

Rooted - Part 6

"Jesus Is Enough"

Colossians 2:6–16 ESV

The heart of what we're talking about is having our roots so deep down in the soil of what's happening that no storm in life can topple us over. The root systems of a large oak tree go deep and wide. They can be larger and broader than the canopy itself, so that when the winds come - not *if*, but *when* they come - the trees will remain upright. They won't be uprooted or toppled over by the winds. In the same way, God is calling for us to be rooted in Christ - to be rooted in the Word of God - so that when the winds of life blow, we won't be toppled over.

Paul was writing to believers in the church in Colossae which was a city in decline, and it was filled with lots of pagan beliefs and systems, and there were these brand new believers in Christ. They were a church of people who had never *been* to church, and all of them were that way. They were a church plant that was just getting started and had no foundation, but they were doing the best they could. Paul got word of this while in a Roman jail cell and he began to write letters to the various churches. These were called the prison epistles.

Paul was writing to the various churches, first of all, to let them know that he was okay, but also to bring teaching and correction against different heresies and false teachings being brought into the church as though they could add something else to Jesus. They would say things like, *"Look, Jesus is good, but you also need something more. You need more rules. So, we're going to go back and we're going to drag Judaism into Christianity."* But, Jesus said, *"There's a new covenant."* And in the Lord's Supper, he said, *"This is My blood of the new covenant."* But they were trying to bring the old back in and say, *"No, no, we need Jesus. Jesus is good, but we also need more rules, and we also need more revelation."*

In other words, we need more than what Jesus is teaching us. Jesus said in the great commission, *"Go therefore, make disciples."* He was teaching them to obey what he had told them. So, now they're wanting to add to Jesus teachings. That still happens today. There's so many things out there right now, where we take Jesus, but then start adding things to him as though Jesus isn't enough. And that really begs the question, *"Is Jesus enough for us?"* Really, it's Jesus plus *nothing*. He must be *enough* or we will be chasing other things, trying to fill a void that we somehow think Jesus can't fill. *It's Jesus plus nothing*. And Paul was bringing clarity to all this.

So there's more *rules*, more *revelation*, and then it's more spiritual experiences - we have to go "deeper" in the spirit. This is where things can get very soulish in the Christian life. This is something we have to watch ourselves - "*more rules, more revelation.*" But when they were talking about strange spiritual experiences, they weren't talking about an encounter with Jesus, an encounter with the Spirit, or an encounter with the God the Father. They were talking about *very* strange things - strange visitations, familiar spirits and all kinds of strange things that they were bringing from paganism into the church.

But Paul answers clearly - "*No. Jesus is enough.*" It's Jesus plus *nothing*. Jesus is enough if we never hear from him again, because he's already done enough. If we never have an overwhelming sense of his presence where we're undone, it's okay because he's *enough* - and he's done enough. There are Christians that have been chasing God but feel like they're always chasing something that can't be apprehended - that somehow God is just out of their reach - somehow he's just beyond what they can get to, like the proverbial dangling carrot that's just out of reach.

But here's the good news - not only is Jesus within our reach, if we're a child of God and we said yes to him and we invited him into our life and we followed him in a believer's baptism and now we're a disciple of Jesus, we *already have* everything we need that pertains to life. In 2 Corinthians 12:9. Paul had prayed three times for God to remove his "thorn in the flesh," and all three times, the Lord said, "*No.*" He didn't remove it. God response to Paul was, "*My grace is sufficient. My grace is enough for you. For my power is made perfect (literally, complete or enough) - complete, whole, and enough in weakness.*" The great Apostle Paul was resolving himself to say, "*All right, if God's grace is enough, then it's enough, and I will stand on that and I will be content with that and I will continue to do exactly what he's called me to.*"

We have to be careful when we begin to chase "experiential Christianity," and it's everywhere out there. We Americans are so dopamine-addicted. We feel like we've got to *feel* something every time we *do* something. But, it's not what we *feel* that moves the needle in the world, it's who we are on a continual consistent basis. It's the little incremental things we do every day that are going to matter over the long haul.

Dallas Willard said, "*It's actually the long obedience in one direction.*" When we move into that mindset that we're going to do the right thing, put down our screens, spend time in the morning in God's Word, and have it take priority in our life, the sense of God's presence will come because now it's built on this Book. It's built on these encounters that we read about in this Book. It's not just getting goosebumps or Holy Ghost chill bumps.

"My grace is sufficient for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul says, "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. So, if when I'm weak, I'm actually stronger, then I will be weak so that his power will be revealed." Paul didn't want people to say, *"Look how amazing Paul is. Look how great Paul is."* No. Paul said, "I'll rather boast about my weaknesses." That's transparent.

Colossians 2:6 ESV

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

How did we receive Jesus? We receive him by grace. The way we arrived is the way we're going to maintain. How we came is how we will continue. Most of us were raised in a very Puritan work ethic. We *work* eight hours - we get paid eight hours. What happens is, we get older, we come to Christ, and then we drag transactional living and that transactional mentality into our faith. *"Well, if I will just do this for God, then he will do this for me. If I'll just act better, if I'll just read the Bible more, if I'll just spend more time and if I'll memorize more scripture, then God will bless me."* And we get into a transactional mentality. we drag it right into our faith, which is exactly what the Colossians were doing as they were coming into the church as new believers.

They were dragging all of that in. And it began to mix and dilute the purity of their faith. Things were coming in and, over time, one thing was accepted here and one thing was embraced there. *"Yeah, we should teach the law, maybe we should go back and teach Judaism, maybe we should get people under the old covenant and the new. Hey, two covenants is better than one."* As they were bringing all that in, it was diluting the purity of it, and Paul says, *"I have to tell them that as you receive Jesus the Lord, so walk in him by grace through faith and not by performance."*

Bill Gillum said that he boils his whole life-theology and his core value down to this - *"As a follower of Jesus, you're working too hard. You're trying too hard. You're gritting your teeth and trying to make it happen."* But listen to this. How do you receive him? By grace - through faith and not by performance. That's not just how we *receive* him, it's how we grow in him. It's how we drive our roots deeper down into the soil - not by adding things, not by bringing things in that are that are not in alignment.

Colossians 2:7 ESV

"Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Our roots are going down into the soil. The top soil here in the hill country is very thin, and not very far down is bedrock, which is limestone. And limestone, over time, through weather and water and freezing and more water, it develops a lot of cracks. Many of the trees that have been standing for hundreds of years here in the Hill Country, their roots are not in soil, they're actually in the bedrock. They wrap around shelves of bedrock and literally tie themselves down so that they will stand. And this is what Paul is saying. We need to be rooted and then built up in him - like concrete around a post. But we can't be built up until we're rooted, which is why this is so important.

Paul tacks on the end, *"You need to be overflowing with gratitude, to live a grateful life, to have a grateful attitude, a grateful mentality. You have to be rooted. You have to be built up. You have to be established. Oh, and stay thankful - overflowing with gratitude."* We never graduate from grace. We never outgrow grace. We never outrun it. We never learn so much that we don't need it anymore. God's grace isn't just a pat on the head and saying, *"You're okay."* God's grace is an infusion of his power, his strength, and his authority.

Growth is not moving *beyond* Jesus. It's going deeper *into* Jesus - getting our roots down in the soil and knowing this Book. This is not like microwave popcorn. This will take a lifetime of reading, studying, and meditating - ruminating, thinking, pondering, keeping it before us, keeping it on our mind, keeping it on our heart, and as we do, our roots are going deep down into the soil. Hebrews 6:1 says, *"Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity."*

We go on in Christ growing up. It's time to mature. One of the greatest problems in the church of Jesus Christ is the very broadstroke statement of *immaturity*. Not just *social* immaturity, but *spiritual* immaturity - not understanding the Word, not reading the word, not spending time in, or even having a desire for God's Word. God speaks most through his Word and we should want to hear God's voice. If we get to know his Word, that's going to help us hear him better.

Don't be captured

Colossians 2:8 ESV

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."

That word *captive* literally means in the Greek *kidnapped - taken against your will*. Do not allow yourself. Do not will to be caught up in the latest teaching that comes along. Don't be captured by these false things. The threat wasn't open rebellion. They weren't trying to openly rebel against God. The threat was spiritual *add-ons*. They were tacking things *onto*. It was Jesus plus this - Jesus plus that. Jesus plus tradition. That was one of the things they were trying to add.

*"No, we've got to bring in what used to be. We've got to bring in the old ways of doing it." And that meant pagan traditions, too. We've got to have our idols. We've got to keep our *altars* in our homes. We can't eat this. We can't eat that. Jesus plus philosophy: mindsets and mentalities that had nothing to do with the Word of God or the letters that Paul was sending or the Old Testament covenant teachings. Jesus plus legalism: "Oh, you're not smart enough to handle freedom on your own, so we're going to put some guard rails around you because we who are older in the faith, we know what you need." That sounds a lot like government today, doesn't it?*

"Yeah. We're smarter. We're brighter. So you just normal people, you nameless, faceless crowds, we know what you need. So we're going to put up guard rails because you'll just kill yourself with freedom." And they're saying the same thing right here. They were trying to say, "You know what? You need guard rails. You need traditions. You need philosophy - because you can't be trusted to love God, honor God, and grow in a relationship with him!" And the last thing was Jesus plus hype: "Man, we've just got to get this place whipped up - stir up your faith!"

When everybody's hyped up and whipped up, it's like then people leave church going, "Man, that was a great service, wasn't it? Woo! I'm sweating. That was so good!" They equate a good service with the energy level in the house. Anything that adds to *Christ-as-necessary*, subtracts from *Christ-is-sufficient*. In other words, if it's Jesus *plus* - "now you got to do this," - well, then, "we're going to add another thing and another thing." Every time we do that, we're saying Jesus is not enough. And the more we do that, the less we look to Jesus as our sufficiency.

Just this week, let's put down our screens and quit reading all the "meme-ology" that's out there. There's a lot of graphicology that's *almost* like the Bible - that's *almost* there. But this week, let's make it our prayer to say, "Jesus is enough for me. Jesus is enough. He's enough." In our worship at the Bridge this week, we intentionally did vertical worship with that new song. It was all about talking to him - telling him who he is - thanking him for his grace, his goodness, and his mercy. Vertical worship is intentional where we're actually now moving worship from just singing *about* God to singing *to* him because we want to *connect* with him.

That's one of our *big three rocks*. We want to have an encounter with Jesus every time we're here. And we can't always do it unless we're somehow providing a moment to just talk to him - sing to him. That makes that song not just a song of praise, but a prayer. So in our worship, we're praying to him. Check that out the next time we sing these songs. Just say, is this vertical or horizontal? And horizontal is not bad. Most of the hymns that we've read or sang through the years in our traditional churches were not vertically oriented. They were horizontal. It's the church encouraging the church about the goodness of God.

When the charismatic movement started in the 50's, 60's and 70's, people wanted a more direct encounter with God. They began to write songs singing to him, not just about him. This week let's spend time "vertical" and not just "horizontal." Let's tell our friends about Jesus and talk about his goodness. Let's edify one another. That should never stop. But let's spend more time *vertical* this week than we are *horizontal*. Here's the big idea - if it competes with Christ for our completeness, it is counterfeit. If it competes with Christ for our wholeness - that we are complete in him - then it is a *counterfeit*, and maybe, like the old bank tellers who had to learn how to recognize a counterfeit by only handling real money, maybe if we only handled this for a while and put our screens down, we would start to recognize when a counterfeit comes across our screen ...*Let's stay vertical!*

Prayer

Father, we thank You for the privilege of being rooted in Your Word. Thank You for the book of Colossians. This is a short book, but yet it is so loaded. It really is the highlight reel of Paul's greatest work theologically in Romans. But we love how he brings it into practical places for us in this epistle, written from a Roman prison cell. Lord, we want to take this and we want to go vertical. We want to walk with You and talk with You, worship You, pray to You, and to honor You. We love You. In the name of Jesus. Amen

Declarations

We started with trust in God, and that's how we will live.

Faith launched us, and faith will sustain us.

Our life with God is not built on effort - it's built on faith.

Faith is not just how we start - it's how we live.