

## Complete: Continue How You Started – Colossians 2:6-7

Our family moved to Michigan in 2017, and we really do love living here. I want you to know that because I'm about to knock on the state a little bit. We moved here from central Virginia, right in the middle of the blue ridge mountains. Right before we moved here, we started getting into hiking as a family and we enjoyed it. And there were lots of good hikes very close to where we lived in Virginia. Here are a couple of pictures from a hike we did about a month before we moved.

Here's how I would describe the hiking in southeast Michigan. Thumbs Down. I'm sure there are great hikes in other parts of the state, but not so much here. When we go on vacation, we try to find a good hike to do, and we just did that recently when we went away. The hike we took was one I found online and the online reviews of it said it was a moderate hike. When we actually got to the trailhead the sign said it was a difficult hike. But we made it and the destination was worth it. But really, hiking is just walking uphill with a specific destination as the goal.

To finish a hike, you just have to put one foot in front of the other and keep doing that. You keep walking. I think that's why Paul uses this metaphor of walking so often to describe progress in the Christian life. In many ways it's basic and pretty mundane, but the destination is certainly worth it.

We've already seen Paul use this picture of walking in Colossians in 1:9-10 and he will use it again in 3:7 and 4:5. But our passage today is the key use of this idea in the book. In fact, one author said 2:6-7 is the heart of Colossians.

Remember, this letter is written because of a threat coming from false teaching. Paul wants them to combat the false teaching with their sufficiency in Christ and continue to walk in the faith. We already saw Paul encourage them to continue in 1:9-10 in his prayer, but then listen to 1:21-23 and 1:28 and 2:5.

2:6-7 forms the heart of Colossians and the argument of the letter because it gives us a simple and straightforward explanation of how to continue in your walk. So, here's what we will see today. **3 Basics for Your Daily Walk as a Christian.**

### **1. Let the Beginning Shape the Present (v. 6)**

If you think about a hike, no matter how long it is, the first step you take will be quite similar to the last step you take as you reach the destination. That's the idea here in verse 6, which is built on the first five verses of chapter 2. You can see it begins with the word "therefore". Because of Paul's goals for their ministry and especially because of his rejoicing in their good order and firmness of faith in verse 5, he wants them to continue in the same way they started. So what does that mean?

Notice the language of verse 6, "As you received Christ Jesus the Lord". How did this whole thing begin for the Colossians and how did it begin for you? What got you here gathered with a church this morning?

Well, let's think about this word received for a second because this is the first thing that happened for the Colossians. According to 1:21 they were alienated and hostile in mind and doing evil deeds. But Epaphras heard the gospel message from Paul and then passed it along to the Colossians. He spoke it, taught it, and conveyed it. It's the same idea you see in verse 7 where it says, "Just as you were taught".

But notice here that they received Christ Jesus the Lord. They didn't simply receive a bit of information, they received a person. So, Epaphras shows up and he starts to tell them about Jesus Christ. He tells them things like this: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. All things were created by Him and for Him. All things hold together in Him. He is the head of the body, the church and the firstborn from the dead. He is first place in everything. All the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him and it is through Him that you are reconciled to God and all of creation will be reconciled too. He made peace by the blood of His cross."

How would you summarize that message? Jesus Christ is Lord. So, the Colossians heard that message but receiving it means more than just hearing it. They believed it and embraced it. They committed themselves to the truthfulness of that message and that person.

This is how you began the walk of the Christian life. It was by faith. Biblically speaking faith involves 3 things. First, knowledge. You have to know about whatever you believe. You always believe something. Second, faith involves assent. You have to agree to what you hear. Your heart must believe it to be true. Third, biblical faith requires commitment. Since faith is in a person it involves a resting in that person and all he offers, promises, and provides.

This is how you received Christ and this is how you must continue, by faith. And this bring us to our second basic of our walk.

## **2. Let Your Walk Be In and With Christ (v. 7a)**

It's very common to somehow get it in our heads that we begin by trusting in Jesus but then we very quickly move on to doing our best, making sure we obey all the time, and making sure I'm a good Christian. Paul makes sure we know that our daily walk involves the same faith that it began with. *At the same time Paul is equally plain in his teaching that all growth and progress in the Christian life must be entirely consistent with its beginnings.* – Dick Lucas

Look at the rest of verse 6 and into verse 7. You walk "in Him" and then Paul explains in verse 7 what this looks like using 3 metaphors. You are rooted in Him. This is an agricultural image. I love spring and one of the thing I love the most is looking into our backyard and seeing plants and trees bloom, seeing leaves sprout and watching life take back over after a cold winter. All of these trees and plants grow again because they have roots that extend down into the rich soil and gather nutrients. You only walk daily as a Christian based on the foundation of the person and work of Christ.

But then notice the second metaphor, built up in Him. This is a construction metaphor. You watch a building get built up. The walls, the rooms, the roof. Construction extends upward. So, you put these two metaphors together and you get the third one, established, which is a legal metaphor. The idea is an official and confirmed document that has legal status.

So, here's the overall picture, Christ is the root system, the foundation and as you stay connected to Him you grow up and are built up and through Him you are established in the faith.

All three of these pictures are something that happens to you where the action is done by God. They all happen to us as we turn away from self and to Christ.

Listen, I don't know if you have noticed this, but our culture is competitive and the competition is to determine who is "enough" and who isn't. And we all tend to go through life feeling like we aren't enough in any area. Parenting, finances, work, marriage, health and wellbeing, and the list goes on and on. We strive, we work, we do our best, but we almost always feel like we come up short and are lacking.

This is especially true in our relationship with God. We know we have messed up and we know we have sinned. We know we fall short of His perfect standard, but somehow we think if we can just push a little harder, read a little more, pray a little more, attend church with a little more interest, then we can feel like we have done enough.

Here's the problem with that. You can't do enough...ever. You aren't good enough, savvy enough or smart enough. You have failed and so have I and this is exactly the truth that you have to believe deep in your heart because this is where grace enters the picture. You can't be enough, but Jesus Christ has been enough for you. This is the message of Colossians. In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and you have been made complete in Him. He is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn from the dead.

And so Paul says, "walk in Him". Be rooted in Him and His enoughness, His sufficiency, His preeminence. This is how you put one foot in front of the other. You learn of Christ and remind yourself of who He is. You stand every day on this foundation, "I am in Christ, forgiven and accepted." He is enough and so I am enough for God in Him. We never move away from hearing of Christ's sufficiency for salvation and for life.

*"The riches of this estate that believers inherit are so vast that the will must be proclaimed every week. Christ's attorney must read and expound the will in*

*sections over a lifetime. Not just once, but every day we must renounce our trust in other would-be lords, saviors, providers, and promise makers. We must let go of our anxious grip on our own lives, our sense of being in control, our own integrity and confidence in our religious experience. We must renounce the contracts we have entered that promised to make our life meaningful and say "Amen!" to the will as it is read to us." - Michael Horton*

So, here's the question then. How do I stay rooted in Him? How do I stop living as if I have to prove myself enough and earn God's favor? How do I grow in my faith that Jesus provides all I need? That's our third basic of our daily walk.

### **3. Let Your Attitude Abound with Thankfulness (v. 7b)**

What we've seen so far is that we are to walk as we began. We are to be rooted in Christ and built up in Him. In other words, we want to look to Him and not ourselves. We want to rest in His sufficiency.

Our gaze should be turned to Him. Listen to Colossians 3:1-2. How do we consciously ponder Christ and consciously remember the incredible inheritance we have in Him that provides all we need?

Well, it's hard right? I don't know about you, but my thoughts tend to be very often inward and turned toward self. What do I have to do? Have I done enough? Did I handle this the right way? Am I a good husband, Father, pastor, etc.

But look what Paul says is necessary to walk with this outward turn. Look at the end of verse 7. This may seem like a rather simple and almost childish basic of your daily walk but think about the connection here for a second.

Thankfulness automatically turns your gaze outward and automatically recognizes that you have been given something. Remember how Paul began verse 6? You received. A gift was given to you by God. To remind yourself of that gift, express thankfulness. Thankfulness goes hand in hand with grace.

What would this look like? Try this week to take Colossians 1:15-20 and just work through that and thank God for each of the "qualifications" Jesus has in that passage and then thank Him for what that provides for you.

Then just thank him for the incredible gifts you have received from His hand. This will keep you rooted in Him and built up in Him and established in the faith. And this will keep you walking toward the goal. Let me end with this quote:

*The deep roots of the faith evidence themselves in an attitude of gratitude for both the initial experience of salvation and the continued sustaining of life. Faith and the nature of a Christian foundation are often invisible, but thanksgiving is a visible response to the grace of God in their lives. – Richard Melick*

### Sermon Reflection Questions – 4/19/26

- What's the best hike you've ever done? If you don't like hiking, what's your favorite outdoor activity?
- What truths is Paul getting at when he uses the metaphor of "walking" to speak of the Christian life?
- How does Colossians 2:6-7 fit into the argument of the letter, in particular what has come right before it?
- Explain what Paul means by "received" in verse 6.
- Explain the 3 elements of biblical faith. Do you think any of the three of these gets left out today in our grasp of faith?
- What three metaphors does Paul use in verse 7? What do they teach?
- What are some areas where you feel particular pressure to be "enough"?
- What's the connection between understanding that I can never be enough and grasping grace?
- Take one part of the teaching of Colossians 1:15-20 and connect Christ's "enoughness" to life this week.

- Why do we need to constantly hear about inheritance we have in Christ?
- How does thankfulness turn our attention to Christ and root us in Him?
- What is one practical way you can cultivate thankfulness in your life?