

Colossians 2:6-15 — Why is Jesus All I Need?

November 5, 2017

Good morning. Great to have you at CrossWinds. We are studying the book of Colossians on both of our campuses. This book is all about Jesus, why we desperately need him, and how amazing it is to have him. So this morning is more about Jesus, which is always a good thing.

One of the things my high school English teacher didn't like was run-on sentences. She always corrected my sentences telling me to keep them short. Did anybody else write sentences that were too long in school? While our English sentences should be kept short, in Greek—which is the language the New Testament was written in—the best sentences were long and complex. Paul's high school Greek teacher would have given him an A+ for Colossians because in Greek Colossians 1:3 to 2:5 is one huge sentence all designed to introduce us to Jesus. For the last three weeks we studied only one sentence!

In that sentence, Paul taught us what genuine saving faith in Jesus looks like. He also revealed the true identity of Jesus as the creator and savior of the world. Last week he taught us how God chose to spread the mystery of Christ to the world. It is through simply by people like you and me who can expect to suffer when we talk about Jesus because the world is opposed to Jesus.

This morning, as Paul continues talking about Jesus, he will answer another question about Jesus, "Why Jesus is all we need?" We don't need Jesus plus designer jeans or Jesus plus a date to the senior prom. If we have Jesus, that is enough. Everything else in life is just extra gravy. In these verses, Paul develops his thoughts under the following headings. 1) The Christian life is about

growing in Jesus. 2) Satan's plans are to trick us away from Jesus 3) God's plan is to fill me with Jesus. 4) What happens when we are filled by Jesus.

Let's jump in.

1. The Christian life is all about Jesus.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 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 can tell Paul just finished his huge sentence about Jesus because he takes a break and says the word therefore. Since we have the creator and savior of the universe in our lives, therefore all of our life should orbit around Jesus. We should not just start with Jesus but we must focus on growing in Jesus.

That should seem rather self-evident but the truth is some Christians over time become what I call Christ-less Christians. They began with Jesus but over time they start to focus on everything else but Jesus. This sometimes happens when you get Christians mixed with a cause. For example, you have Christians for the rainforest. Over time they become people who want to save the rainforest who happen to be loosely associated with Christ. Eventually they are people that want to save the rainforest and they don't care about Christ. I know my rainforest illustration is lighthearted but this happens all the time. A good illustration of this would be Harvard University and many other Ivy League schools in our country. They started out as Christian schools for higher learning but eventually drifted away from Christ to become only about higher learning. Paul is warning again that kind of life. Paul is clear that once we become a Christian, everything always and only goes back to Jesus.

He says, “as you received Christ.” In the Greek, this is a technical word. It means receiving a body of truth handed down to you, holding to and making sure it isn’t changed. You don’t play the game of telephone with this truth where we get to change it a little at a time to suit our liking. It is the idea that we are entrusted with the tradition about Jesus and we do our best to hold to that tradition and ensure it isn’t changed. It is our job to guard the tradition about Jesus and pass it on in tact. The Christian faith is not a matter of self-discovery or inventing new things. It is always a matter of holding to the old things.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (ESV)

Ultimately the traditions of Jesus come to us as the New Testament. The New Testament was originally recognized in the early church so people knew what were the true traditions of Jesus, not the changed traditions of Jesus. The criteria for most the books of the New Testament were they are either written by an apostle or by someone closely connected to an apostle so we know we are holding to the truth of Jesus not something that came a few hundreds of years later written by a guy that was a fruit

loop.



Not only do we hold the truth about Jesus but we are to walk in that truth. Whenever you see this idea of walking in the Bible, you need to realize it is a Hebrew idiom for how we live our day-to-day life. The Christian life is about holding to the truth of Jesus plus living our day-to-day life based on the truth about Jesus. In Colossians 3, Paul will spend most of the chapter explaining how

the truth we learn about Jesus in Colossians 1 and 2 changes the way we live our every day life. Paul will explain how Jesus changes materialism, sexuality, marriage, anger, work, and parenting.

The Christian life is all about Jesus. It is about holding to the truth of Jesus and then letting that truth change the way we live every day.

Since our lives about to be about Jesus, we must become better rooted in Jesus. The picture is of a tree sinking its roots deep into the soil so it can grow stronger and stand the storms. Trees blow over if they have a shallow root system. Paul says if you don't want to have a mid-life Christ crisis, develop a good root system in Jesus. This means we take the basic truths of who Jesus is and what he has done for us and we anchor them deep into our lives. Many times this means we memorize something so we can bring it to mind. One of the best ways to root ourselves in the truth of Christ is to memorize some basic Bible verses about who Christ is and what he has done for us. Let me share three basic verses. If you don't know these by heart. I encourage you to take the time to memorize them this week.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

Not only are we to anchor ourselves down into Jesus, but we are to build ourselves up in Jesus. The idea is we are not just to be content in knowing old things about Jesus but we are to constantly learn new things about Jesus. This

means reading our Bible on our own.

Keeping our finger in the text. It also

means showing up at church on

Sunday to learn more about Jesus in

the preaching. It means getting

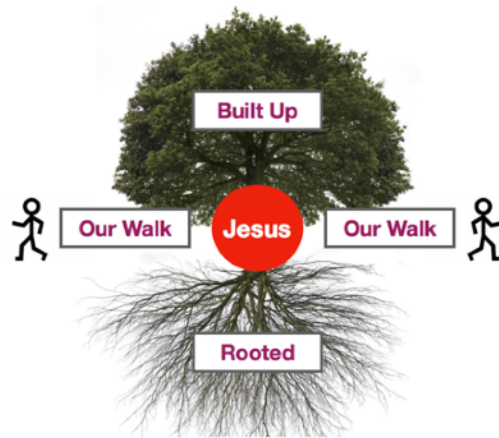
involved in a CrossWinds University

Class or a Life Group during the

week. The reason we always want to learn more about Christ is because the

Christian life is not just about beginning with Christ, it is about staying with Christ

and rooting ourselves deeper in him over the long haul.



Paul says the goal is we would become established in the faith. The word established literally means settled, packed down and sunken in. It was used to describe materials, that pressed together so they fused together. One way to picture this is what I used to find at the bottom of the lake where I went to summer camp. There were boats and other buried treasure sunk in the mud but still visible to the eye. As a boy, we want to pull these treasure out of the mud to put them on shore. Do you think they ever came to the surface? Absolutely not, they were sunk in the earth, fused with the earth. Another way to think of this word is like you are trying to unscrew a rusted bolt from the rusted frame under your vehicle. The steel screw and the steel frame rust becoming established together over time so it is impossible to take them apart. This is what should happen to a Christian and Christ over time. We hold to him, walk in him, root in

him, grow in him so we become so fused with him then when we are cut, we bleed Jesus.

This sounds like work. What are the results of becoming established in Jesus over time?

A heart of thankfulness comes from anchoring to, growing in, and living for Jesus.

It is thankfulness. The way you recognize a healthy Christian that is growing in Jesus is they are filled with gratitude. If a person is consistently griping, whining, complaining, causing division, or grumbling; it may not be your problem. It may simply be they don't have a healthy walk with Jesus. The byproduct of growing deeper with Jesus is always a heart that overflows with gratitude.

The more we understand all that God has done through Jesus by paying for our sin and making us into a completely new person; we can't help but have an attitude of gratitude. A grateful attitude shows up in our marriage when instead of wanting a different spouse, we are grateful for our spouse. A grateful attitude shows up in our job when even though our job is not everything we want, we are grateful to have a way to serve others and to serve Jesus. A grateful attitude shows up in church during worship when we can't keep our mouths closed when we are singing about Jesus because the gratefulness in our heart needs to find release through the words we sing with our mouth.

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Hebrews 13:15 (ESV)

Here is Paul's simple point. The Christian life from beginning to end is all about Jesus. Every step we take in our Christian life is about going deeper with Jesus. True Christian growth is not about discovering the way the end times will unfold, it is about loving Jesus.

2. Satan's plan is to take me away from Jesus.

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 (ESV)

Since a healthy Christian life is all about Jesus, Paul warns us that Satan's plan is to lead us away from Jesus. It is possible for Christians to be lead away from Christ as captives. The word captive literally means to be taken captive as a prisoner of war. How does this happen?

Philosophy can lead me away from Christ.

Philosophy in itself is not wrong. It simply means loving wise, or living wisely. Good philosophy in life is to eat healthy. It is to brush your teeth. It is to use soap in the shower. It is to use deodorant every morning. Those are good philosophies for life.

Philosophy also covers the way we look at the world. The Greek philosophy in Colossae was that knowing God involved secret passwords and secret rituals. The Hebrew philosophy of their day was that pleasing God involved asceticism (harsh self denial of the body, like going without food for a week) and circumcision. These were all part of knowing God and pleasing God. Paul says none of this is true. We don't need to know secret passwords, to starve ourselves or to circumcise ourselves to know God. All we need is Jesus.

Today we don't have those kinds of philosophies leading us away from Christ. What are the modern philosophies Satan is using to lead us away from Jesus today? Let me give you an example. Have you seen this bumper sticker? Today tolerance is the philosophy of the day. There is a lot of cultural pressure that everyone must agree and that all religions are essentially the same. We can't say what somebody believes is wrong or we are considered intolerant. We can not say Jesus is the only way to God, when Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. Nobody comes to the father but through me." If we say that, we are considered intolerant of other religions. We can't say homosexuality is sinful, not because that is our opinion but because that is what the Bible says. If we say homosexuality is not pleasing to God, we are considered an intolerant homophobe.



The one thing modern culture is intolerant of is not agreeing with them about tolerance.

Modern philosophy is filled with empty promises.

Not only does modern philosophy oppose Christ but modern culture makes empty promises that never fulfill. A great example of this is materialism. It is the promise that the person who dies with the most toys wins. More stuff will make us happy. Do we really need more stuff to be happy? No. Studies tell us that after our basic needs are met, more stuff leads to more stress.

Modern philosophy is demonically inspired.

Where do these modern philosophies and empty cultural promises that lead Christians away from Christ come from? Paul says *they are usually based on human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world*. This is an interesting statement. It is complex. Let's break it down. The first word we want to understand is what is translated as the little phrase *according to*. In the Greek, it literally means to be source from something. Modern godless philosophy and empty cultural promises for happiness come from human traditions which come from the elemental spirits of the world. What we have is a hierarchy. The elemental spirits of the world are creating human traditions, which are creating modern philosophies and empty cultural promises. What do these other words mean?

Human traditions means the group think of our cultural. For example, most ladies do not need a new dress. We look at ladies magazines and see there is a new style everyone is wearing. Since everyone is wearing a new style, to be in style we feel pressure to go and buy a new dress. This is where modern philosophy and empty culture promises come from in our culture. They are pressed on us because it is the group think of our culture. What creates the group think of our culture? Here is where it gets interesting.

Paul says the group think in our culture, such as tolerance and materialism, ultimately come from the elemental spirits of the world. What is that? This is actually one Greek word. It is an interesting term. It is used only here in the New Testament. It is only used occasionally outside the Bible in some Jewish

literature and some Persian religious texts. In all those cases it appears to be referring to powerful demons and are seeing to demonically influence the world by fostering a dark cultural values in the world. Demons are trying to take Christians captive and pull them away from Christ by pressing godless philosophy and empty cultural promises on them by the group think of society which is ultimately being spurred on by powerful demonic beings. Once we realize that demons don't just possess people but, like Russia trying to influence the American election, part of their strategy is to pull Christians away from Christ through culture, life begins to make much better sense.

3. God's plan is to fill me with Jesus.

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. Colossians 2:9–10 (ESV)

This is incredible stuff. The god who dwelled on Mt. Sinai with fire and smoke, the God who dwelled in the tabernacle in the wilderness and in the God who dwelled in the Jerusalem temple now dwells completely and totally in Jesus.

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. John 2:19–21 (ESV)

God had left the building! God was no longer in the holy of holies in the temple. He had fused himself with a human body in Jesus and he was now walking around the temple. There can be no more deity found anywhere than in Jesus.

This means that since all of God dwells completely in Jesus, how can anyone go anywhere else other than Jesus when it comes to knowing God? God is not 75 percent in Jesus and 25 percent some place else. All of God is

concentrated into Jesus. The one who made the universe poured himself into a human body forever.

Now what makes this even more amazing is not just that all of God lives in Jesus but we have been completely filled by Jesus. Jesus now generously and constantly pours himself into us so we are always full of him. We have everything we need in Jesus.

Since Jesus is fully God and since Jesus completely and totally fills us, the idea that we need anyone or anything else to know God is preposterous. The idea that anyone else knows God apart from Jesus is insane. The idea that we need an intermediary to pray to God outside of Jesus can't be true. We have Jesus and he completely fills us.

This should completely change the way we think about ourselves. In high school, our identity was found in what we did. If we were an athlete, we were part of the jock group. If we played an instrument, we were part of the band group. If we were smart, we were part of the nerd group. Remember the way what we did defined who we were?

Even though many of us are out of high school, we still let what we do define ourselves. For most men and women, their work is their identity. For many mothers, raising children is their identity and when the children are out of the house, moms face an identity crisis.

As Christians, our economic group, our social group, and our friend group is not our identity. Jesus is our identity. That is what matters. All of God lives in Jesus and Jesus completely fills us. The one who created the universe is living

inside of you. I can lose my identity in my work, as a father and as a husband and still make it. It would hurt but our identity is in something much bigger than what we do. It is in the fact that the one who created the universe loves us and is inside of us.

Now Paul is going to explain why our identity being in Jesus and all God has done for us through him is such a big deal

What happens when we are filled by Jesus?

I experience the death of my old nature and resurrection life my new nature.

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. Colossians 2:11–12 (ESV)

What does it mean to have Christ filling us? Paul says what happened is we literally participated in the events of the cross. The benefits of Christ's death, burial and resurrection are ours because we literally participated in them when we trusted in Christ by faith.

Paul uses circumcision to refer to Christ's death. In this passage, Paul is speaking metaphorically. Circumcision is the cutting away of a small piece of a male's flesh, traditionally done on the eighth day after a child is born. Paul says circumcision is a gruesome metaphor for Christ's crucifixion. Jesus' death on the cross involved the painful stripping away not just of a small piece of flesh but the violent removal of Christ's entire body by death. As Christians, we participate in Christ's circumcision, that is his death. As Christians, when we trusted in Christ,

our sinful nature was cut away from us by the death of Jesus. We literally die to our former way of life.

Paul says we didn't just die with Christ but we were buried with Christ. That means that our old way of life was taken away from us and literally buried with Christ.

Paul says you see our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ in our baptism. Incidentally this is why we baptize by immersion, not sprinkling. Paul is talking about baptism symbolizing Christ's burial and resurrection. Our old way of life died with Christ. We go under the water to symbolize our old life and the way we lived being buried with Christ. We come out of the water to symbolize that we literally rose with Christ to a new life by our faith in him. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead has transformed our lives so we are literally a new person living a new life.

When we trust in Christ by faith the person we were is circumcised out of us. We are given a new resurrection nature inside of us. A person that now hates the sin they used to love and loves the Jesus they used to hate. The practical implications of this are immense.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Romans 6:6–7 (ESV)

Before Christ, the dominant operating principle in our life was sin. We sinned because we were sinners. We went to sin like a duck goes to water. It was our nature. When our old self died with Christ and we were literally given a new nature. We no longer have to sin. We are like ducks the no longer want water.

The power of sin has no grip on our life. We may want to sin but you don't have to sin. In fact sin is against our new nature.

Satan wants us to think we have to give in to sin because its pull is too powerful. He wants us to think we are a slave to sin and sin is our master. As a Christian, because we died with Christ and rose with Christ, the power of Christ in us is more powerful than the power of sin against us.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:9–11 (ESV)

If you are a Christian, how do you think of your struggles with sin? Do you think there is no hope? Do you think you have no power to walk away from lust, anger, selfishness, half-truths? That isn't true. That is what you were, not who you are. Satan wants you to think you are still living your past life before Christ that was controlled by your impulses to sin, not your present life that is controlled by Christ.

I have complete forgiveness of my sin.

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. Colossians 2:13–14 (ESV)

What God did when he caused us to trusted in Jesus is he not only gave us new life in Jesus but he forgave all of our sin. It say God literally canceled the record of debt that stood against us by nailing it to the cross.

In the ancient world, when you couldn't pay money you borrowed money and what you borrowed was written on a piece of paper called a certificate of

debt. When the debt was paid off, the certificate was canceled. Paul says that every time we sin we put ourselves in debt to God.

When Jesus died, he took our debt to God and he nailed it to the cross. Paul is talking about the placard that hung above a criminal dying on the cross which detailed the criminals crime. That was the traditional way the Romans did things. It was a real deterrent. The wooden placard on the cross of Jesus said, "King of the Jews." Paul says in reality the placard on Jesus' cross listed our sins that put us in debt to God. Jesus died to pay for all of our sin so the record of our debt to God would be completely canceled.

In fact, Jesus' last words on the cross when he died were, "It is finished." It is the Greek word *tetelestai*. It literally means paid in full. It was the word stamped across a certificate of debt when it was finally paid. Jesus' final words as his physical body and his spirit separated on the cross were "paid in full", signed Jesus. Those words were stamped across the front of our sins which put us in debt to God. That is what it means to be filled by Jesus.

I have complete victory over every demonic power.

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Colossians 2:15 (ESV)

Jesus' death on the cross did not just break the power of sin from our life. It did not just pay for our sin in full so when we die we can stand before God with confidence. Jesus literally disarmed all the rulers and authorities (those are the ranking demonic powers) that are set up against us. Jesus literally conquered the vast fallen demonic world of Satan and his powerful demonic army. He conquered them and put them to shame in his triumph. Picture and entire army

stripped of their weapons and clothes. They stand there in bare feet and rags. That is all that is left.

The picture Paul is giving us is what would happen in his day after the Romans conquered another country. The soldiers would march through the streets of their cities to cheering crowds. Behind them came the captives in chains stripped down to the barest of clothes. The powerful kings and dignitaries of the conquered nation came through the town in complete humiliation as they walked through the street in front of the people of the city.

Paul points to Satan and all of the high ranking demonic powers in the entire universe that were fought against us were completely stripped of their weapons by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Christ's victory is so complete that today the idea of resistance against Jesus is futile. All that is left is for Jesus to lead them through the streets with a ring in their nose and chains around their hands and feet for the final public spectacle of their defeat.

We started with the question, "Why is Jesus all I need?" After we look at all we have in Jesus, what else could we possibly want?

Jesus defeated every demonic spiritual power in the universe. At the name of Jesus, they must flee. That same Jesus completely fills our heart.

Jesus completely forgave us all of our sin by taking the list of sins against us and nailing them to the cross. Jesus stamped across them "Paid in full." In his own blood.

Jesus took our old nature that had to sin, he cut it away and gave us a new resurrected nature that is not controlled by sin. Don't be tricked. If you are a Christian, no matter how enticing the sin, we have the power to walk away.

Don't let yourself be deceived by the demonically inspired cultural pressure around us that wants to take us captive away from Jesus. Hold to Jesus, walk in Jesus, sink your roots deep in Jesus and grow in in Jesus.

Conclusion

Today with your family or in your life group, I want you to think through three questions.

1. Am I guilty of idolatry by finding my identity in my friends, job or family more than who I am in Jesus?
2. What demonically inspired modern thinking and empty cultural promises are taking me captive and leading me away from Christ?
3. How well am I rooted in Christ? What is my plan to learn more about Christ?

Why is Jesus all I need? After we see what God has done for us through him, what else could we possibly want? After Jesus, everything else in this life is just extra gravy.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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