

Built Up In Him (Colossians 2:6-10)

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Preacher: William HC

[0 : 0 0] okay it's Colossians chapter 2 verse 1 to 12 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not met me personally my goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God namely Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine sounding arguments for though I am absent from you in body I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is so then just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord continue to live your lives in him rooted and built up in him strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ for in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form and in Christ you have been brought to fullness he is the head over every power and authority in him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead and that's what I'm saying thank you so much Viola yeah great sharing hey what an incredible interview and testimony so we appreciate that sorry there's someone's that's yours you'll need your Bible Venus okay um if you have your Bibles on your phone or elsewhere please um yeah make sure you keep them on or turn to Colossians and we'll be looking at chapter 2 so we do have um English Bibles if you need it just grab them out the front in the foyer I won't look if you want to go right now and grab it otherwise um please um turn it on on your phones and we're going to listen to what God has to say to us thank you for praying as well for our family it's great to be back and we had the joy of house sitting last uh past two weeks um so we did visit uh a few other gospel preaching churches um but there is no place like home so uh let's pray and ask God to help us this afternoon thank you so much lord for this reminder from your word that we can walk in the fullness of Jesus Christ do help us now as we hear from your word to be rooted and built up in the gospel instead of other empty ways would you help us as we listen to your word as we try to understand what you have for us apply it to our hearts please today we pray these things in Jesus name amen let me share with you the stories of two friends i've been praying for recently so uh this is i i've just changed the name i has been faithfully attending her local church since she became a christian but over the past few years um eyes become more and more involved in an online fellowship they call it a bible fellowship but actually they spend most of their time talking about how a chinese woman is christ of the last days and almighty god so look in truth i has doubts but her days are so filled with following the instructions of her leaders messaging anyone she can think of to invite them to join her online classes so i've been praying for i in contrast let me

tell you also about rick rick not from this church don't worry rick is a key leader in his local church he loves telling people about jesus like we just heard seeing their eyes light up because of what christ has done for them on the cross and yet in the past year or so rick's service to the lord feels like it comes out of a pressure to perform in front of others actually rick can't remember the last time he enjoyed reading his bible or praying to god in secret lately rick's become filled but filled with frustration when he thinks about what's not right about his own church family a sister filled with false teaching a brother filled with discontent their names are different to what i've said but what their stories have in common is summed up in one word lack lack they are people like us who have heard about jesus perhaps for many years but struggle to experience fullness in the christian life they are they're filled their lives are filled and yet they lack purpose peace security and if we're honest perhaps this is our experience right from time to time if we can be honest let's say if this church a piece of piece was a fridge we're kind of like empty milk cartons sometimes if this was a petrol station we're the ones pulling in with the fuel light flashing we are people whose homes our wallets our schedules that can be filled and yet we still lack joy contentment something else look over the summer um if you've been around we've been hearing lots of wisdom for the heart haven't we honest truths from god's word we've thought about the dustiness of our lives through the psalmist some 90 uh we've side with the preacher on new year's day and ecclesiastes 11 to 12 with pastor elbert we were dreaming of jacob and when he was at bethel and last week came a reminded us to watch with jesus right as he showed great wisdom willingly taking a sinful woman's guilt and shame upon himself and so this afternoon the wisdom for the heart i want to share comes from the book of colossians what we just heard viola read and colossians is a wonderful letter uh four chapters long perhaps if we were to sum up the message of this letter it could be this all treasure and wisdom and fullness comes through jesus the fullness of god all treasure and wisdom and fullness comes through jesus the fullness of god right this this letter is all about fullness and who has it for us to those who are reading this letter who felt lacking the apostle paul a servant of christ himself lacking all kinds of comforts right he's writing from prison he prayed colossians chapter 1 verse 9 that they might be filled with the knowledge of god's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding so as to walk in a manner worthy of the lord can you see that to a church searching for wisdom for knowledge uh the apostle paul wants to point us to jesus and in chapter 2 verse 1 to 5 uh perhaps when you heard viola read it up i wonder if you noticed um in her reading that the word wisdom appeared didn't it which verse was it verse 3 christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge so in christ hidden in him is wisdom for our hearts for the heart look like us the colossian church had received christ jesus the lord we don't have a record of the apostle paul visiting this church in the book of acts that we heard last

year but it's most likely he and his friends would have interacted met brothers and sisters from this part of asia minor as you remember there was a three-year period that um the apostle paul and his friends were hanging out in ephesus right a major city and colossi was in one of the cities nearby and so look paul would have understood their situation well enough what they needed to remain strong in he knew that they needed to not shift from the hope of the gospel that they'd heard and so he uses the word full and fullness and fill over and over again through this short letter to remind them that fullness is found in christ alone and we see that defending this truth this hope is part of paul's great struggle for them right look at verse one how hard he contends for them and even for the brothers and sisters in laodicea and so verse six to seven is what we want to zoom in for just for the next few minutes that we have together i want to suggest we lean into these verses and the following and apply this wisdom to our hearts as we start a new year together and some of you might be pretty smart you would have noticed that actually these same verses verse six to seven are hanging here right behind me all right on the wall okay we love our banners don't we pcbc right uh who remembers the one on the far left right i don't even think that english works well you know what's treasure the past trot the future mean um and then i don't know if you remember posting a post-it on the other one uh it seems like every year right new year new banner right uh one of the most noticeable things actually about our church i wonder if it's your first time right you walk in yet why is there a banner you know and why is it in chinese and english what's going on shows up on every live stream actually um i think one of my kids recently it was like immediately noticed when the new one came up dad there's a new banner uh look i asked pastor albert why do we have banners and he just said well they've just had banners since i joined 20 years ago and so we just keep doing them i think perhaps in one sense putting things on banners reflects a bit of our church's cultural heritage right so there's a lot of people from chinese backgrounds here you step into an asian restaurant you'll notice a few banners on their walls too um this is at one of the local libraries we visited while i was on holiday look as with all things right what's not explained can get ignored and what's ignored can perhaps get misunderstood so i think it's worth it right let's explain the banner a little bit all right let's apply this wisdom to our hearts so let's have a listen again verse 6 i have a read with me verse so then just as you received christ jesus as lord continue to live your lives in him this is the new year let's be courageous for a moment okay i'm going to ask you to do something really dangerous you're going to have to turn to someone next to you or near you you might have to open your bibles and and ask this question what's the so then the therefore what's the therefore therefore okay i'll give you 30 seconds just turn to someone next to you what's the therefore of a certain what's what's that what's the so then referring to so have a go have a go talk to each other okay i'd love to hear someone's um thoughts anyone brave enough new year new you be courageous what is what's so then referring to just feel free to shout out anyone have a guess yep go for it song yep you've pointed someone's pointed to you all right have a go so then yeah yeah where'd you get that from or like you know what what brought it that's mine i think it's great

answer yeah okay so you looked at the next verse and you saw right okay rooted and built up in him okay fantastic thank you thanks for sharing that anyone else no okay all right that's a great answer okay uh he's basically referring to the gospel that um that he's received and actually we see the verse before verse five tells us okay paul's actually responding to the good order how firm their faith in christ is right you see that in verse five he's in other words he's actually saying this i'm so pleased at how firm a foundation jesus is to you and so therefore as you receive jesus keep living in him all right keep living in him actually the word in the original language um there some of your translation might say walk in him when our lord jesus called peter and andrew to follow him he didn't just say say a prayer and go back to your old life right he said follow me all right to follow jesus he had to walk in his footsteps to leave your old life behind to follow jesus you needed to learn up close from his actions his his life what he taught how he lived that's a powerful picture isn't it of life as a disciple of the lord jesus i think notice too in this verse verse six notice how closely god's word relates receiving christ jesus to walking in him the two go together okay if you've ever been taught that you become a christian through jesus but you stay a christian through something else your own efforts a different belief okay some secret teaching surprise paul says no you never move on from the gospel the key to your life as a christian from start to finish is surprise christ himself not tradition not a particular teacher or youtuber not a certain experience or a secret insight to be in christ is what brings you salvation and it is the most important identity you need for your whole life so walk in christ and now you might want to ask me you know what does it look like to walk in christ that's what the whole letter of the colossians lays out right so if you're brave and you read the rest of colossians you'll see chapters three and four flesh out life in christ walking in christ and the nuts and bolts right in marriage and in family in our workplaces how we pray how we manage our time and so on but i think it's important to realize before paul gets into all the practical instructions in verse seven here he reminds us it starts with being rooted in christ first you see that rooted and built up in him verse seven says strengthen in the faith as you were taught and overflowing the thankfulness okay again it's a new year let's be courageous turn to the person next to you you've now established a rapport so you can do this more quickly what's the faith that you've been taught in verse seven referring to how would you explain to each other what's that talking about have a go ask someone hey person next to you what's the faith as you were taught mean and have a go at explaining okay go for it another 30s and gary's formulating the answer he's thinking as he's speaking he's nearly got it yeah someone else someone someone have a go friend you can do courageous courageous thank you yeah definitely as you were taught okay um you have to read the whole colossians of that that

he lays out who jesus is and what he did for us or in chapter end of chapter one um thank you for that that's the faith we've been taught isn't it okay i wonder if you said to each other the faith is it maybe you've heard other explanations of what the christian faith is i mean is the christian faith god wants you to be healthy and comfortable i'm not sure is the faith you've been taught to be a good person and god will reward you i don't think so is the faith you've been taught god saved you but now you need to earn his love back i don't think so all right can i suggest to each of those examples misunderstands the faith that's been taught here in the bible and the gospel god's grace for us through jesus should be what is the root of our christian life and so paul has explained the gospel okay he explains it earlier in colossians 1 19 to 22 but you can see it laid out can't you in christ right the one who is before all things who create everything and everyone all the fullness of god was pleased to dwell in in christ god has reconciled made right to himself all things in christ god makes peace through the blood of his cross and through christ we who are enemies of god are restored in fellowship in relationship through the death of his perfect son through christ we are declared holy even though we don't deserve it we are declared unblemished and blameless we definitely don't deserve that that that's good news isn't it it's incredible news it's as news we're sharing to people on the street to our friends and family so how firm is our faith in this good news if this is new to you maybe you're listening on the live stream now or later can i encourage you if this is not something that you already believe please would you dig deeper into this truth about jesus let one of us here introduce jesus to you maybe come up afterwards i'd love to give you a bible we have lots of them or maybe just this short book here with the essentials about jesus or you could come along and chat with us in a smaller setting maybe on a wednesday night group or join one of the groups here after the service over snacks over snacks hopefully take a next step in following jesus but for most of us if the gospel is meant to be the root of our christian life then we dare not move from it and think well let's i know it now let's move on to other things and we must not assume the gospel i wonder if someone shook you while you're asleep you know hey what's the gospel what's the faith that you were taught could you in your half awakened state say yeah i know the gospel it's christ died for my sins or would you be caught unawares unable to defend to declare the faith that you were taught have a look at verse six again of chapter two all right look again every word is important okay in scripture he's not christ jesus as the backup file in your life it's not christ jesus as the insurance policy just as you receive christ jesus as lord does not say that as lord maybe all your life you've heard that the gospel is what gets you and me into god's kingdom but then the rest is up to us now hard work i've certainly been taught that before that's the gospel of abuela right from encanto all right

[20:17] we got the miracle now we've got to earn it for the next generation no these verses are saying christ is not the front door he is the whole house these verses are saying the gospel is not just for non-christians out there that we share it to preach it to yourself because you need it to every day his grace saves us it empowers us it empowers us his grace will complete us but only if we go back to the gospel again and again and a church that does this that's the picture that we see isn't it in verse seven rooted and built up and strengthened all right there's a few mixed metaphors here paul's could be talking about trees i could be talking about buildings doesn't matter but he says as we are rooted in jesus we're going to grow and flourish in him the true vine and he's saying as christ is our firm building foundation we are going to be built up in him into a beautiful dwelling place for god's spirit this is what it's called being centered on the gospel the gospel should change every part of your life and my life at times i feel i lack i need to go back to the gospel first remember christ i lack i feel i lack yet he lacked willingly his whole life he emptied himself philippians 2 7 to take on the form of a servant for me i lack well i don't truly lack because he has sealed and filled me with his holy spirit ephesians 1 13 i lack nothing the lord's my shepherd is that true for you and then we apply it to our life and our situations when there's a conflict and or relationship struggle and other arguments about to bubble to the surface and your family remember jesus let his peace colossians 3 15 rule over be lord over my heart let him fill you and change your attitude to your loved one when i'm about to say something harsh to one of my kids right true story i need to remember christ and bring his love and encouragement to them instead instead of my sinful grumpiness or whatever else because jesus friends is incredible he fills every lack that we have he has bought us at such a cost so then just as you received christ jesus as lord walk in him rooted and built up in him strengthened in the faith as you were taught that's a good banner verse for us is it not pcbc and let me just close by following paul's conversation to the colossians all right in the next few verses i want to suggest that there are two benefits two results of being built up in jesus as pcbc english and i hope these two benefits are benefits you want in your life this coming year the first benefit the first joy of being gospel centered like paul wants us to be is that we are abundantly thankful you notice that little hanger on phrase at the end of verse seven okay rooted and built up in him and then it says just as you were taught in the faith abounding right overflowing with thankfulness is what it says here i mean think of rick right that discipleship group leader he's gone down the slippery slope of discontentment ah they don't come ah they have all these problems how would you encourage him at the close of verse seven he says overflowing of

thankfulness is the result of being gospel centered so i wonder paul might ask rick rick brother we know the gospel so what are you thankful for what are you thankful for maybe that can be the question we ask each other or especially someone who needs the encouragement look i'm convinced we're not a perfect church right i know we're not a perfect church do you know why because i'm a member of this church so i bring all my faults my failures to it but if you can't think if i can't think of one thing to be thankful for about this church family then it might be a sign that you've forgotten the gospel that has saved us and that should produce overflowingness in our lives overflowing thankfulness in our lives and so we need to go back to jesus see what he did for us and then be built up in him until we're overflowing with thankfulness even for our church family look to be thankful is not just a self-help tip okay it's actually god's will for us first thessalonians 5:18 right be thankful in everything for this is god's will for you in christ jesus amazing amazing right right i know god's will for your life be thankful and i get it we're a cross-cultural church here okay there are all kinds of unique challenges how do we invite our kiwi friends and family into an english service of a chinese baptist church oh that's a mouthful have a go but it's hard isn't it or we think about our wider church family how do we sow the seeds of faith into the next generation right when their parents don't speak english very well so we can't talk with them for a while maybe the kids don't get to come here because it's you know 4:30 and they don't come in twice in a day what's going to happen how do we bridge those gaps we have lots of questions don't we in a church like ours there are all kinds of challenges but if you get into the habit of only dwelling on our weaknesses oh we can't do this because we're like this oh it's so hard because of this that can be a breeding ground for discontent it will become the opposite of what paul wants us as gospel center people to be overflowing with thankfulness yes thankfulness for even this precious group of people here listen to daniel daniel is a pastor of a church like ours and he writes about the immigrant church he pastors and he says it this way there is much to be thankful for in the immigrant church i have found it helpful to reflect on how intentional our church is in reaching chinese immigrants right that's his context he says too i've benefited of the wisdom of older first generation believers they provide a different yet still godly perspective on issues ranging from western values to the family to the church he says too i've been humbled by the sacrifices many immigrants have made for their faith and their loved ones i like what he says our church building may not have the best signage for the latest tick but we have skilled cooks and a great kitchen i'm still waiting for uncle ben to come back with more hong kong milk tea after church one day all right i should give him a call sometime see you see what we can arrange this year look but pcbc friends don't get hung up about bilingual banners don't get discontented about whether our production quality matches the other churches down the road and don't be discouraged when people come and go from our family because there is no lack among us that jesus our lord cannot fill here among us are god's precious

people rooted in christ build up in him through the gospel and for that we can be overflowing with thankfulness amen amen and secondly i think we see in verses 8 to 10 and i'll just touch on that very briefly we can be watchful and filled as we walk in christ as we're rooted in the gospel as a family right because think back to i right our sister caught up in the teachings of a group called eastern lightning sounds fun it's not a nba team it's actually a cult they spam the universe anxiously to tell you about their savior who's not jesus but there's not just i think about n another brother actually this one but closer to home friend of a friend i'm still pleading for god to release this brother from the grip of shin chonji what we think of the door knockers that we get sometimes uh we got one recently last year from the world society mission of god again a cult they used to worship up the street in pakaranga from us so many flavors of deception in our world today cults and yet speaking of cults there's also my other brother he's caught up in the cult of instagram scrolling alone but every react gives him life or death to his self-worth or my sister whose testimony i heard recently she was caught up in the cult of korea and her job loss she was sharing devastated her so much it made her question even whether her life was worth living cults so many flavors of deception look paul does not in this letter you notice spell out every kind of superstition or worldview or teaching that the colossians were tempted by but in verse 8 to 10 he does spell out the ultimate solution does he not literally he says watch see to it see to it that nothing other than jesus captures you because in christ is all fullness and you've been brought to fullness in him right see that and in christ verse 10 you have been brought to fullness any teaching or religion or world view or way of life that takes you further away from jesus is a deceptive cult let's call it what it is it cannot fill you forever i'm so sorry to tell you this but it's true so don't chase it don't chase it because paul says you'll either be captivated by the fullness of christ or you'll be captivated by the hollowness the emptiness of something else there's two ways to live and so the way to be watchful says paul is not just to memorize facts about false religions false prophets over the past 2 000 years all right i'll leave that to the bible scholars what you need to do is to be captivated by the fullness of christ this year maybe friends ask yourself take an honest look what human traditions and principles am i leaning on in my life instead of delighting in jesus directly going to the source of true delight through his word through prayer ask yourself what empty cult am i drawing my identity and and worth from instead of jesus as lord be courageous again take a moment get your bibles out next to verse 8 write down type it in what is the empty cult that you need to move away from and turn to jesus

and then maybe underline verse 10 too right and your hearts on your screens whatever in christ you have been brought to fullness you have been brought to jesus maybe this year pcbbc maybe being captivated by jesus means you will take up the different opportunities to be built up in him here at this church it could be committing to journey with brothers and sisters week after week even here right what a victory right against the enemy to have god's people faithfully gather week after week despite all the cults and worldviews and pleasures of this world maybe it's intentionally asking one or two people outside of your friend group would you like to read the bible together over coffee over snacks maybe you could read colossians right it's a great book so far read it together pray about it maybe take this what you've learned go with it go through this book passage by passage in your existing friend groups small groups whatever because we marvel we marvel at the brother in christ we know who is gracious under pressure we're amazed at the sister we read about who's willing to suffer under oppressive governments than deny jesus but remember that all this is the fruit not the root of walking in jesus colossians reminds us as we center our lives around the gospel the good news about jesus as we're built up in him we'll be abundantly thankful in all situations and we will become watchful as filled people in christ so whatever you feel you lack this coming year remember this when you're captivated by christ everything will follow holiness maturity fullness and joy our legal name as a church may say pakaranga chinese baptist church but built up in him maybe we can be precious children built in christ let's pray oh lord god we confess our weakness and we turn to you we confess our lack and we want to walk in the fullness of your son jesus help us to be rooted and built up in the gospel instead of all the empty ways we've been chasing we lift this new year to you as your people and ask you to bless the word that we've just heard into our lives we pray all these things in the name of our lord jesus amen