

Sermon on Colossians 2:6, 7 Sermon Title: "CLING TO AND LIVE IN CHRIST"

Scripture Reading: Colossians 2

Sermon for the New Horizon U. R. C. of Scarborough--August 21, 2011

Brothers and Sisters in Christ. In this sermon we will consider that we as Christians are to live in a way that is consistent with the fact that we have believed in, and will continue to believe in, Christ Jesus the Lord. We will have three main points: I. To Receive Christ Is to Believe in Christ. II. Have a Consistent Christ-Centered Walk and Talk. III. Conditions of Truly Clinging 依偎 to and Living in Christ.

Introduction:

1. The apostle Paul had never been in the city of Colosse, which was located in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).
2. The main reason Paul was writing the Christians in that city was to refute [prove to be wrong] a dangerous heresy 异端, 邪说 which was an early form of Gnosticism 诺斯替主义.
3. A heresy is a belief or teaching which is contrary to what the Bible teaches.
4. Gnostics stressed a secret knowledge as the means of salvation.
5. Moreover, Gnosticism greatly lessened the importance of Jesus Christ.
6. Also, the Christians at Colosse were being exposed to teaching which stressed the worship of angels as well as obeying certain Jewish Old Testament legal regulations.
7. The apostle Paul was warning the church Colosse to be on spiritual guard, and that apart from Jesus Christ there is no salvation, no eternal life.
8. The **text** for this sermon is **Colossians 2:6, 7: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."**

I. To Receive Christ Is to Believe in Christ

A. The Christians at Colosse had received Christ Jesus the Lord.

1. **John 1:12** uses the word "received" similarly: **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:"**
2. We need to understand that to **receive** Christ is not to receive a wafer or bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.
3. Instead, to receive Christ Jesus is to place our childlike trust in Him, trusting Him to give us peace with God and eternal life.
4. To receive Christ Jesus is to believe in Christ as Savior and Lord, believing that God credits the righteousness of Christ to our account, and that because of this God forgives our sins.
5. It is to believe that Jesus suffered and died on the cross in payment for our sins, and that He then rose from the dead on the third day.
6. One of the best modern examples of trusting or believing **in** occurs when a person undergoes artery bypass surgery 冠状动脉搭桥手术.
7. The person's heart is stopped, he is hooked onto a machine which functions temporarily as his heart, which keeps his blood circulating within his body.
8. Then, at the correct time during the surgery process, the surgeons wait for the stopped heart to begin beating again.
9. Ultimately, it takes great trust in our sovereign, almighty, loving God to be willing to undergo artery bypass surgery.

10. But a person also must believe in, he must trust in, the surgeons and the machine which circulates his blood, in order to be willing to undergo such a major surgery.

11. When we believe in the Lord Christ Jesus, we are saying that we have confidence in Jesus that He gives us eternal life both now and for all future eternity.

B. Paul was emphasizing that the Christians at Colosse had believed in Christ Jesus the Lord.

1. They were believing in the Son of God, Who took upon Himself our human nature, like us in all things except for sin. They had believed in **Christ**.

2. The word “Christ” means “Anointed One.”

3. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our Chief Prophet and Teacher, our only High Priest, and our Eternal King, as Heidelberg Catechism answer 31 says.

4. In His office as King, Christ guards us and keeps us in the eternal life which He died and rose again to provide for us.

5. What a rich comfort this is! As Jesus said, **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:27, 28).**

C. Furthermore, the Colossian Christians had believed in **Jesus**.

1. The name Jesus means “Savior,” and the angel told Joseph in a dream: **“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).**

2. To believe in Jesus as Savior means that we humbly believe that our sins are forgiven by God because of Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself to pay the awful punishment for our sins.

3. It means that we believe that by means of His death on the cross in our place, Jesus removed God’s wrath which was against us and satisfied God’s justice which was against us because of our sins.

D. In addition, the people of the church at Colosse had believed in Jesus the **Lord**.

1. Boys and girls, do you know what the word “Lord” means?

2. It means “master,” “possessor,” “ruler,” “owner.”

3. To believe in Christ Jesus **the Lord** means that Jesus owns us, He rules us, that He is our Master, our Possessor, the One Who controls us.

4. To believe in Jesus as Savior is difficult for some people, but it is even more difficult to believe in Jesus as Lord.

5. For when we believe in Christ as Lord, He requires that He rules over our lives with undivided and undisputed authority.

6. To believe in Jesus as Lord means that we wholeheartedly, humbly, and lovingly **obey** Him in all areas of our lives--employment, family, marriage, education, church life, how we spend our money, where we live, recreation, etc.

7. Jesus asked, **“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46)**

8. The Bible teaches that if we do not believe in Jesus as Lord, then we really do not believe in Him as Savior either, and therefore are not saved.

9. Have all of us placed our faith in Jesus as the Savior, as the Christ, and as the Lord?

10. It is not enough to know about Jesus, nor is it enough to believe **about** Jesus. We must repent of our sins and believe **in** Jesus in order to be saved from our sins.

E. Our text uses the language of God’s grace and of faith.

1. God’s grace had been at work in the lives of the Christians of Colosse.

2. They had responded by repenting and believing in Christ.

3. However, they were to continue to live by faith in Christ. They were to continue to receive God's grace for their lives as citizens of God's kingdom. And so must we--if we are Christians.

II. Have a Consistent, Christ-Centered Walk and Talk

A. The Bible says in our text that we are to **“so walk”** in Christ Jesus the Lord.

1. The Greek word, “walk,” means how we live, how we conduct ourselves, the manner of life we lead.

2. The Colossian Christians were not to allow themselves to be misled by false teachers.

3. Instead, they were to let their life (their walk or conduct) continue to be consistent with the fact that they had believed in Christ.

4. One of the excuses often used by non-Christians about why they don't believe in Jesus and don't attend worship services, is that there are too many hypocrites in the church.

5. There is never an acceptable excuse for refusal to repent of our sins and to believe in the Lord Jesus for eternal life.

6. But the excuse about too many hypocrites in the church often is true. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be what he is not. He is someone who pretends to be better than he is.

7. Basically, the excuse about too many hypocrites means that Christians are not living what they claim to be--that although they claim to be Christians, they don't show it, they deny it, by how they live.

B. The Bible repeatedly instructs and urges us as Christians to lead a life which is consistent with the fact, which clearly shows, that we are Christians.

1. For example, **Ephesians 4:1**: **“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech 恳求 [beg] you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,”**

2. **I Thessalonians 2:12** says, **“that you would walk worthy of God Who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”**

3. And **I John 2:6** says, **“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk [live, conduct himself] just as He [Jesus] walked.”**

4. In other words, the Bible repeatedly commands us to **live** what we **are** in Christ.

5. Our triune God want us to live as new creations in Christ, as covenant keepers.

6. God does not want us merely to mouth the words of Christianity, and then live as though we were non-Christians.

7. Jesus accused the Jews as follows: **“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matthew 15:8).**

8. Jesus accused the Jews of pretending to be sincere and genuine 真正的 in their worship of God, but it was only lip worship, not heart and life worship.

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9. The danger for each of us who professes to believe in the Lord Jesus, is that our Christian talk is better than our Christian walk.

10. There is inconsistency in the lives of even the most wholehearted disciples of Jesus Christ. There is inconsistency in the lives of even the most godly of Christians.

11. However, the more we expose our lives to the truths of God's Word, and the more we prayerfully obey God's Word in our daily living, the more closely our Christian talk and walk will agree.

III. Conditions of Truly Clinging to and Living in Christ

A. The apostle Paul used two word pictures to describe two conditions of clinging to [continuing

to be united to] Christ by faith and of living in Christ.

1. The first illustration is that of a tree--"**rooted**" ...**in Him.**"

2. We were rooted in Christ when by grace through faith in Him we entered God's kingdom.

3. We were rooted in Christ when we were justified by faith in Him.

4. The roots of a tree are very important. They provide both the foundation and support which the tree needs in order to remain standing.

5. Roots also are the means by which the tree draws up nourishment and water from the soil, so that the tree can keep on living and grow.

6. Being rooted in Christ is very important. May each of us cling to in Jesus Christ by faith.

7. To **cling to** Jesus Christ is to continue to love Him, to continue to want to fellowship with Him, to be firmly anchored, grounded, by faith in Him.

8. We are to be rooted in Christ. Scripture says, "**that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

9. If we as Christians are firmly rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, we may experience all kinds of trials which shake our outer life, but our inner life can remain calm and at peace.

10. How does our faith in Christ grow?

11. Our faith in Christ grows through: regular, daily reading of the Bible personally and as families; believing, daily, meaningful prayer to our heavenly Father; true Christian fellowship; actively studying the Bible and trying to obey it; participating in Bible study groups; and regular, consistent, wholehearted worship of our great God.

12. Our faith in Christ also grows by means of: the Biblical use of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; by means of a trusting, joyful, submissiveness to God in response to trials; and by means of personally making known the gospel of Christ to others.

B. Paul's second word picture is that of a building. Our text says, "**built up in Him.**"

1. The verb, "built up," has a present, continuing sense.

2. Being built up in Christ pictures to us row after row of bricks being added gradually to a building which is under construction.

3. Being built up in Christ refers to becoming more and more like Him in this life.

4. This refers to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life, in which the Spirit increasingly removes the pollution of our sin, renews us in the image of God (we become more like Jesus), and enables us to do good works.

5. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, He is the foundation of our faith.

6. Then, like a house under construction, we as Christians can be made more like Jesus, the pattern according to which the Holy Spirit renews us.

7. Are we more like Jesus--in His holiness, His compassion, His love, His obedience to His Father's will, than we were, let's say, three years ago?

C. Verse seven mentions a third condition of clinging to Jesus by faith and living in Jesus. It says, "**established in the faith.**"

1. Being established in the faith refers to unshaken personal faith in Christ.

2. Being established in the faith means that we arrive at that point in our spiritual life at which we have complete assurance that we have eternal life, complete assurance that we are saved in Christ.

3. **I John 5:13** says, "**These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son**

of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

4. How can we arrive at such certainty of faith in Christ?

5. We must cling to, [hold fast to] Jesus by faith in order to have eternal life.

6. Also, we must believe God’s promises regarding eternal life in Christ.

7. Moreover, we must grow in Christ in order to give evidence of true spiritual life within us, and that we are living a genuine, meaningful Christian life.

8. The Colossian Christians had been taught this, and we also need to be taught this.

D. And then Paul mentioned one more condition concerning clinging to and living in Christ, namely, **“abounding in it with thanksgiving.”**

1. All of our spiritual and material blessings come from God.

2. The Bible says, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation [change] or shadow of turning” (James 1:17).**

3. One proper response for the blessedness of our being saved in Christ is that we give joyful thanks to our triune God.

4. Giving thanks to God is our continuing, real, loving expression of gratitude to God for all that He has done for us through Christ.

5. We have so many spiritual blessings as Christians for which we can give God thanks, such as: the forgiveness of our sins; eternal life; having been born again by the Holy Spirit; adoption by God as His children; being members of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ; peace with God; the Holy Spirit indwelling us; being declared righteous in Christ; the Bible; prayer to our holy and all-knowing God; etc.

6. Blessings come from God, we receive and enjoy them, and we are to give to Him our offerings of thanks by means of thanksgiving, by means of sung and instrumental music, plus by means of prayer.

7. Strange though it may seem, we as Christians often fail to or forget to give thanks to God for the great riches of His salvation to us in Christ, don’t we?

8. But may we as heirs of eternal life because of God’s grace to us in Christ, grow in giving daily thanks to God, so that our thanksgiving is like a fountain which keeps on overflowing with water.

9. Throughout our brief earthly pilgrimage, may we realize our dependence upon the Holy Spirit -in order to repent of our sins and to believe in Christ as Savior and Lord, and in order to keep on living in Christ.

10. And if anyone here does not yet really believe in the Lord Jesus, why not repent of your sins today and believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord?

11. And then pray that God will enable you to live in obedience to Jesus as Lord.

12. You will never regret having repented of your sins and genuinely believing in the Lord Jesus for eternal life.

Amen.