

Colossians 2:6-15

Date: Sunday, 27 February 2022

Scripture: Colossians 2:6-15

Sermon: Walking with Jesus

Preacher: Justin Ang

Colossians 2:6-15 (ESV)

Col. 2:6 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.

Col. 2:8 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. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 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, 12 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. 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, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Transcript

Introduction

There's a hymn that a friend recently introduced me to. It's called Give Me Jesus. I want to read out a bit of the hymn for you, because I think it's wonderful.

Take the world, but give me Jesus,

all its joys are but a name;

but his love abides forever,

through eternal years the same.

Oh, the height and depth of mercy!

Oh, the length and breadth of love!

Oh, the fullness of redemption,

pledge of endless life above!

Take the world, but give me Jesus,

sweetest comfort of my soul;

with the Savior watching o'er me,

I can sing, though thunders roll.

They are such wonderful words and I suspect we'll sing them sometime. But that's the question. If we were to lose the whole world, if we were to have nothing, but Jesus, would he be enough for you?

That's the issue we're going to be thinking about, praying about. Because it's the issue that the Colossian church had. Was Jesus going to be enough for them? There were people in their midst who challenged them. Who tried to convince them that Jesus wasn't enough. That Jesus wasn't supreme. That they needed more than Je-

sus. They needed human philosophies. They needed to worship angels, they needed regulations. Paul reminds the Colossians that Jesus is enough. He is supreme.

Now, I must admit that the challenges that the Colossians faced aren't exactly the same today. We don't think about angels, we don't think about regulations, but the question is still the same, is Jesus enough? Can we sing, Take the world, but give me Jesus?

Today, I want to point out three things in this passage. Paul reminds us that because Jesus is enough, we are to continue walking with Jesus, we are to watch out for the lies and lastly we'll see why Jesus is enough for us.

Continue Walking with Jesus (v6-7)

The first thing I want to talk about today is the importance of walking with Jesus. This is what Paul points out to the Colossian church here in this passage. Please have a look at the passage.

Col. 2:6 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.

Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV)

You'll notice that Paul uses the word, Therefore. I just love that word because in mathematics you use three dots to indicate a conclusion. You know, in mathematics, you might write down an equation, you show your proof and then you say, therefore, $x = 10$. It's the same here with Paul, Paul has just spoken all about Jesus. He says that the Colossian church has received Jesus. They have received Jesus who is supreme over creation, he is even supreme in the new creation. They have received Jesus who is the treasure of all wisdom and knowledge. He's unpacked that in Colossians 1 and now Paul is saying because of who Jesus is, because you have believed in him, you should now walk in him.

And what we'll see is that Paul, in the rest of the letter to the Colossians, will highlight what it means to walk with Jesus. For the rest of the sermon series in Colossians we're going to unpack what it means to walk in Him.

Well, what does it mean to walk with Jesus? Well, let me try to give you an example. Rachel's sister's getting married next week and Rachel and I have been asked to help out. There's a lot involved, there's a dance that Rachel is trying to remember for when they enter, there's a speech, I'm a driver. There's a whole run sheet for the day that includes the night before. It's really involved. And we're excited. But it's really easy for us to get caught up in the wedding, and not the marriage.

Well, in our day and age, it's really easy for us to focus on accepting Jesus into your life. Like it's really easy for us to be caught up in the wedding. Let me ask you, do you remember the day when you decided to put your faith in Jesus? Maybe for some of us here, you were at a Billy Graham conference and you remember saying the prayer of confession. I remember doing that in Year 5, Illawong Primary School. But I suspect that you know people who were at that conference who made a prayer of confession but are no longer Christian. People forget that there's the marriage after the wedding and yes, the wedding is a great start to a marriage but it doesn't make the marriage.

Walking with Jesus, isn't just about the day that you chose to believe. Walking highlights that it's not a once off commitment, it's a day in, day out commitment. In fact, when Paul commands us to walk in Jesus, it's a continuous verb. Continue to walk in him. Just as you believed, you must continue in him.

Paul calls the church to have its foundation set on Jesus Christ, doesn't he? He uses the image of a plant, with roots in Jesus. He also uses the image of a building, being built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. And Paul says that we must continue to have our foundation on Jesus Christ.

I want to make something clear as we look at this passage. Maybe I'm giving the impression that you need to pick up your bags and do something big for Jesus and become a missionary overseas if we are to have our foundation on Jesus. That's not what I'm saying. Maybe God will ask you to do that, but what I'm saying is that if Jesus is your foundation it should affect every single part of your life. It's like the saying, "Character is key", you often hear it in terms of leadership. And the same is true as Christians, our character, our hearts are key. Our hearts are to be based on Jesus. We are to live with our hearts fixed on Jesus. That's how we walk in Him.

So can I ask, how are you going as you walk in Jesus? Are you growing in your love of Jesus Christ? Are you growing in your knowledge of him? Are you building your

life on the teachings of Jesus? Do you continue to stand firm in your faith in Jesus as life buffets and challenges you? The promise that Jesus makes is that whoever listens to his words and builds their life on him will be like the man who built his house on the rock. When the winds come, and the rains pour down, it does not fall.

Can I tell you a sign that you're walking with Jesus? It's the last part of verse 7. Abounding in thanksgiving. As I've read through the letter of Colossians in one sitting, I've noticed that Paul talks a lot about joy, and thanksgiving. I think it's because he recognises that gratitude and thanksgiving to God is supposed to be a major characteristic of God's people. Thankfulness is a mark of a Christian. It's like the hymn, It is Well with My Soul

When peace like a river attendeth my way

When sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say

It is well, it is well with my soul

Even when life doesn't turn out the way you expect it to, we can still be abounding in thanksgiving. We can still sing, It is well with our soul.

Walk with Jesus.

Watch Out for the Lies (v8)

But the second thing that Paul wants us to do is to watch out for the lies. Have a look at verse 8.

Col. 2:8 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.

Colossians 2:8-10 (ESV)

Really this is the other side of the coin of point one. Walking with Jesus. If you're walking with Jesus, you're going to make sure you're looking out for the lies. And here, Paul is warning us, and the Colossian church that they are not to be taken as prisoners by human made philosophy and empty deceit.

Maybe you're wondering what's going on for the church for Paul to warn them against philosophy and empty deceit. It appears that the Colossian church was being challenged by a group of Jews. Jews disguising themselves in order to convince the Christians about regulations, wisdom that was developed by human tradition. Regulations like the washing of cups, purification rituals that had to be performed. The worship of angels as a matter of paying a debt. The belief that there was more than one god and each god ruled certain geographical locations. They might have tried to convince the Colossians that there was a spiritual realm that they had to appease.

Being carried away by lies is really easy. Recently, I've been getting a lot of spam texts and emails on my phone. And they're clearly from overseas. I'll read one out, let title is "I have a personal donation for you"

I'm Clay Tousey, the Winner of the 286 million jackpot prize held on

June 5, 2021. here is a verification webpage for record

<https://www.powerball.com/winner-story/love-you-more-trust-becomes-floridas-16th-powerball-jackpot-winner>

My Jackpot win was a gift from God to my Family

Hence my entire Family has agreed to do this

We are donating 50% of the money to Help individuals and Small

Scale Businesses around the world that was affected by pandemic.

Do you think I should contact Clay? Of course not. It's clear it's a big lie. The big lies are easy to tell, but when it's a lie that's close to the truth, it's harder to discern. The lies today aren't about the spiritual realm as it is in the letter to the Colossians.

What is it that takes us captive today? The problem with our society isn't so much that there is a spiritual realm, what matters today is the material realm and only the material. There is no spiritual. Today, the challenge for us is the idea that we can make up our own story.

Maybe you know the poem, Invictus? It was written by William Ernest Henley. He was an English poet from the 19th century, an atheist. But it's a popular poem, be-

cause it's a declaration by humans that they can do it their way. Let me read the first stanza

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the pit from pole to pole,

I thank whatever gods may be

For my unconquerable soul.

And then listen to what he says in the last stanza,

It matters not how strait the gate,

How charged with punishments the scroll,

I am the master of my fate,

I am the captain of my soul.

I am the master of my fate, the captain of my soul. This poem really reflects what our society believes. One of the reasons why this poem is so inspiring for people today is because our society believes that truth is what you make it, what you define it as, what you believe it to be. Truth is what you, yourself, make of it. I can live my way, I can define my own life, I can write my own story.

And here's the thing, it's a lie that sounds good. It's a good counterfeit because he speaks to our hearts. It's easy to believe that we need to "follow our dreams." Like today, we're told that we should do what feels good. That's a lie but it sounds wise, doesn't it?

Paul says, don't be distracted. Don't get carried away by these lies. Don't believe empty wisdom that's based on human tradition. Let me make one practical suggestion and an illustration.

Whenever we listen or watch media, we should watch with a critical mind. How do we do that? Let me give you an example.

Back in World War II, the Nazis had a team who was tasked in making counterfeit British and American notes. Their plan was to secretly produce and distribute the money in order to cause the collapse of economies. Do you know how analysts

know how to spot a counterfeit? It's not the way you might think. You might think that analysts analyse every type of counterfeit so they can see the difference. Actually, they focus on knowing the true note intimately. They know it's feel, the texture, the words that are printed on the notes. They know it so well that when they see a counterfeit, they just know by instinct.

We need to measure what we listen to, what we watch, what we read, against Jesus and his teachings. We need to know Jesus so well, we need to walk with him so intimately so that when we watch something, when we see advertising, we can go, yep, that's a counterfeit. "I shouldn't believe it." We should be able to have a critical mind and recognise the lie that doesn't match against Jesus.

Watch out for the lies.

Why Jesus is Enough (v9-15)

But there's one final thing I want to talk about. Maybe you're thinking, "But Justin, Why aren't we to be taken prisoner by these lies? Why can we walk with Jesus?" This is the last point. And it's point that Paul has been trying to make.

We're told in the very next verse.

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Colossians 2:9-10 ESV)

Paul says that we can walk with Jesus because Christ is supreme. Christ is God himself, living as a human. And Paul's point is simply that no philosophy, no angels, no ruler can compare to Jesus because he is God. Jesus is simply wiser than any philosopher, any intelligent academic that ever lived because Jesus is all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We can look for wisdom elsewhere. When we think about who in history is smart, we might think of Jean Paul Satre, Albert Einstein, Richard Feynman, Jordan Peterson. They may be considered smart, and they have a little knowledge. But they don't have all the knowledge. All knowledge is merely derivative from Jesus. No one compares to Jesus because he is the one who made it all.

And we are filled with him. We do not have a lack (Psalm 23) because he has already filled us with himself.

And Paul goes on,

11 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, 12 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.

Colossians 2:11-12 (ESV)

We can continue to walk with Jesus, because he has set us apart from the world. Like the seal of physical circumcision was a mark of separateness for Israel to the world, we have been set apart and now been included as part of the body of Christ the church. We can walk in Him because we have one another to encourage us. It's one of the reasons why I am encouraging us to see each other as family. Because God has called each one of us into the body so that we can help one another in this walk with Jesus.

We can continue to walk with Jesus, because we do not need to fear anything in this world. If Jesus was raised from the dead, we too will be raised and we belong to the new creation where the old authorities have no power over you. "No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck you from His hand." Because that's true, you can walk with Him.

And have a look at the rest of the passage,

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, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)

We walk with Jesus because he has set us free. Once we were lost, but now we are found. We have been set free from guilt. The power of sin no longer has a hold on us, we are now free to follow Jesus. No power from rulers, authorities, no angels

can put us to shame because Christ himself has conquered them all. That's incredible news.

There's really a sense of irony here because it is through Jesus being stripped naked, and hung on a tree, that the Roman Empire and the Jews themselves were stripped bare. As Paul writes, Jesus crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, folly to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1).

No condemnation for those who are in Christ. Neither death nor life, nor angels or rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can separate you from his love. (Romans 8). Is Christ enough? Of course.

Walk with him, brothers and sisters. Watch out for the lies. Christ is enough. He is your all. Let's pray.