November 1st

Rooted In The Word

Rooted in the Word Main Scripture: Psalm 119:105 (ESV) “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Sermon Theme: God's Word is the foundation that guides our lives, strengthens our faith, and helps us grow in Christ. Main Point: If we want to stand strong in our faith, we must be rooted in the Word of God. Introduction: What Are You Rooted In?

Last week, we began our series, Rooted in Christ, from Colossians 2:6–7. We talked about walking in Christ, being rooted in Him, and building our lives on Him. Today, I want us to take that a step further and talk about what helps us grow those roots deep. Think about a tree for a moment. When we look at a tree, we see the trunk, the branches, the leaves, and maybe even the fruit. But what we don't see is what is happening beneath the surface. The strength of that tree depends on its roots. If the roots are shallow, the tree is vulnerable when strong winds come. But when the roots grow deep, the tree has something to hold on to.

The same is true in our spiritual lives.

- We can come to church every Sunday.
- We can sing the songs and know when to say amen.
- We can know the right things to say and be familiar with the stories in the Bible.

But what happens when the storms come?

What happens when the prayers aren't answered the way we expected?

What happens when somebody hurts us, when our circumstances change, or when we face a decision we don't know how to make?

What we are rooted in will make a difference. We live in a world where opinions change, culture changes, and people disagree about what is right and wrong. If we build our lives on the opinions of people, we will find ourselves constantly being pulled in different directions. But God has given us something we can build our lives on.

He has given us His Word. Psalm 119:105 says God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. The psalmist understood that he needed God's direction. He knew he could not successfully navigate life by relying on himself alone.

Today, we're going to look at four ways God's Word helps us grow deep roots in Christ. If we're going to be rooted in the Word, the first thing we need to understand is that God's Word gives us direction.

1. God's Word Gives Us Direction Psalm 119:105 (ESV) “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The psalmist compares God's Word to a lamp and a light. Both help us see where we're going. Imagine walking down a dark road at night without a flashlight. You can't see what's ahead. You don't know where the next step will land. You might stumble over something or take a wrong turn. But when you have a light, you can see enough to take the next step.

Notice that the psalmist doesn't say God's Word shows him the entire journey at once. He says it's a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. Sometimes God doesn't show us everything we want to know. We want to know how everything is going to work out. We want to know what next year will look like. We want to know how a difficult situation is going to end. But many times, God gives us enough light to take the next step.

A. God's Word helps us make decisions. We all face decisions in life.

• How should I handle this difficult relationship?

• What should I do when I feel mistreated?

• How should I respond when I'm angry?

• What do I do when I don't understand what God is doing?

We may not find a verse that tells us every specific detail of every decision, but the Bible gives us principles to guide our choices. Proverbs 3:5–6 teaches us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding.

The problem is that sometimes we want God to bless our decisions without first asking Him to direct them. We make up our minds about what we want to do, and then we ask God to bless it. But being rooted in the Word means we allow God to shape our decisions before we act. Instead of asking only, “What do I want to do?” we begin asking, “What would honor God in this situation?” That's a different way of living.

B. God's Word keeps us from being led astray. Not every voice we hear is a voice we should follow. Not every popular idea is a biblical idea. And not everything that feels right is right in the eyes of God. In Acts 17:11, the Bereans were commended because they examined the Scriptures daily to see whether what they were hearing was true. They didn't just accept something because somebody said it. They checked it against the Word of God. Church, we need that same attitude today.

We hear all kinds of things from television, social media, friends, family, and the culture around us. Everybody seems to have an opinion about how we should live. But as followers of Jesus, our final authority must be the Word of God. And that means we have to know what it says.

We cannot measure everything against Scripture if we never take the time to read and understand Scripture. Talking point: If the only Bible we know is what somebody else tells us on Sunday morning, we're missing an important part of growing in Christ. The pastor can teach you, encourage you, and help you understand Scripture, but you also need to open the Bible for yourself.

Application:

• Before making a decision, ask what Scripture teaches.

• Before accepting a popular opinion, compare it with God's truth.

• Before reacting to a difficult situation, take time to seek God's wisdom.

Key statement:

God's Word may not show us every detail of the road ahead, but it will help us take the next step in the right direction.

Transition:

God's Word doesn't just show us where to go. It also gives us the strength we need to keep going when the road gets difficult.

2. God's Word Strengthens Our Faith Romans 10:17 (ESV) “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

Our faith needs to be strengthened continually. There are times when we feel strong in our faith. We can see God working, we have peace in our hearts, and we feel confident about what lies ahead. But there are also times when we struggle. There are prayers that seem unanswered. There are situations we don't understand. There are moments when we wonder how we're going to make it through. It's easy to talk about trusting God when everything is going well. But our faith is often tested when things don't go the way we expected. That is why we need to be rooted in the Word before the storm comes.

A. God's Word reminds us of who He is. When we read the Bible, we're reminded of God's faithfulness.

Think about Abraham. God gave him a promise, but he had to wait. He couldn't see the whole picture, but he had to trust God. Think about Moses and the Israelites. They reached the Red Sea with an impossible situation in front of them and an enemy behind them. But God made a way where there appeared to be no way. Think about Daniel. He remained faithful to God even when it cost him, and God was with him in the lions' den. And above all, think about Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, He made a way for us to be forgiven and restored to God.

These stories remind us that God is faithful, even when His people face difficult circumstances. Now, that doesn't mean every situation will turn out exactly the way we want. It doesn't mean every prayer will be answered on our timetable. It means we can trust God's character even when we don't understand His timing. Sometimes the most important thing we can do is go back to what we already know about God. When fear comes, remember His promises. When discouragement comes, remember His faithfulness. When you don't know what tomorrow holds, remember who holds you in His hands.

B. God's Word helps us stand when life gets difficult. Jesus tells a story in Matthew 7:24–27 about two men who built houses. One built his house on rock, and the other built his house on sand. Both houses experienced the storm. Both faced the rain, the floods, and the wind. The difference was the foundation. Jesus said the wise man was the one who heard His words and put them into practice. Notice that Jesus didn't say the wise man's house would never face a storm. He said the house built on the rock would stand.

Sometimes Christians get the idea that if we're following God, life should be easy. But Jesus never promised that we would avoid every storm. We still experience loss. We still face disappointment. We still have difficult days. The question isn't whether storms will come. The question is whether we have built our lives on a foundation that can hold us steady.

You don't build a strong foundation in the middle of the storm. You build it before the storm comes. When the storm hits, that's not the time to start figuring out what you believe about God. That's the time to stand on the truth you've already learned to trust. If our faith is built only on our circumstances, it will rise and fall with our circumstances. But if our faith is built on the Word of God, we have a foundation that remains firm.

Application:

• Don't wait until you're discouraged to open your Bible.

• Don't wait until your faith is weak to begin strengthening it.

• Build your faith daily through Scripture, prayer, worship, and obedience.

Key statement:

The goal isn't simply to know what the Bible says. The goal is to build our lives on what it says.
Transition: God's Word guides us and strengthens us, but it also does something else. It begins to change us from the inside out.

3. God's Word Changes the Way We Live 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...” God didn't give us His Word simply to increase our knowledge. He gave us His Word so we could know Him, grow

in Him, and live according to His will. There is a difference between knowing what the Bible says and allowing the Bible to change the way we live.

We can hear a sermon and agree with every point. We can read a passage and understand what it means. We can even memorize Scripture. But if we never allow God's Word to change our attitudes, decisions, and actions, we're missing the purpose.

A. God's Word corrects us. One of the purposes of Scripture is to show us when we're going in the wrong direction. Sometimes we read the Bible and feel encouraged. Other times, we read it and realize something in our lives needs to change. Maybe it's our attitude toward someone who has hurt us. Maybe it's our unwillingness to forgive. Maybe it's pride, anger, bitterness, or the way we speak to people. Maybe God is showing us that our priorities have gotten out of order and we've allowed other things to take His place.

The Word of God doesn't always tell us what we want to hear. Sometimes it tells us what we need to hear. And if we're going to be rooted in the Word, we have to be willing to receive corrections. Hebrews 4:12 teaches that God's Word is living and active and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. In other words, God's Word has a way of getting beneath the surface. It reveals things we might rather ignore. But remember this: God's correction is not rejection. He corrects us because He wants us to grow. We shouldn't approach Scripture looking for ways to prove that we're right. We should approach it with a heart that says, “Lord, show me what needs to change in me.”

It's easy to read a passage and think about how somebody else needs to hear it. It's harder to let that passage speak directly to our own hearts. But spiritual growth begins when we allow God to work in us first.

B. God's Word calls us to obedience. James 1:22 says we must be doers of the Word, not hearers only. Think about how easy it is to hear a sermon, say it was a good message, and then go home and continue living exactly the same way. We can be moved emotionally without making a real change. But God calls us to more than hearing. If God's Word tells us to forgive, we need to take steps toward forgiveness. If God's Word tells us to love our neighbors, we need to show that love through our actions. If God's Word tells us to serve, we need to look for opportunities to serve. If God's Word tells us to share the gospel, we need to be willing to tell people about Jesus.

We can't say we're rooted in the Word while consistently refusing to do what the Word tells us. Now, obedience doesn't mean we're perfect. We all have areas where we're still growing. We all need God's grace. But there should be a willingness in us to listen when God speaks and respond when He calls us to change. A Bible that stays closed cannot guide your decisions, and a Bible that is only read but never

obeyed will not produce the spiritual growth God desires. The goal is not perfection overnight. The goal is a life that continues to surrender to Jesus.

Application:

As you read Scripture this week, ask yourself two questions:

` 1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What needs to change in my life because of what I've read?

Don't just read to finish a chapter. Read with a heart that is willing to respond.

Key statement:

Spiritual maturity is not measured only by how much Scripture we know, but by how faithfully we live it.

Transition:

That brings us to a practical question. If God's Word is so important, how do we make sure it has a regular place in our lives?

4. We Must Make God's Word a Daily Priority Joshua 1:8 (ESV) “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it...” God told Joshua to keep His Word before him continually and to be careful to obey it. This was not just about reading a passage and moving on. It was about allowing God's truth to shape Joshua's thinking and actions. We need that same commitment today.

A. We need more than a Sunday morning faith. Coming to church matters. Gathering with other believers matters. Hearing the preaching of God's Word matters. But our relationship with Jesus cannot be limited to one hour on Sunday morning.

Think about our physical bodies. We wouldn't expect to eat one meal a week and remain healthy and strong. Yet sometimes we treat our spiritual lives that way. We expect one sermon on Sunday to carry us through the entire week. We need to spend time with God throughout the week. We need His Word when we're at work. We need His Word when we're dealing with family. We need His Word when we're making decisions. We need His Word when we're tempted, discouraged, or uncertain about what to do. And we need His Word when life is going well, too.

We shouldn't treat the Bible like an emergency kit that we only pull out when something goes wrong. It should be part of our daily walk with God. If the only time we open our Bibles is when we're in trouble, we're missing the opportunity to build a deeper relationship with the One who walks with us through every season.

B. Start small, but be consistent. Maybe you struggle to read your Bible regularly. Maybe you've started reading plans and stopped after a few days. Maybe you open your Bible but find it difficult to understand. Don't let that discourage you.

Start somewhere.

• Read a chapter each day.

• Begin with the Gospel of John or the book of Psalms.

• Write down one truth you learn about God.

• Pray and ask Him to help you understand.

• Think about how you can put what you've read into practice.

You don't have to understand everything in the Bible before you begin reading it. You simply need to be willing to keep learning.

Over time, those daily moments in God's Word can shape the way you think, respond, and live. And as a church, we need to become people who love the Word of God. We don't want to be a church that simply gathers on Sunday, sings some songs, listens to a sermon, and goes home unchanged. We want to be a church that knows God's Word, lives God's Word, and shares God's Word with our community. If we want to see lives changed, families strengthened, disciples growing, and people coming to know Jesus, we must build our lives and our ministry on the truth of Scripture.

Application:

Make a decision this week to give God's Word a consistent place in your daily life. Don't wait for a convenient time. Make it a priority.

Key statement:

A church rooted in the Word is better equipped to stand firm in truth, grow in Christ, and fulfill the mission God has given it.

Conclusion: Are Your Roots Growing Deep? Let's return to our main text one more time. Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The psalmist understood that he needed God's Word to guide him. He knew he couldn't successfully navigate life by relying on his own understanding alone. And neither can we. We live in a world where opinions change, culture changes, and circumstances change.

But God's Word remains true. Let's bring this back to the picture of the tree we talked about at the beginning. When a tree is deeply rooted, those roots provide stability. They help support the tree when

the wind blows and the weather turns rough. In the same way, when we're rooted in God's Word, we have something solid to stand on when life becomes difficult.

• When you don't know which direction to take, let God's Word guide you.

• When your faith is being tested, let God's Word strengthen you.

• When God reveals something that needs to change, let His Word correct you.

• When life gets busy, make time for God's Word.

We began this series by talking about being rooted in Christ. Today, we've been reminded that one of the ways we grow deep roots in Him is by knowing His Word and putting it into practice. You cannot grow deep spiritual roots while continually neglecting the Word that nourishes your faith.

Final Challenge I want to leave you with three questions today.

1. Am I spending time in God's Word? Or am I depending only on what I hear on Sunday?

2. Am I allowing God's Word to change me? Or do I only accept the parts that make me comfortable?

3. When the storms come, where will my foundation be? Will I be standing on my feelings and circumstances, or on the truth of God's Word? Church, God isn't simply calling us to know more about the Bible. He is calling us to know Him, trust Him, and follow Him. Let's be people who are rooted in Christ and rooted in His Word. Let's be people who don't just hear the Word on Sunday but live it throughout the week. And let's build our lives on a foundation that will hold us steady no matter what comes our way. Closing statement: The deeper our roots grow in God's Word, the stronger we become in our walk with Christ.