

3/31/19 - Col. 2:6-15 - "Rooted, Built-up & Established"

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 March 2019

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] Turn with me to Colossians 2, verse 6, and let's open up with a word of prayer. Lord God, we come to you and we thank you for this word.

We know that it's by your Spirit alone that can bring change. Father, I can read this word all day long, but without your Spirit working within the hearts of everyone who hears.

Father, we are hopeless. We are lost. So Father, we ask for help at this time by your Spirit to guide us through your word, to instruct us, to encourage us, and to challenge us with your word.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Colossians 2, verse 6, reads, Therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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

[1 : 26] For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Verse 13, If you can recall different phases in life where you just feel like you're on a mountaintop, where just the greatest memories, the greatest joys that you can ever recall, foundational times.

I often think of like a honeymoon. You know, my wife and I look back in our time of our honeymoon, and we, no matter what life might bring, it could be the most challenging times.

But if we go back to like our honeymoon, our wedding day, when those doors open and here comes the bride, those really good mountaintop experiences, those experiences are so rooting and reminding to us as life continues.

[3 : 25] Because obviously it's impractical to ever go through life and imagine that it's a legitimate thing to think that you're going to continue on a honeymoon phase.

I experienced it with the ordination, or not the ordination, the installation service here at Youngstown Metro Church. It was just like, I couldn't even talk. I was speechless by the love and the care of everyone who was here.

And the plans and everything that took place behind the scenes, all for that one time of honor. I look at these times as being foundational and something that I can look back on.

Because obviously, it's like the week, the day after the installation service, it's like the honeymoon's over, time to get to work. And I think I sprouted a gray hair in my beard. I showed Matt as evidence.

So, these honeymoon phases are so foundational in our lives that we can look back on. And I think the same is for coming to know Christ for the first time.

[4 : 35] That when you come to Christ for the first time, you sense that fulfillment, that awe, this awestruck wonder of a wretched man like me can be forgiven.

That the record can be wiped clean all because of one man's obedience to the cross. We're going to be talking about a model for Christian maturity in the first point today.

And we're going to be talking about this honeymoon phase. Verse 6 says, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Paul starts out this passage here with therefore. Therefore, and common phrase, what's therefore, therefore. This therefore brings in a bunch of baggage, which Brad has spoken about, which we preached on many weeks ago.

It creates a bridge and unifies the previous flow of thoughts and statements. It's a conjunction that instructed the Colossian church of the person and the proclaimed message of Christ, passed on by the apostolic body, which Paul was a part of.

[6 : 08] And now Paul, by saying this to, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus, so walk in him. This isn't insinuating that the church was doing anything wrong.

It's not like they weren't submitting to the Lordship of Christ. However, as many faithful ministers, week after week, like me, just continue to remind you and remind you.

He's reminding this church of the truth, the authenticity of the message, of the apostolic message, of Jesus Christ being Lord of all.

And this is a significant statement. These two verses hold the very purpose of the letter. Literally, this is the key verse to understanding the entire purpose of the epistle of Colossians.

And some commentators identify this statement, these two verses, as the thesis statement for this book. And we observe four participles here of rooted, of built up, look at your text, of established, and of thanksgiving.

[7 : 23] You know, tracing back, like I said, this is going to be tying in, like we've been building up all this while through this book in Colossians. Tracing back to the introductory section between verse 1 and 14 in chapter 1, we see Paul expounding upon this idea.

Remember it? I think I was like a broken record player up here of talking about walking in a manner worthy of the Lord. Does anybody remember me talking about that? Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Well, Paul's talking about that right now in this passage. Let's turn back. Look in your text in chapter 1, verses 10 through 12.

That as Paul said, to be bearing fruit, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, is to be bearing fruit in every good work. Or in the text today, being rooted in Him, as verse 6 says today.

If you look back to walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, is to be growing in the knowledge of God. And in today's text, in verse 6, being built in Him.

[8 : 33] And if you look back to being strengthened with all power. Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, to be strengthened with all power. Looking at today, we're talking about being established in the faith.

And then back to chapter 1, one final time with these participles. Giving thanks to the Father. And today, what do we read? Abounding in what?

In thanksgiving. Paul is calling upon the genesis of their faith to be remembered. The very beginning, the foundation of their faith.

They are called to look back. Look at the tense of these participles here. Rooted. Built up. Present tense. Established. So specifically between the two participles, rooted and established, is telling you to look back at something.

And it's looking back at this honeymoon phase. Look back at this time where there was humility. Where there was gratitude.

[9 : 44] Where there was wonder in the cross. Look back, Colossian Church. And at that moment, at the moment of their faith, they were rooted and established.

Because one thing that needs to be understood about saving faith is that it doesn't waver. There's no Christian roller coasters of getting off the roller coaster and getting back on.

Getting off when you're feeling a little dizzy and then getting back on. You're on it from the very beginning. The very time you are rooted and established, there is no wavering in saving faith.

And true saving faith will bear fruit. And notice a sense of architecture here being built up. That once the Christian is rooted and established, the Christian embarks upon a building project.

As they grow in the knowledge of God. Looking back at how chapter 1 talks about growing in the knowledge of God. Now unlike architecture created by human hands, I love architecture.

[10 : 54] Frank Lloyd Wright is like one of my favorite architects. I love his structures and his mind and his creativeness. But this architecture here is not built by human hands.

But by the Spirit of God. And all credit of growth is attributed to God. As 1 Corinthians 3, 6-7 says, I, Paul, planted.

Apollo's watered. But God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything. But only God who gives the growth. So this growth, this building up from this established faith is something by the power of God.

And something we have very little to do with except our obedience and our discipline to allow it to happen. And I'm just going to dive right into application.

Because we need to talk about true spiritual growth here today. I need you to hear this, church. Spiritual growth and Christian maturity is found in the ongoing edification process.

[12 : 13] Which is completely and utterly in your control, church. With the help of the Spirit of God. You know, just as babies are so dependent upon their mother for food, for milk.

We see a lot of illustrations throughout Scripture that alludes to this, this very metaphor. But as one matures and grows and experiences some suffering.

As God uses suffering to grow us as Christians. You're able to wean yourself from that dependence on somebody standing here up on a podium.

From even a church structure that you can be growing week after week in your own personal study. Be able to feed yourself. Like a seed is implanted.

Like when Paul talks about planting a seed that Apollos watered in 1 Corinthians. A seed is implanted without a plan of watering. And if Christian maturity is to be fully attained, I cannot be the only one to be holding the watering can.

[13 : 24] A pastor cannot be the only one holding the watering can. However, it is important each and every Sunday that we do embark corporately in the study of his word and in this growth process.

As I do hold the watering can. But a lot of Christian growth maturity that happens comes down to if you're holding the watering can. If you could imagine like the consumeristic church of today's culture of, you know, what kind of amenities churches have, you know.

What kind of programs, you know, they can have so I can grow and everything. It makes me wonder like what would people do if we lived in a third world country where they don't have all these elaborate programs.

Where they barely even have a climate control environment to even have corporate worship. It brings into perspective, church, that true Christian maturity that is rooted, which is being built up, which is established and abounding in thanksgiving.

As Paul is talking about in this letter, this is something that comes on to all of us being responsible for. You cannot be codependent on a church, on a program, on a pastor.

[14 : 43] We have to be dependent on the spirit and our discipline, our own personal discipline throughout the week to be studying. Sunday sermons, Bible studies, and small groups are all great ways to supplement that growth.

And if we are, if the Lord allows us to do that, obviously, man, let's do it together. And we're doing it. But if the sole source of our growth is a codependence on a church or a small group or a Bible study, and I want to preface this with love, it should be no surprise to you if you feel starving.

Many have gone from church to church looking for a solution of going out from fellowship due to this very thing of, that we must understand when we hear the proclaimed message, when that seed of Christ is planted, we have to be diligent with the care of that seed ourselves.

And as we continue in verse 8 and 9, Paul gets into specifics here to help pinpoint, for the first time actually in this epistle, he's been kind of hitting the root throughout this epistle of faithfulness to the gospel.

And Paul, for the first time, hits specifics that are being reported to him when he's writing this letter in the Rome prison, which is reports given by Epaphras, which leads to the second point of sorting out truth.

[16 : 14] Starting in verse 8, turn with me. It says, 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.

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority.

He starts this section out saying, going from being rooted and established the thesis statement, to getting into specifics of how this is applied in their life.

Saying, see to it a direct warning to the church of Colossae. Paul takes no time to call out the false teaching, and pinpoint it directly, as he addresses those who have a message or agenda that is contrary to the sufficiency or the supremacy of Christ alone.

Paul mentions three realms of opposition to the message of the gospel. Here, look with me. Philosophy, empty deceit, human tradition, all of which were according to the elemental spirits of this world, and not according to Christ.

[17 : 39] Considering the Gnosticism, which was prevalent during this time, they offered a deep knowledge, a hidden knowledge, to the Colossians.

A solution for this growth that they may be trying to attain, but they're kind of stuck. In this time, I could imagine that the church of Colossae is possibly doubting Paul's words.

Is this a legitimate message? You know, we've been studying this and everything. There's got to be something more. So, turning back to his letters to the church, and going to their corporate gatherings, same message about Christ.

But what if there's more? And so, you had a group of Gnostics at this time who said, ooh, there is something more. There's a deeper knowledge that you can tap into.

And these are captivating philosophies. They're deceitful. And their traditions were tactics to promise to lift up and to become more wiser and more mature.

[18 : 50] Saying, here, I have been, I have, I've seen, I see you haven't been watering as you should be. As Paul has been telling you, as Epaphras has been telling you, you haven't been watering as you should have been.

I'll take you to the next level. Come with me. Listen to my teaching, my philosophy. Don't listen to Paul. We're Epaphras.

And while not all philosophy is bad, I mean, philosophy literally means love of wisdom. And we should be desiring wisdom.

You can read throughout Proverbs. A book of wisdom. So we should love wisdom. And Christianity is philosophical because of the holistic claims of the created order and the values which guide life.

But here, Paul, in this original time period, Paul was addressing two forms of dangerous philosophies of Judaism and Greek Gnosticism.

[19 : 57] And they both were a mixture of complicated, complicated, mysterious, and astrological truths. Which they were intermixed with truth, like Hebrew truth back at this time.

But it was just kind of like seasoned with a couple little things to explain things a little bit better to maybe be a little bit more enticing over the truth of the Hebrew religion.

And we can recall even Jesus and his ministry on this earth to the Pharisees who held tight to the human tradition. Very tight, as you can recall. Matthew, or Mark 7, verses 8, talks about this.

Jesus saying that you have let go of the commandments of God and are holding on to human traditions. Jesus then follows in this passage, I'm not going to go into it because that will just be a rabbit trail, but he follows it with a quote from Isaiah 29, 13, where God's people are accused of false worship.

Isn't it the same today? That sometimes the message of, the consistent message of proclaimed Christ, that if we don't find new ways of keeping people's attention, you know, just the gimmicks that some churches put on, like sometimes the sufficiency of the message of Christ just isn't enough.

[21 : 24] And we get totally captivated by other ways, maybe what another church is doing, maybe some other different methods and practices other people are doing. This all roots back to the thesis statement of being rooted, of being built up, of being established and abounding in thanksgiving in the message and sufficiency of Christ.

And Paul, actually, I want to point it out in this text, has a word play. And I actually missed it. You have to, like, really, like, be studying to actually pick up on this.

It's, Paul plays on words here and contrasts the description of empty and deceitful and sets up a contrast of Christ where he mentions empty, but he mentions the fullness of Christ.

He mentions the empty deceit in verse 8, but then he talks about in verse 9 the fullness, a complete contrast from one to the other, black and white, that there's this emptiness, there's this darkness, but then there's this light.

It almost reminds me of going back to the study of 1 John, of John comparing and contrasting various elements of our faith. And we see here all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

[22 : 49] And he also contrasts the gospel that is the word of truth. And additionally, he contrasts the contrast between the worship of created beings and the creator here.

So just a little interesting side note. I thought it was cool. Verse 9, it says, for in him the fullness of deity dwells bodily. Verse 10, and you have been filled who is the head of all rule and authority.

Christ's identity is in complete fullness of deity incarnate in the flesh. Jesus is full. And this does not mean in this passage that we are to be filled with that same deity, like almost like a demigod in this passage.

But it is because of his fullness of deity that believers are satisfied in the salvific assurance in faith because of his fullness that we have been filled.

That is us being filled with the assurance in Christ alone and his supremacy alone. There is nothing greater that there is nothing that is greater than that reality in this world.

[24 : 16] No philosophy, no human tradition in that reality. There is no one greater with a reality of another truth and there is no greater philosophy.

And this should be an extremely urgent call to the modern church, you, sitting here with us today. to be careful of extra-biblical means and methods which invade and distort the truth of the gospel.

Looking for different ways of studying and things like that. Be careful of those who offer these tools and methods and different things of attaining a certain level of spiritual maturity.

That is the very issue which occurred in this early church and it was extremely seductive in appearance in promises of taking you to the next level.

The supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ must be enough, church. This message is which I became a minister of just as Paul and proclaimed to you, do not be deceived, do not be distracted by this.

[25 : 40] And as we enter into the final verses today, we observe an illustration to the work of Christ as Paul uses a culturally relevant act. Literally, an unexpected appearance of if you're, if there's any youth in the room right now of circumcision, it's honestly an unexpected appearance.

You would read this and be like, whoa, where'd that come from? Whew, it's happening. But this was an outward cutting of the flesh to visualize the covenant affiliation of the Jews.

In the Old Testament, this was the covenantal sign of God's people saying that they were separated from those around. You can read about this in Genesis 17 verses 9. And as we get into the final point of sharing in Christ's supremacy, in verse 11, Paul begins with an illustration from 11 to verse 12.

It says, in him also you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead.

The Old Testament laws, Jesus Christ was a fulfilled image of this circumcision. But that was only a temporary covenant between God's people. Where literally Jesus, while circumcision was a physical act of shedding flesh, literally Jesus Christ shed his entire body.

[27 : 27] Circumcision of Christ. And while Paul is relating to a cultural idea of covenant promise, he is also speaking to Christian conversion as they have experienced the deliverance through the salvific work of God.

This is an act, look at this verse in verse 11. The circumcision made without hands. There's a little bit something more unseen about this where God is involved in the unseen.

Paul explains through repentance, believers experience a new circumcision which rests in the circumcision of Christ's death and resurrection. Christ shedding his flesh for us.

And these are the converts who may have been circumcised in the flesh but their hearts were far from circumcised. They were not circumcised in their hearts.

And this circumcision which takes highest priority is the outward sign of promise. over the outward sign of promise.

[28 : 38] You see in Acts 8 like Simon the sorcerer who traveled with the apostles through their journey through Acts. He was baptized, he was a believer but there was something in his heart.

It looks from the outside that he was a legitimate follower of Christ. But as time went on, as time does this thing of weeding out truth and a lie, you know, Simon the sorcerer turned out to he was not circumcised in his heart.

The sinful desires were not cut away in his heart. You can see it's in Judas the very person who shared the table with Jesus through his ministry on earth looked like he was a follower but his heart was not.

And the good news of the gospel is that all those who are called to repentance by the Spirit of God through faith as verse 12 talks about here that when you are called to repentance by the Spirit of God through faith that this Christian is justified and the sinful natures and desire are literally cut away circumcised receiving new desires and going back to the thesis statement being rooted and established a legitimate conversion of saving faith.

And as we wrap up the passage today church we see justification which is the act of God not by human hands which is made possible through the work of Christ alone which we respond through faith.

[30 : 13] And verse 13 Paul turns the script upon to the church. He directs his attention to the church as he starts out saying and you who were dead in your trespasses read with me in verse 13 and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them.

To be dead church as we come to the end of our time together to be dead highlights the absence of the relationship with God in the Old Testament to be dead was to be cast out from the presence of God we saw in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3 17 but if you are in Christ your past is buried with him in his death and you receive a new life a new record and a new identity Christ is the climax the ultimate revelation of Jesus he is the climax of the revelation of God's power and God's power is the revelation of raising him from the dead that both God's power and Jesus Christ together makes salvation possible and canceling the legal record this kind of brings to mind like a legal court system talking about legal records and demands trespasses canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands that to be understood this should be understood as literally blotting out we see that in Revelation 3 5 or wiping or wiping out in Acts 3 4 this is a complete removal obliteration of the history of sin because of the blood of

Jesus Christ and those legal demands because he brings in a whole package of Old Testament law here as Romans 3 20 says through the law we become conscience of our sin that I could stand up here and talk about how bad of a person I am but literally God's word in the Old Testament that there's many philosophies out there of unhitching the Old Testament which makes no sense whatsoever to abandon the Old Testament and expect to know the fullness of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross it's just ridiculous but the Old Testament is the key to understanding the saving work of Jesus Christ and the substitutionary atonement where he took our sins and our sins were laid upon him on the cross to release us of the condemnation of the law he accomplished this for us on the cross which points to the suffering of Christ that records and brings about the blood of

Christ that was shed it points us to the penalty of our sin the mess that we create Romans 5 9 says since we have been justified by this blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him and I love how this message that Paul is talking to the church of Colossi he mentions in verse 15 he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him to understand this this is something that was common in that culture and time period about open shame it's something culturally relevant to them as Roman military when they would come back from victories they would lead a public demonstration through the cities a public display it would be like a

Macy's Day parade I don't know if it would be that legit but I mean it would be pretty significant of the victory that they just attained where they would be leading captives of this victory in a procession through the city and look back at the thesis statements of how we participate in this very thing in verse 6 through 7 look at it it says rooted and built in him established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving how do we put sin and the legal demands of the law to open shame in our own lives it's abounding in thanksgiving think about it the violent act and pain of circumcision

[35 : 57] I don't want to get in too descriptive and imagery and everything like that but like literally there's grown men and young boys they don't have the numbing cream in any sense of the manner like this was a painful and violent act to become a child of the covenant of God which points us to the very violent and painful act which Christ endured and bore in his own flesh which was completely stripped away on the cross when believers come to realization of this good news and faith being rooted being established the honeymoon phase of understanding the gratitude the fullness the joy coming to realization of this message for the first time the wonder of the gospel they identify not only in his death but also in his resurrection where they become victors over sin through faith in him and putting the enemy to open shame through our abounding in thanksgiving so as we come to the close here the centrality of the message of

Christ is a topic which can only reprioritize those things which have tendencies of invading us and distracting us whether it being self centered philosophies a ten step program to obtain this certain maturity in your faith or deceitful traditions that sometimes go around in churches or spiritual experiences you know whatever it may be when the message of Christ becomes bland it should indicate to us not a problem with a church not a problem with a pastor all the time sometimes it is but it should indicate to us we might be the problem that we must personally push and really labor in this process of being rooted and established and building ourselves up as verse six and seven talks about and sometimes with the help of a pastor with church amenities

Bible studies and things like that yeah those are great and we do those here however if those are the dependent products in the growth of our faith we're going to be missing something missing something very key the greatest battle in this endeavor of Christian growth is our current culture of instant gratification this culture has created a mentality of if that we can't wait for something that this watering process that sometimes seems so mundane like reading God's word again I don't even understand I'm in Leviticus or talking about sacrifices and it's just we're done I'm going to go read a book instead when we are infiltrated and affected by this culture of instant gratification where we're not digging in to this

Christian growth of being built up if we are not experiencing a certain return on investment in the word of God alone we're being trained to jump to another investment to try something else try something new maybe this will work out but the Bible calls this church spiritual immaturity because personal growth is not something that happens overnight church it's not felt instantaneously and it is something it is a process it's a lifelong process of personal responsibility to be patient and diligent in scripture think about it look at me I'm not sitting here every Sunday morning being fed if my personal growth was contingent upon that I would be dying right now that my spiritual growth is my personal responsibility outside of this place to be studying to be growing and it is the same likewise for everyone here today one of the first questions

I ask when somebody comes and says I feel disconnected and we all go through those seasons trust me I go through those seasons where I'm reading and nothing is making sense and it makes you want to quit and I think this is a key fundamental time where the Bible should be calling us through our rooted and established faith to be digging in a little bit harder that usually the most times the cliché say the most important time to pray is when it's hardest to pray that kind of idea you know when people come to me with these things I usually ask them like so what are you reading right now where are you at in scripture in your daily readings how's your prayer life what is God teaching you these days some pointed questions that speak directly to this personal responsibility of all of us and the exposing of

[42:10] Christian immaturity is the least desirable topic to address we don't want to have to get to a point where we have to realize like uh like friends kind of talking about me today um but once this is addressed the moment church that we address this or the moment that we don't address this and we look for a different investment we have abandoned this time together we need to understand the fruit and the reward that comes when we double down on our original investments in this church body specifically even if we're disconnected you double down on that investment if you're having trouble reading for five minutes then read for ten minutes if you have trouble reading for ten minutes read for twenty minutes and don't pray don't stop reading until you break through because

I believe that the spirit of God will come through for you it does but it takes time it takes discipline so church what is God calling you today I want to challenge us today what is God calling you to essentially circumcise in your life to cut away what is distracting you whether you're in Christ or not in Christ church I call us all to double down on our investments in each other this community especially in yourself to evaluate that which is taking place of the building up process that has been ongoing since we have been rooted and established in our faith allow this time to as we do communion and everything allow this time to be a time where we do search our hearts this morning please join me in prayer father

I thank you for the truth and application of scripture father that that nobody likes to go through times of suffering all throughout scripture you see that consider a broken man job who was almost unidentifiable by his friends because of the suffering that he went through and how much if that were to happen in our culture that we would we would often say what's going on what's wrong what am I doing wrong but job knew the truth he was rooted he was established and father the end product of job was that he was abounding in thanksgiving father I pray that we as a church dig in to this personal responsibility of growth that this week if we have not opened our scripture open your scriptures to for weeks father father

I pray that we make a plan this week put it on the calendar certain time set this time aside because of Sunday morning gathering is the only time that we expect to grow we're going to be missing something huge for your kingdom and through your work that you want to do and you desire to do through this church father have your way with us and press upon us to start getting serious in Jesus name amen