so you can wake up in the morning and say, 'My aim is to please Him and to walk worthy of the Lord and what He did for me.'"* It's not on us. It's on him, but we have to participate. We have a role to play in partnership with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Only he can make us worthy. This is what Jesus has done for us. He says, *"I'm going to get you access to places that you don't have access to, to things you didn't earn and stuff that you're not worthy of, but I'm going to make you worthy, so walk worthy of the Lord."* This will change us if we can get a hold of it.

Colossians 1:10-12 NKJV

*"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."*

Jesus has qualified us. We can be counted worthy because we've been *qualified*. The Father has qualified us to be partakers of an eternal inheritance in Jesus Christ. We've been qualified *in him*. Paul wanted us to have the power of God so that we can have patience and all longsuffering with joy. The proof of God's power and grace and strengthening is that over the decades of our life, we can remain faithful to God without quitting. That takes the power of God. That's called *longsuffering*. As we face trouble and trials and things that would attempt to shake us, divert us, and confuse us, we're somehow able by his grace to make it through to the other side in the supernatural joy of the Lord.

Paul is praying this for the Colossians and for us, that we would be strengthened and have patience from above to make it to the end of this thing with a smile on our face, with joy in our heart, and a skip in our step - not because we're faking it till we make it, but because the Holy Spirit is bursting out of the inside of us. This is *The Life*, the *Christian* life that Jesus died for us to live. This is the type of life that will change nations and communities and families and bring lost people into the Kingdom of God. It's the power of God that we all need to be strengthened - *with endurance*.

Endurance and perseverance with joy is the autograph of God's grace on the human heart. It's him saying, *"I was here. Look at their joy, their longsuffering, and their patience in spite of all the mess that they've been through."* Only God can do that. We understand with our own kids what will bring them true joy in the long run is not what they want - not what their *flesh* wants. We don't just want them to be happy for a moment but then miserable for a lifetime. We want them to be equipped with everything they need to live for the long haul - for the marathon of life - in patience, longsuffering, resilience, and the ability to make it through with the joy of the Lord.

Colossians 1:15-17 NKJV

*"Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see - such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together."*

Jesus existed before anything else was created and he is supreme over all of creation. Literally everything came through and by the hand of Jesus Christ before anything was created. This is the answer to the most important questions about our life: *How did we get here, why are we here, and what is our purpose in life?* We exist for him - for relationship with him, and for his pleasure. He delights in us and in the details of our life. Every day of our life - the way he planned it - he's written out in a book, and he's invited us to join the story that he wrote for us.

Why? because he created us for himself. We were created *on purpose* for a purpose, which means that our value and our significance are established and sustained by him. Our value and worth is defined by Jesus. Only he could define what we're worth because he made us for himself. Any worth we try to find apart from him will crumble and make no sense because nothing and no one has any say over our life except him. It's all about Jesus.

Hebrews 1:2-3 NKJV

*"God...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power."*

Everything holds together because of Jesus and his love and his grace towards us. As scientists have studied the atoms that make up our body, they cannot explain what holds our protons and our neutrons together because everything "science" says is that they should fly apart and not be able to co-exist or to hold their form, but there is some "*force*" holding protons and neutrons together constantly. That force literally holds every proton and neutron together in the nucleus of every atom that consists of who we are. Also, there is a glue that holds every cell together in our body called *Laminin*, which is in the shape of a cross - another message from God, saying, *"Hey, don't forget Jesus, the simplicity of Jesus Christ and the gospel. I uphold all things, and in Me all things consist and have their being. I literally hold everything together."* The very glue of ourselves is the cross of Jesus Christ that is binding us together and holding us in his love!

**Prayer** *Father, thank You that this message of who You are will take root and bear fruit in our lives. God, help us to yield ground in our heart to You, Lord, that we would have the courage and the faith to simply surrender to the supremacy and all-sufficiency that is who You are. Lord, would You just bring in a wave of Your presence, Your Holy Spirit, and Your renewing goodness this week? We drink it in and we receive it by faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.*