



Colossians - Chapter 2 v 6 to 23

Overflowing with Thankfulness

Maybe not the best time to tackle a topic like this – after all, life has been tough for many people in recent months so there's not much to be thankful for at the moment. But maybe the message we have here is just what we need at this time.

Try to find things for which you are truly thankful.

You may also like to mention things that have caused you pain and pressure.

There is a flow to Paul's argument about how we should live. Remember life for the Colossians would not have been simple and without pressure. But Paul's response to this is

- They have received Christ v6
- Continue to live in him
- Be built up in him
- Become strengthened in their faith
- Overflowing with thankfulness

Paul is saying that just 'becoming a Christian' should lead to an ongoing life of discipleship. If you've received him as Lord and Saviour, he longs for ongoing relationship.

How difficult have you found it to 'live in him'?

Practically what does this mean?

Have you found that living in him has built you up and strengthened your faith?

What stops that happening?

The reason for Paul's encouragement is clear in the next verse (v8). There will be those who seek to drive our faith away from close relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul mentions relying on tradition and living by the values of the world.

Talk about some of the 'things of the world' that have been a distraction in your lives.

Paul goes on to give good reasons why 'living in him' is better than following worldly values. He gives them another brilliant description of Jesus and why we should trust him. In Christ you will find the full reality of who God is. Paul is painting a picture of the all-sufficient Christ. He is 'God in a body' (v9). Circumcision is the Jewish way of identifying that a person is one of God's children. But we identify with God's people by having the old worldly self buried in the symbol of baptism and, as we come up from the water, we are symbolically raised with him. One day that will be a reality.

This can appear to be a very idealised picture. Do we sense that we are people marked (circumcision) as people of God?

Paul says we acknowledge that we are God's children because we have faith in the power of God. Do we?

Verse 13 gives us more reasons to be thankful. We were once (spiritually) dead in an un-circumcised state (Not marked as God's child). Notice that the transformation is done by God (v13f). God took away sin by becoming the sin-bearer on the cross. The 'written code' of the law can no longer pronounce a 'guilty of sin' verdict over us. Christ has 'covered' it (see Psalm 32)

How do you understand what Jesus did for you on the cross?
Was it just a noble sacrifice or was there something more profound? (v15)

It might be good at this point to look back at this passage and see all the things that we should be thankful for and give thanks to God for his love for us in sending Jesus to be our Saviour.

Paul moves on from the all-sufficiency of Christ to tackling the error threatening the church in Colossae (v16f). It is clear that the heresy (probably Gnostic philosophy – see the first Colossians sheet with the background) is infecting the church. They were being told they had to observe all kinds of rules relating to eating food and festival observance. Paul blows this away by saying 'the reality is found in Christ' (v17) Clearly the observance had trumped the relationship with Jesus and 'lost the connection to the Head' (v19).

Is it ever possible that our observance of traditions detracts from our relationship with Christ?
Do we ever get cross when church is not done in the way we like it?

We have lost a lot of 'connections' (v19) in the last year or so. Paul is saying that we are all connected to Christ by his saving work and that is what binds us together. We have a relationship with Christ in common with all our brothers and sisters. That is how we grow (v19) – we grow together.

How important is it for us to deliberately re-kindle relationships with friends at church?
Do we need to renew our faith in God?

We no longer need to be bound to any ritual observance (v20 & 21). 'Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom - but they lack any value'. (v22 to 24)

Does this suggest we should not be slavishly linked to any format in church worship?
Do some of us need to learn a more tolerant approach?
If we are prone to dissatisfaction do we need to be thankful more often?

THE DOWNLOAD VERSE

This verse is a clear statement about our identity in Christ and how our relationship with him should be developed.

'So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness' (verse 6)

You are a child of God. He died for you. He rose from the dead and so will you. He wants you to be built up in him - so take time to think of him and read his word

And every day thank God for the gift of his Son and all the blessings you receive. In other words – **'OVERFLOW WITH THANKS'**.

Take some time this week to ***THANK God for Jesus***