



Getting It Right in 2022

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Colossians 2:6-7

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⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

(Pastor prays)

The book of Colossians was written as a letter of warning and encouragement: warning against false teaching, false principles and a false gospel; and an encouragement to take on the mantle of discipleship, to take on the good grace of God and to live your life for the glory of the Lord Jesus. And I can think of no better passage to dwell on as we walk into a new year. We need strength. We need hope. And we need the grace of God found in the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to get this right. We need to be solid and confident and to brace ourselves for the year ahead; to be able to get up in the morning and not face the day with dread, but with a joyful determination to live for Christ. We need to trust God's goodness and to have a plan, a resolution to grasp the Gospel and to grow as Christians. And I really only have one goal today, and that is to convince you to try and to trust: to try to live for the glory of God and to trust God's good plan for your life. And if you are willing to try and trust, by God's grace, regardless of what we walk through this year, you will grow as a believer.

Now, we've created a little booklet that provides a path forward for you as a Christian and I want each of you to have one. Look at it, think through it, try

and trust, and by God's grace find a way to strengthen your faith and strengthen your resolve to grow as a believer in the year ahead. And for that to happen there are a couple of things we need to get *right* so that you are not deceived by lies or devoured by wolves. We must reject the casual Christianity that is only useful in a crisis and embrace being a disciple whose life is saturated by the good grace and glory of God. And I want that for you and I want it for myself so that we can get on to the other side of this year and know that, through it all, God has sustained me and grown me as His child. I think this passage gets us there so that you can say with other believers...

When Christ is My All, All is Well

Say that to yourself and write it down. For that to be true, we need to get some things right.

We need to get conversion right

I chose these two verses because they summarize the entire little book of Colossians and go deep into our understanding of what it means to be a Christian. What do you mean when you say, "I'm a Christian"? "I got saved"? "I prayed to receive Christ"? What did you get when you believed the Gospel? Paul tells us in verse 6, *as you received Christ Jesus the Lord*.

What did you get when you got saved? So often we go right to the benefits, which is understandable because they are glorious and the whole of the New Testament is filled with explaining the benefits. But if you aren't careful, you end up with a sort of respectable "prosperity gospel." You end up with forgiveness, restoration, condemnation is lifted and the past is gone. Dignity is restored; there is meaning and purpose and a new start to your life. There is hope and courage for the day, and you are part of a family.

To be sure, these benefits are tremendous. I'm so thankful that I'm not going to Hell, so thankful that I will go to Heaven when I die. Those are all benefits. But what have I received as a gift is so much greater than the benefits. At

conversion the emphasis isn't on the recipient, but on the giver and the gift. And the gift is Christ Jesus the Lord. *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord.* We need to get that right, You received Christ Jesus the Lord. Christ. The great prophet of the church, anointed by God to reveal His will and to save His people. Christ. The answer to all the Old Testament types, prophecies and metaphors. Christ. God of very God. This is what Paul said in Colossians 1: 26-27. *Christ is the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* You have received Christ, the hope of glory!

Jesus. The great high priest. The man. A real man who felt, hurt, prayed, cried, walked, hungered and got cold. And in our place was tempted in every way and yet he lived without sin. He kept every one of God's laws. He even fulfilled them, and then Jesus as a man, because it had to be a man, He takes on your sin and all of the shame and condemnation with it. And so that God could be just *and* the justifier, He goes to the cross to appease the wrath of God and takes the consequences that we deserve. And then in turn He gives us the righteousness that He earned as a man. Conversion is that He takes our sin and puts on us His righteousness. He dies the hideous, horrible death that we deserve and He lays a corpse in the grave. And God, as a sign of acceptance and victory and hope, raised Jesus from the dead as a man. A *real* man. He ascended to Heaven as a man and now intercedes to the Father in unbroken fellowship as a man for us. When you are converted, you receive Christ Jesus.

The Lord. The King. Here is our Savior demanding and receiving full control and surrender and submission of our lives to His will. Here is the giving over and letting go and trusting. Here is the passion of life, the day-to-day bending of the knee and sworn acceptance to King Jesus as Lord. Jerry bridges says that there is no neutral ground in Christianity. There is no part of your life that isn't surrendered to Christ at conversion. Every thought, every word, every deed, every dollar, every spending spree, every Starbucks, every drink, every video game, every song, every text, every post is surrendered to Christ. Jesus

is Lord of all or He is not Lord *at all*! When you got saved you didn't just get a free ticket to Heaven. You got a lifesaving transformation. Let's deepen it and strengthen it and grow in our understanding of conversion. Will you today receive Christ Jesus the Lord? We need to get conversion right!

The second point is likened to the first.

We need to get Christianity right

Let's read verses 6 and 7 together. ⁶ *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,* ⁷ *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.* There is an imperative: walk in Him. It is the call and command and the proof that you actually are a Christian. To walk in Him is to live your life for the glory of God in Christ Jesus. This is what you are going to be doing for the next 364 days. You will be walking in *something*, and for the Christian the command is to walk in Him. And you may ask, what does that actually look like? Paul gives us four phrases to explain it in verse 7.

The first one is **agricultural**. The word is "rooted," like a tree. It is a verb in the perfect tense. It is a one-time event that has ongoing effects. It is having been rooted like a taproot reaching down to the nutrients that are in Christ. It is firmly fixed. It is when the Psalmist is describing a righteous man in Psalm 1:3. *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.* Even if it's a terrible season, a drought. You have trusted that He is the vine and you are the branches, and if you remain in Him, you will bear much fruit. Have you been rooted in Christ? Is He your source of joy and hope and life? That was the agricultural example.

Next comes the **architecture** example. Built up. Being "built up" in Him. Here is a present tense verb that is happening right now. Brick by brick, piece by piece as the castle wall comes up overtime. Here is where these discipleship resources come into play. Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone. This comes in worship and community and community groups. It comes in D groups and

Bible reading and prayer. It comes through devotionals, fellowship and missions. Each one is a vital brick put in place as God is building your life into a living temple. Are you ready this year to be built up day by day and brick by brick as God uses all these things to strengthen your life? Rooted and being built up. God is doing it and it is being done to us. We are renovation projects; old things are being torn out and replaced with the new.

So we have agricultural and architectural and now there is an **accounting** reference. "Establish." Established in the faith is to be confirmed. It's to show to be true. Established in the faith. That's a body of belief, theology. Just as you were taught. It's learning what the Bible says and means and shows me about God, because the truth is that if you neglect the Bible this year you will not grow. Bible theology is God-centered apologetics, Christ-centered prayers and sacrificial mission.

He adds on top of everything else an **aquatic** metaphor. So we've got agricultural and architectural and accounting and now he's adding aquatic.

"Abounding in thanksgiving." That is *overflowing* like a river out of its banks. It's more than is necessary. This is not an attitude of gratitude. This is not feeling thankful. This is *giving* thanks. This is giving thanks to God when you feel anything *but* thankful. This is looking around your life and thanking God for every bit of it. Isn't this what Habakkuk prayed in Habakkuk 3: 17-19?

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

When Christ is your all, all will be well. Get conversion right. Receive Christ Jesus our Lord. Get Christianity right. Walk in Him and be rooted, built up, established in the faith and abounding in Thanksgiving.

(Pastor prays)