

Mondays are my day off. After doing a few errands in the morning, I usually stop for some lunch. Sometimes, I go to Tim Horton's where I get the Chicken Bacon Ranch Wrap. I also like to have a drink. So on cold days I get a coffee and on summer days I get some sort of passion tea lemonade. When I add the drink to the wrap, they immediately ask me "do you want to make this a combo?" The combo includes the wrap, the drink and one other item like a donut or muffin or cookie.

Did you know that it is the same price and perhaps even a little cheaper to get the combo with 3 items rather than 2 individual items? But the combo option presents me with a problem. I actually don't need a 3rd item. Yet when they ask, I look at all the luscious sugar filled options just below the glass. I sometimes can't resist. "Ok, make it a combo. I will get a honey dip donut," which I don't need. Then I have my wrap and my coffee. Then I have the donut on top of that which forces my body to process all that sugar. My body doesn't like too much sugar. So I don't feel the greatest when I leave. If I just stayed with the wrap and didn't add anything to it, that would be sufficient for my lunch. But sometimes I add something, that I didn't need.

Now we can do something similar in our walk with Christ. If you're a Christian, you initially received Christ by faith as your Savior. You were forgiven. You were adopted into God's family. You began the journey of walking with God by faith in Christ. You may believe that with Christ you have all you need. But then we go along in our Christian walk, and it gets a little mundane. It gets ordinary.

Maybe we meet someone who is excited about their faith. They share with you the discovery they've made. They have found that if you just go to this meeting and hear the speaker, you will get inspired in your faith. The speaker has these insights on how the stars point to Jesus. If you just learn the star patterns, you can see Jesus at work each night in the sky. It's so amazing.

Or maybe we hear of someone who is excited because they found a way to bring peace into their home. If you just get some crystals and place them in key spots, your house will be more peaceful.

Or maybe you know someone who once called themselves a Christian. They're okay with Jesus. But they also found that this new writer makes so much sense of today's world. If you would read their work, then you could find the key for life in our modern world. Or you find someone who is so happy. You ask what's going on. They answer that they've been following this idea of being true to yourself and your feelings. You follow your feelings and it is so good to just go where they lead you. Yes, Jesus is okay but some of his stuff is pretty dated. It's kind of on the wrong side of history. Now we know so much better. So we can still respect some things about Jesus and his life. But following our feelings is really where it's at today. "That's what we need to do for our faith to be relevant." Or is it?

All these examples add something to Jesus. It's Jesus plus this speaker who can read the stars. It's Jesus plus crystals. It's Jesus plus this new writer. It's Jesus until He goes against your feelings.

Christians in the ancient city of Colossae faced similar questions. They had received Christ as Savior and Lord by faith. Yet now, teachers told them they needed to upgrade to the full meal deal. They needed Jesus plus a few other things to get the full spiritual experience. The apostle Paul hears about this. So he writes the New Testament letter to the Colossians in response. He's concerned such a belief could actually lead them away from Christ. So we have seen him emphasize the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. Last week we saw him call the Colossians to mature in Christ. When you're convinced of the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ and you mature in Christ, you will be less likely to think you need more than Christ to live. You will have greater strength to say no when sugar coated additions to Christ are placed in front of you.

Today we will see Paul continue to help the Colossians live out their faith in Christ alone. He's going to do this through a command, a warning and some assurance. I pray that God will use this to strengthen our faith that in Christ alone we have all you need.

Our text is Colossians 2:6-10. Page 835 in the Bibles in front of you.

Five verses packed full, some call this the heart of the letter.

Colossians 2:6-10 - ESV

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

A Command, A Warning and Some Encouragement. First, we come to the command. In verse 6- Paul brings them back to when they became Christians. “Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord.” So if you received Christ Jesus the Lord, you are a Christian. How do we receive Christ Jesus? By faith. A true Christian believes what Jesus said about Himself. A true Christian recognizes Jesus as God the Son. But true faith does not only believe in our minds. It lives as if all that Jesus said was true; all that Jesus did was true and all the Jesus commands is true. We need to live accordingly.

There’s a title in verse 6 that we can skip over so easily because we’re so familiar with it. But a true Christian has to deal with this. That title is “Lord.” This verse begs the question – Have we received Christ Jesus as Savior AND Lord? Is Jesus Lord over every area of our lives? Or do we just want Jesus to save us while we do whatever we want with our lives? Is Jesus Lord over 20% of my life while I reserve 80% for myself? Is it 50-50? Christian maturity involves the journey to submit 100% of our lives under the Lordship of Christ; our words; our driving; our scrolling on our phones; our entertainment choices; our attitude at work or school; our eating; our relationships; our goals; our finances; our spending all needs to come under the Lordship of Christ. Remember we talked about the iceberg image a few weeks ago. When we come to Christ, we maybe see 10% of our sin and the rest is under the surface. In a similar way, when we come to Christ we may start by putting 10% of our lives under Christ’s lordship. Then it is a lifelong journey of surrendering to the Lordship of Christ in every area of our lives. So is Jesus both your Savior and Lord?

But back to the command in verse 6. “Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.” **The Command – Continue to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord.** This means to live a life that shows we’ve given the Lord His rightful place. It means to live in way that shows obvious recognition

that Jesus Christ is our Lord. We need the word “continue” to show this is an ongoing daily requirement for Christian living. Continue to walk or live in Christ Jesus the Lord.

But how? It sounds like a lot of work. Some of you are here today, you’ve got barely anything to give. You barely made it through this week. Your energy is sapped. You’re emotionally shot. Now it seems we’re commanded to just “try harder.” But here’s the good news. Notice the little word “as” at the beginning of verse 6? “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.” How did we receive Christ Jesus the Lord? By faith. “As you received Christ the Lord by faith, so walk in him by faith.” Every day we continue in the Lord by faith. We ask God for His strength, power and help to continue walking with the Lord. We pray, “Lord, please give me your resources, wisdom, and strength to walk in Christ today through whatever I face.”

Verse 7 continues the good news – “Rooted and built up in him, established in the faith.” All these qualifiers are in a passive form. That means we don’t do the action. Someone else does the action to us. That someone is God. So walk in Christ the Lord, being rooted by God, being built up in Christ, being established in the faith, just as you were taught.” God did the rooting or planting when we came to Christ. God is doing the building up. God is establishing us. Our job is to cooperate; to continue to live by faith each day. So we pray, “God will you continue to root me in Christ; to build me up in maturity; to establish me in the faith.” Notice the last phrase is in the present form. It doesn’t say “abounded.” It says “abounding.” You and I respond to God’s power, strength and help to continue in Christ with an abundance of thanksgiving.

These verses continue the theme of Christian maturity that we talked about last week. Remember Paul’s purpose in 1:28 – “Christ we proclaim warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” Continuing in Christ is critical to our maturity in Christ. That’s Paul’s command to the Colossians. Through Paul, God commands us to continue in Christ by faith just as we received Him.

Next, we come to the warning in verse 8. “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world and not

according to Christ.” So why did the Colossians need to mature in Christ? There was this threat of anti-Christian idea. Last week in 2:4, Paul wrote “I say this in order that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments.” Now, he picks this up again with some more specifics. “See to it. Look carefully. Watch out for what? That no one takes you captive.

Warning – Watch out for empty, deceitful teaching from human tradition and demons. that can take you captive. To be taken captive means to be carried off as plunder. The image is of an invading army. They come into your city and defeat your military. Then they take you as a captive to their city or their prisons or their labor camps. This is what happened to the Israelites when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem which we learned about during the Ezekiel series.

But here, the invader is not a foreign army. It is anti-Christian ways of thinking. Such thinking takes captive those who believe in them. But much of the world does not view this way. I’d summarize the dominant view in our culture about ways of thinking like this. “Everyone has a worldview or way they see reality. There are many different world views. Each one is legitimate and adds to the beautiful tapestry of human thinking. We all need to respect one another’s worldviews and learn from each other. It doesn’t matter which worldview you hold, as long as you’re tolerant of everyone else.” Doesn’t that sound beautiful and inviting and inclusive.

Would Paul agree with that? Does he see alternative worldviews as another beautiful idea and alternative lifestyle? Does he see them as just another path on our collective pursuit for the good of everyone? No. “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit.” Paul warns that this alternative way of thinking apart from Christ leads to captivity – to enslavement. It doesn’t lead to anyone’s good.

What is this thinking? The ESV translates it as “philosophy and empty deceit.” Now this is not a blanket condemnation of all philosophy. The word philosophy means the “love of wisdom.” There is wisdom about the world to be found in philosophy. We need to learn from especially Christian philosophers who have grappled in this area of thought and study. In Paul’s day, the term philosophy could be applied to anyone’s teaching. So he’s likely addressing the philosophy or teaching of the false

teachers. He calls this teaching as empty. So empty refers to people or teachings that have no intellectual, moral or spiritual value. It promises much but end up giving nothing. It is without content, basis and truth. And so much of our culture's teaching falls into this category. Somebody makes some claim with little content, no basis and no truth. But it's something cool and new so people pay attention.

Or they fudge the data to support their teaching. That's where the deceit comes in. It's not founded on facts or truth or reality. It's something I want to be true so I am going to claim it's true or twist the facts. I remember listening to an interview with skeptic Michael Shermer who used to be Christian and is now an atheist. He claims that best source of reality and truth today is peer reviewed scholarship. That means someone writes something or claims some discovery maybe in the lab. They put it in writing. Other people review it and either support it or debunk it. There is some value in that. Ideas and theories do need testing and examination by others. But Shermer believes this is the best we've got.

Well there's just a few problems with that. But the biggest one is that assumes that the people who do the writing and the people who do the reviewing are completely committed to truth, reality and honesty and have no bias; no agenda; no political slant; no funding interest; no emotional motivation to say yes or no to someone else's idea. The amount of fraud twisted arguments and suppression of alternative views in scholarships, universities and colleges is rampant. Yet it's presented as truth. If you dare disagree with current truth, you face serious consequences. How ironic. Someone wants to put forth a different idea on a university campus where we're supposed to think and they get shut down for it. University and College Students and Young Adults, will you please take Colossians 2:8 seriously. If you think that something your prof is saying is not right or not true, check it out according to the Scriptures. We've got this Young Adults Next Group starting up today. Maybe you can talk about this in that group.

Yet why do so many accept empty and deceitful thinking? Because it's according to human tradition and the elemental spirits of the world. I agree with those who interpret that to mean there is demonic influence in anti-Christian thinking today. The devil is a deceiver. If he can get us to believe a lie, he's taken us captive to that lie. He's led so many astray. So this is the warning. Warning – Watch out for empty, deceitful teaching from human tradition and demons.

But after this warning, we find further great assurance for our faith walk with Jesus. Verse 9 – “For in him (Jesus) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily and you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority.” Notice the contrast with verse 8. “See to it that no one takes you captive with philosophy and empty deceit. Verse 9 – For in Christ the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. This is powerful statement about Jesus Christ’s deity. He is fully God. In contrast to empty deceit and ideas, in Jesus we find the fullness of God.

So when we put our trust, faith and dependence on Christ alone, we are not settling for something less than the world has to offer. We turn to one in whom the fullness of deity dwells. Remember how Paul lifted Jesus up earlier in this letter. He holds the highest position of honor in all creation. He is the Creator of all things in heaven and earth. In him all things hold together. Jesus holds the highest position among the resurrected. Last week we saw in Colossians 2:3 “In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” In Him the fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Verse 10 reminds us that we have been filled with him. So why would we need more than Jesus? Why might we think Jesus is not enough? Then verse 10 ends with more good news especially concerning those elemental spirits of the world. “You have been filled with Christ who is the head of all rule and authority.” We just talked about the demonic influence behind deceitful and empty thinking. This is entrenched in many of the power structures in our society. Yet we don’t have to fear or be overwhelmed by this. Jesus is supreme over every rule and authority. He is above all spiritual beings, including those who rebelled against God. So though Satan and demons attack and oppress us, deceive us and take people captive, Jesus is head over them. When we pray in His name, the demons cannot stand it. They cannot overcome it. We can stand. **Some assurance – We are filled with Christ who is fully God and who is head over all spiritual beings.**

So, A command – Continue to walk in Christ the Lord by faith. A warning. Watch out for empty, deceitful teaching from human tradition and demons. Some assurance. Remember you are filled with Christ who is fully God and head over all spiritual beings.

So how might we respond to all this today?

Is there some area of my life which has not come under the Lordship of Jesus? Do I put my faith aside and give myself a pass when I'm talking, driving, working, eating scrolling, feeling or thinking about the past, present or future.

Is there some area in my life where I regularly get taken captive by something from the world? Is there some situation, some setting or some people with whom I am more likely to adopt some empty or deceitful thought. We need to guard against ideas that bypass our mind through our eyes through images. We just see them. It takes a lot to step back and think about them. If we're not careful, we can be taken captive by them before we even realize what's happening. Watch for ideas that can bypass our minds through our ears. Some message is contained in some beautifully played song that we just sing along to without thinking.

Is there some fear or anxiety in my heart that can lessen when I recall that Jesus is full God and rules over all? You are filled with Christ in whom dwell the fullness of deity. You are filled with Christ who is head and authority over all things. You don't need to run to something or someone more for fullness.

If you have never received Christ the Lord, I appeal to you, receive Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. This is a total reorientation of life to Christ. It means turning away from a life apart from Christ and submitting all of life under Christ's Lordship. It's also a release from the captivity of deceitful and comply thinking. Is today the day when you will respond to His call? He wants the very best for you. He created you and desires deep fellowship with you. He wants to walk with you through the rest of this life and into eternity. Will you receive Him as Savior and Lord?