

**Turn with me now in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 2. This has been such a blessed Lord's Day, such a beautiful time of covenant renewal and communion with our risen Savior. We have been fed by the Word, we have been spiritually nourished in the sacrament, and now we come to express how deepest gratitude to the Lord for this rich blessing He has bestowed upon us. So give your attention now to the reading of God's Holy Word from Colossians chapter 2 beginning at verse 6.**

**\*Read Colossians 2:6-7\***

**\*Pray\***

**We are a busy people; we have busy lives. There's always places to go, people to see, and things to do. One of the great joys and blessings of the Sabbath is that we get to step away from our busyness and have a full day to simply rest in the Lord. And each of us nows how important this day of rest is. But oftentimes in our busyness we tend to overlook how great a gift this day is. We tend to just come to church, enjoy the fellowship with the saints, and then go on living our lives. When we think of what we have done here earlier today, the meal that we have just received, partaking of the body and blood of our Lord signified by the bread and the wine of the Supper, we ought to pause and reflect upon it. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not just some common meal, it's not some ritual that we do out of mere tradition, it's not partake of and then simply go on living our lives. It is truly a means of grace. It is one of the means by which Jehovah makes His covenant known unto you and blesses you with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. It signified you being His people and He being your God. It signifies the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the perfect spotless Lamb who bore your sins upon His shoulders and purchased your salvations. It signifies that covenant between you and God being sealed with the blood of Christ. Because of that, we cannot just walk away. We cannot receive the Lord Jesus and let that be that. There is an obligation that is now placed upon each and every one of us that have received Christ. One the first**

**things that we teach our children is when they receive a gift from someone they must express their gratitude, and not in a dismissive obligatory way, but truly and sincerely. The same is true of us here today. The exhortation to you this morning is if you have received Christ offer thanks unto Him with your very life. We will consider this exhortation in three ways: first, receiving Christ; next, walking in Him; and finally, abounding with thanksgiving.**

**First let us consider what it means to receive Christ. Paul writes, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord...” There are two aspects to what it means to receive Christ. The first is in that title ‘Christ.’ Here we have an affirmation of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. This is the Son of God operating in His mediatorial role as the redeemer of man. It is the Greek term for the Hebrew word Messiah, the one who would come and save the people of God. He has come into this world, taken on human flesh, lived a sinless perfect life, was crucified, died, and was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. He stands as the mediator of that covenant between you and God as the one who fulfilled the terms of the covenant on your behalf. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” This is what we have just celebrated at the Lord’s Table earlier today. “Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me... this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” So the question stands to you, beloved, have you received Christ? Have you been made partaker of that blessed covenant which was purchased with His very own blood? If you have not then I plead with you to do so. Your very eternal state, your very soul, lies in the balance. A couple of weeks ago I received news that my uncle passed away. Yes, it is a sorrowful thing whenever a loved one passes, but what compounds the sorrow is the fact that he died outside of Christ and now he is experiencing the judgement reserved for those who reject this Gospel. Just as I wept over his death, I weep over the thought that there may be someone here who has not received Christ and could face the same eternal fate. And so I hold him forth to you this**

**day. Embrace Him, take hold of Him, receive Him. But friends, I trust that most, if not all of you, have received Christ. If this is true of you then, brothers and sisters, you have much to rejoice in. Let that truth fill your hearts with all joy and gladness, that you are His and He is yours.**

**But there is another aspect to receiving Christ that must be understood as well. This is found in that second title given unto Him, 'Lord.' This is a political title signifying His rule over all things. This is seen all throughout the New Testament in places such as Matthew 28 in the great commission, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Ephesians 1:21-23, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And it is clearly seen in Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." If Christ Jesus is not Lord of your life, how can you possibly say that you have received Christ? It's not possible, though some theologians have tried to argue it is, to receive Him as Christ, as your Savior and Redeemer, and not receive Him as Lord. Shall the person and work of Christ be divided in two? So if you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, He must have dominion over you. He must rule and reign in your life. Everything you do must be in accordance with His holy will. To receive Christ is to consent to be His, to submit to Him as your Lord, to cast off all the other things in this life which have fought for dominion of you and fully embrace Him. In receiving Christ Jesus the Lord your life must reflect it by being one of submission and gratitude for your God and King.**

**Though we have received all from God as a free gift, we yet have duties to perform. If we have received Christ, we must walk in him. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as**

ye have been taught.” We must walk in Him in our daily course and keep up our communion with Him. Our whole life must be one continued act of “faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.” (Galatians 2:20) Undoubtedly, the Apostle Paul has in mind the words of Psalm 1, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” The path in which you walk must be the paths of righteousness, walking in Christ Jesus the one whom you have received, living in obedience to His commands, and delighting in His law. Friends, this can only be done in you are consistently, daily, in the Word of God. You cannot know how to walk in Christ, how to walk in His ways, if you do not know what His ways are. One of the saddest things I hear very often is Christians saying they have never read the Bible in its entirety. My question is why not? We have no problem reading through *The Lord of the Rings* or Calvin’s *Institutes* or any other of our favorite works, and yet we can’t find the strength and perseverance to read through the Word of God? That’s hogwash. If you have received Christ Jesus the Lord walk in Him, be in the Word, let it be your ultimate rule for faith and life, live in Him.

The Apostle then uses imagery to show us what this looks like. He first saying you are to be rooted in Christ. Once again we see the influence of Psalm 1 in this passage, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” It is Christ, the well-spring of life, who nourished us if we are rooted in Him. He is the river of water that causes us to grow and produce fruit in due season. But there’s another angle from which we can understand this being rooted in Christ as well. Charles Simeon, that great Anglican minister, writes, “The use of a root is, not only to convey nourishment to the branches, but to keep the tree steadfast amidst all the storms and tempests by which it may be assailed. And we, so far from being cast down by all the storms that may assault us, must take occasion from them to shoot

**down our roots more deeply into this divine soil, and to take more firm hold of him by whom we can be upheld.” If any one has not fixed his roots in Christ, he will easily be carried about with every wind of doctrine, (Ephesians 4:14) just as a tree that is not supported by any root. This is what it means to be “stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.” It is in being rooted in Christ, walking in Him, knowing the true doctrine which you have been taught, that you are safeguarded against all of the imposters, the false teachers, who seek to win you away from the true religion. Brothers and sisters, this world is full of those who seek to uproot you by their evil and deceptive ways. It’s not just those false teachers in the church which seek to do this. Oftentimes those are the easiest to avoid. No, very often it is the false teachers of our culture who seek the deforestation of the Church, seeking to uproot you from the truth of Scripture, and sway you with their enticing words. Hold fast to Christ whom you have received. Sink your roots deeper into Him so that you find your fulfillment there. He is your refuge and your strength. He is your surety and your hope. He is your life-giving stream of water who nourishes your soul.**

**Paul goes on to use the imagery of a building being erected. You are to be “rooted and built up in Him.” It is by walking in Christ Jesus that you are built up, that you are strengthened, that you are matured, that you grow. If you’ve ever walked through a forest and seen the greatest trees, perhaps you been to Sequoia National Park and seen the giant sequoias there, you know that the tallest trees, those that grow to heights unimaginable, are those with the deepest root systems. The same in true of buildings. In downtown Chicago we have the Sears Tower. That tower stands at a height of 1,729 ft. The foundation for that buildings is a massive cement structure that is 100 ft deep. Then there are 200 huge cylinders filled with concrete that go another 100 ft down and are set into solid bedrock. Your foundation in this Christian life must be firmly planted deep within the solid bedrock of Christ. It must be “stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.” This ought to call to mind that parable of the two builders in Matthew 7, the fool who**

**built his house on the shifting sand which was destroyed by the wind and the waves, and the wise man who built his house on the rock. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” There is no other foundation which you can build your life upon than the rock of Christ. He is the firm foundation. By walking in Him, by being rooted in Him, by being built up in Him you fulfill that obligation that is place upon you by your receiving Him.**

**Friends, receiving Christ will be of no advantage to you unless you walk in Him, abide in Him, remain in Him. As we saw earlier, receiving Christ Jesus the Lord is an act of covenanting. It places you under the obligations of that covenant which you have sworn with Jehovah. In receiving Christ you have made an agreement just as the saints of old did in Exodus 24, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” You are to “shew the Lord's death till he come.” Walking in Christ is not an option if you have received Him. You are not called to a life of passivity or laziness. No, you are called to an active obedience to the commands of the Lord. But note that it is not your obedience to the Lord that puts you in covenant with Him, or even that keeps you in covenant with Him as some false teachers espouse. Your obedience flows forth from the fact that you have received Him, that you are in covenant with Him. Never get this twisted lest you fall into the error of the legalists. But also never forget that this is an obligation placed upon you lest you fall into the error of the antinomians. “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” (Philippians 1:27) “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” (Ephesians 4:1) Walk in Christ.**

**And finally, all of this, receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, walking in Him, ought to lead you to a sense of immense gratitude for what the Lord has done for you. Let us now consider that qualifier of the**

**Apostle that all of this must be done while abounding in thanksgiving. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” We are to live lives of thanksgiving, of gratitude. The command to give thanks is seen throughout Scripture. In fact, it’s mentioned around 70 times in the Bible. This is something that our Christian walks ought to be known for. Psalm 100:4, “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psalm 107:1, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psalm 136:1-3, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Colossians 3:17, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” The constant refrain found in Scriptures is that the people of God are to be thankful for what He has done.**

**Consider the great gift that has been given unto you. That you have been brought from death unto life. That you have been brought out of darkness into His marvelous life. That your sins have been forgiven and you have been made co-heirs with Christ. That you have been adopted into the family of God, once an enemy you have now been made His sons. Can we reflect on the great gift bestowed upon you and not be thankful? Can we contemplate the blessings attached to that gift, and not be thankful? To forget this crucial aspect is to take for granted that blessings that the Lord has given you in Christ. Calvin comments, “When he adds, with thanksgiving, he would have them always keep in mind from what source faith itself proceeds, that they may not be puffed up with presumption, but may rather with fear repose themselves in the gift of God. And, unquestionably, ingratitude is very frequently the reason why we are deprived of the light of the gospel, as well as of other divine favors.”**

**Very often a heart of ingratitude is linked to a heart of pride, thinking that in some way you are responsible for God blessing you, that in some way your actions have merited God's favor. Friends, this is a wicked thought. God's blessings upon you are not because of anything you have done but solely because of His graciousness. And, as Calvin said, this heart of ingratitude towards Gods very often is the reason why the Lord withholds His blessings. Why is the Church today in such a terrible position? Why are denominations wrecked by controversy after controversy? Why are families being destroyed in record numbers? We should never presume upon the will of God, thinking that we understand and know why these things are happening, but we should do a self-examination and see if it is our hearts that may be the cause.**

**Friends, if you have received Christ you must have a heart of thanksgiving, and not just in the moment but you must be abounding in thanksgiving. Let your thoughts, your words, your actions, your prayers, your praise all be full of thanksgiving unto the Lord. When rise up in the morning, give thanks unto Him for the giving of a new day. When you lay your head at night, give thanks unto Him for the blessings you were given throughout the day. When you sit at your table to eat, give thanks unto Him for giving you this day your daily bread. When you go to work, give thanks unto Him for providing for your needs and the needs of your family. When you go to school, give thanks unto Him for providing you with an education. When you tuck your children in at night, give thanks unto Him for the blessing of a good and godly heritage. Children, when you are tucked in at night, give thanks unto Him for loving and godly parents who care for you. When you come to church, give thanks unto Him for nourishing you with the means of grace and for the fellowship with the saints which you enjoy. And when you have come to the Lord's Table and partaken of the sacramental feast, give thanks unto Him for feeding you spiritually with His body and blood symbolized in the elements of bread and wine. Give thanks unto the Lord for His entering into covenant with you and making you a partaker of that blessed covenant purchased with the blood of**



**Christ. Friends, if you have received Christ Jesus the Lord you must abound in thanksgiving.**

**Brothers and sisters, you have received Christ Jesus this day. You have received Him in the Word read and preached. You have received Him in the singing of His psalms with grace in the heart. You have received Him in supping with Him at His Table. You have received Him in renewing your covenant with Him in the sacramental meal. Now live in Him. Walk in Him. Be rooted and built up in Him. Serve Him with gladness and obedience to His commands. And render unto Him what is due His name by abounding in thanksgiving. Friends, if you have received Christ offer thanks unto Him with your very life.**