

Text: Colossians 2:6-7

Title: Walk as You Were Taught

Truth: Christianity teaches us how to live in Christ...not just how to “get saved.”

Date/Location: Sunday September 27, 2015 at FBC

Introduction

In light of the danger to the Colossians—posed by persuasive false teachers—Paul reinforces to them how they should live in Christ.

I. Comparison: As You Received Christ...so Walk in Christ, verse 6

A. We first must ask, “How did you receive Him?”

1. The first answer that probably pops into our mind is, “I received Him by faith.” That is absolutely true. And we should therefore live in...faith! 2 Cor. 5:7 reminds us that we walk by faith, not having seen the resurrection body or anything else that is beyond the end of this earthly life. But we will see it.
2. But the context weighs against this interpretation. Not that the context is contrary to it. Rather, the context indicates that the reception of Christ has to do with *more* than mere faith. That might sound strange, but I do not mean to give the impression that to be saved requires more than faith. That’s not at all what I am trying to say. What I am going to say is that Paul goes on in verse 7 to refer to “as you have been taught.” He points back to the prior delivery of doctrine to them, and their reception of it. This is an important process, made all the more important because there was no easy way to duplicate or transmit the teaching in writing like we can do today.
3. The process started with someone coming to the Colossians, taught them about Jesus, told them who He was and what He did and how He requires us to respond to His message why we should listen to Him, what benefits come to those who trust in Him, how our lives are and how they should be, and so forth.
4. This teaching was therefore “delivered” to the Colossians. Then, the Colossians “received” it—they learned the spiritual teaching of Christianity and received it. Paul often mentioned this process in his letters. For instance:
 - i. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 – I declare to you the gospel which I **preached** to you, which also you **received** (same verb). I **delivered** to you what I also **received**.

- ii. Phil. 4:9 – The things which you learned and **received** (same verb) and heard and saw in me, these do.
- iii. Gal. 1:9, 12 – Paul speaks about **receiving** another gospel and the true gospel that he had **received**.
- iv. Mark 7:4 – Mark comments on the traditions of the Pharisees that they **received** and held.
- v. 1 Thess. 2:13 – The church **received** the word of God as it was in truth.
- vi. 2 Thess. 3:6 – a life that is not in accord with the tradition **received** from Paul.
- vii. 1 Thess. 4:1 – The Thessalonians had **received** instructions as to how to walk and please God. They were to follow that all the more.
- viii. 1 Cor. 11:23 – the same thing applies to the teaching Paul himself **received** on the Lord’s Table; he then **delivered** that to the Corinthians.

The other side of “receiving” is “delivering.” There are a lot of verses for that idea as well: Mark 7:13; Acts 6:14, 16:4; 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Peter 2:21; Matthew 11:27.

We can see the focus of the verb “to receive” is not only on the act of faith in being saved, but in the total reception and embracing of the body of Christian truth that was delivered to them. Paul was concerned because this “reception” could be messed up by persuasively speaking false teachers (2:4).

- 5. A further interesting point in the verse is that the Colossians received “the Christ—Jesus the Lord.” The two articles “the” are present in the Greek text and there is some discussion in the commentaries as to what this means. To boil it down, Christians believe in **the Christ** = Messiah. As a further identification of that Messiah, we are talking about the fully human **Jesus**, not an apparition as some heretics claimed. And further, we are talking about **the Lord**, the fully divine Jesus, the creator God who was being “talked down” by some false teachers in Colossae.

B. Then we apply that reception to, “How then do you walk in Him?”

- 1. Walking means living, the manner of life one carries out.
- 2. The Colossians were to live in him in the way they were taught to live, according to that standard of teaching. The immediate contextual explanation of this is found in verse 7. However, I should add at this

point that Jesus taught His disciples how to live. He then told them to propagate that teaching to all future disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). That is what we are participating in when we learn the Bible, so that we can live better, not just know more!

3. This brings up a sticky point in terms of application. We should also walk in Christ as we have been taught. But that applies *only* if we have been taught correctly. What if we have been taught incorrectly? Perhaps we grew up in a cult. Perhaps we are just now coming into contact with simple Biblical Christianity. What then? Do we doggedly hold to “what we were taught” because “that’s what we were taught”? No! What Paul taught is recorded for us in Scripture. So we have the additional responsibility to compare what we were taught to what God teaches in the Bible. If they match, then we can steadfastly hold to what we were taught. If not, we have to abandon what we were taught and embrace a Biblical form of doctrine. An important doctrine called *sola Scriptura* fits in here, whereby we are protected from every new form of doctrine that pops up by our understanding that all teaching has to conform to the form of sound words given in Scripture. If they do not, they are to be rejected, no matter how many people are propagating them or what “church” is teaching them.

II. Explaining Christian Behavior, verse 7a

The next three “action words” describe how we are to “walk” in Christ. They are in the passive voice, indicating that God is at work and that we are to responsibly participate in His work. Through the gospel, God makes it so that we can be:

- A. Rooted – A picture from the world of plants and trees.

See Psalm 1:3, unlike the chaff of 1:4; Psalm 92:12-15; Jer. 17:8; Eph. 3:17.

- B. Built Up – A picture from the field of architecture.

The word actually has the idea of “built upon” but then it adds “in him.”

It sounds like “built upon in Him” but the in Him probably is there simply to refer to both the rooted and built up parts having to be connected to Christ. The root underneath, set in the foundation of Christ, is then built upon as we grow in Him.

See 1 Cor. 3:10-14 (3x); Eph. 2:20; Jude 20.

- C. Strengthened in the faith – A picture from the subject of law.

This word speaks of being established, confirmed, put beyond doubt, like a legal validation of something. The word is used in Romans 15:8; 1 Cor. 1:6; Hebrews 2:3, 13:9. True Christians should be confirmed in the faith that they were taught and secure in it.

D. Top to bottom, inside and outside, you have received Christ. You have abandoned all other roots, all other building materials, all other forms of strength. You are not blown about with every new idea that comes by. You are supposed to have a good stature or “build” in Christ. You are not supposed to be weak and wimpy in the faith. You are to be sure of it.

E. We studied at length above the phrase “as you have been taught.”

III. The Overflow of Thanksgiving from the Christian, verse 7b

- A. This action word is also a descriptor of how the Christian life is to be “walked.” In contrast to the three passive verbs before it, this one is active. It emphasizes our role more than God’s part.
- B. The Christian’s responsibility is one of gratitude, gratefulness, appreciation toward God, and overflowing to others. This is not just an attitude, but is actually expressed...openly...publicly...
- C. Note other passages that deal with this responsibility: Eph. 5:4, 1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 4:15, 9:11-12; Phil. 4:6, Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:1, 4:3; Rev. 4:9, 7:12.
- D. If you are grouching, you are not giving thanks.
If you are gossiping, you are not giving thanks.
If you are grumpy, you are not giving thanks.
If you are complaining, you are not giving thanks.
If you are swearing or telling crude jokes, you are not giving thanks.
If you are anxious, you are not giving thanks.
If you are bitter against your spouse, you are not giving thanks.
If you are not regularly praying, you are not giving thanks to God.

Conclusion

Walking in Christ is so much more than “walking in faith.” It is that...*and* it is walking as we were taught, it is walking while being rooted, walking while being built, walking while being confirmed in the faith, and walking in thanksgiving.

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