

Firmly Rooted and Growing

Week 39: Sept 24-30 — *Colossians 1-4*

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Helpful Resources

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.59)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

We spent the week reading a letter from Paul to the church in Colossae (Asia Minor), a place that he had never been (2:1). Most likely, this church was started by Epaphras, one of Paul's associates (*Col. 1:7; 4:12, 13; Acts 19*). Epaphras was concerned about the strange doctrines that were infiltrating the church, so he journeyed to Rome to meet with Paul.

Paul took the time to write a letter encouraging and challenging the Colossians. First, he encouraged them with theological truths about Christ and His sufficiency (1:13-23). Second, in light of the Lord's sufficiency, Paul challenged the Colossians to "take captive" every philosophy according to Christ, rather than fall for the lies they were hearing.

Because of Christ, Paul wrote, the Colossians were "firmly rooted and were now being built up in Him and established in their faith" (2:7). "As you have received Christ Jesus," he said, "so walk in Him" (2:6). In this review, let's look again at how we are firmly rooted in Christ and are now charged with being built up, or growing, in Him.

- Firmly Rooted in Christ
 1. **Mysteries Solved** (1:24-29; 2:9-23): Paul described himself as a minister of mysteries, those things which were hidden in the Old Testament but revealed in Christ. For example, the Old Testament hinted at the future indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. It also foreshadowed the inclusion of Gentiles in one body with the Jews, which is the Church. Christ fulfilled all symbolism and typology, Old Testament shadows (like circumcision, tearing the veil), to complete the work of salvation (*Heb. 8:5; 10:1*).
 2. **Sufficient Salvation** (2:9-23): Paul wrote, "In Christ you have been made complete...; therefore, let no one act as your judge" (v.9, 16). Because Christ is sufficient in Himself, as the fullness of Deity in bodily form, His work of salvation is sufficient, lacking nothing. Therefore, we are free from judgment on earth and in heaven. We have nothing to worry about regarding our sin or shame. Christ has taken all away and nailed it to the cross.
 3. **A New Identity** (3:1-11): Because of Christ, our old self has died. We have become a new creature with a new identity (v.3, 10). We must now view ourselves as God sees us — redeemed, forgiven, justified, clean, His child and heir, free from sin and shame. Our thoughts must change to think more of Him, who He is, what He's done, and what His purpose is for us on earth. We are in Christ, and He is in us. "Christ is all" we need (v.11).

Now that we are firmly rooted in Christ, we are being built up, or growing, in Him. Let's look at some of the ways Paul encouraged the Colossians to grow.

- Growing, or Being Built Up, in Christ

1. **Being Renewed** (3:5-11): Now that our identity is in Christ, we are “being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created us” (v.10). We now consider ourselves dead to the views and values of the world — immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, and idolatry. We are setting aside anger, wrath, malice, slander, dishonesty, and abusive speech. We are being transformed into Christlikeness.
2. **A Discerning Mind** (2:1-8; 3:2): Now that we are firmly rooted and established in Christ, we filter all ideas, thoughts, philosophies, and doctrines through the Word of God. We “take them captive according to Christ” (2:8), so that “we will not be deluded by persuasive arguments” (2:5). In short, our entire worldview is changing to reflect God’s perspective and values. All things must align to the truths of Scripture, the mind of Christ.
3. **The Goal of Unity** (3:12-17): As the people of God, we must mirror the character of God. When we do, living together in peace with believers and unbelievers is possible. Paul’s recipe for getting along includes compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and forbearance. All of these are to be grounded in love (v.14). The people of God should reflect to the world what Christ has done in their lives.
4. **Right Relationships** (3:18-4:1): Part of growing in Christ is honoring Him in our relationships in marriage, in the family, and at work. We will live, work, serve, care for, and submit to others as unto the Lord. When we seek to glorify Him, we will naturally love and cherish our relationships with others.
5. **Playing Our Part** (4:2-18): As a member of the body of Christ, we have a part to play in His ministry to the church and the unsaved world. Though our roles may be different, we all have the same goal — to share Christ with others and to minister to them in His name. Paul wrote to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it” (v.17). We, too, have a ministry. We must be busy playing our part in the Lord’s work. We were saved for good works (*Eph. 2:10*).

The Bottom Line

Now that we are firmly rooted in Christ, we are being built up, or growing, in Him.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever doubted your salvation or the sufficiency of Christ to save you? Explain.
2. What does it mean that your identity is in Christ? How do you view yourself? Do you view yourself as God sees you? Why or why not?
3. Re-read the list of things we should “set aside” after salvation (#1, Growing in Christ). How are you doing with this list? In which areas do you struggle? What areas do you still need to surrender to Him?
4. Are you taking every idea captive according to Christ, or are you more prone to believing everything you hear, read, or watch?
5. What does it look like to take every thought captive?
6. Evaluate your worldview. Is it biblical? How can you tell?
7. Is unity with others one of your goals? What are you doing or not doing to promote unity?
8. What are some of the pitfalls that Christians fall into regarding relationships with others?
9. How is your attitude regarding marriage, family, or work? Is it glorifying to God?
10. What is your ministry role in the kingdom of God? In what ways are you fulfilling it?