



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, July 24-30 (C) – Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]

Focus: *Holding Steadfast to Christ*

word of life

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.”
(Colossians 2:8 NRSV)

Read Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]

Up to this point in the letter to the Colossians, there has been much affirmation for those following Christ. This section begins with encouraging words, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2:6 NRSV) As people receive Christ, they embark on a life-long journey to live in him. That means being rooted, growing and establishing a life in Christ. It also means a life overflowing with deep gratitude and thanksgiving for all God has done and is doing.

1. *Which is first—receiving Christ or living with thanksgiving? Explain your answer.*
2. *How do Christians become both rooted and built up in Christ?*
3. *How might being established in Christ help a person withstand the storms of life?*

Deep roots and an established faith in Christ are needed in order to withstand the false or challenging teachings of the day, including philosophy, empty deceit, and other instruction not according to Christ. (See Colossians 2:8) It is not clear what the specific teachings and philosophy being promoted in Colossae include, but caution is given to the Colossians. There is concern by the apostle that the Colossians might be spiritually kidnapped and taken captive by false teachings.

The confusion revolves around experiencing the fullness of Christ—whether this has occurred already in baptism or will occur later in heaven. If it comes later, then perhaps the Colossians will need to pursue something else to help them get to heaven. Thus, some of the alternative teachings might have appeal.

4. *How can Christians discern if teaching is from Christ or not?*
5. *How can a Christian know if he or she has been taken “captive” by empty deceit or false teaching?*

The response to the Colossians has many layers, but all relate to the fullness of God found in Christ, the one who rules over all authorities as proclaimed in the hymn found in the previous chapter. (See Colossians 1:15-20.) They are reminded of their connection to Christ in baptism for “...when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead...God made you alive together with him...” (Colossians 2:12-13 NRSV) Once and for all, they have been made alive in Christ.

Freedom follows. Christians are freed to live in faith. Thus, the church in Colossae is urged not to let anyone condemn or disqualify them because of dietary practices and other matters. Instead, they are to be steadfast in the faith. For Christ alone is sufficient.

6. *What does it mean to say Christ alone is sufficient?*
7. *How does holding steadfast to Christ free believers?*

Word among us

Ari was like a butterfly as she floated from one fad to the next. Her bookshelves were filled with the latest philosophies and teachings. In spite of her extensive knowledge and resources designed to bring joy and fulfillment, she still felt quite empty inside. Nothing seemed to fill her deep spiritual hunger. Often times, she found herself struggling with depression, especially as she entered the final years of her life.

When she was young, Ari had a negative experience in a church and was determined never to be associated with Christians. She had invested much of her life running from Christians, but something continued to draw her back. As a last resort and final whim, Ari decided to visit a neighborhood church during their worship time. She had carefully planned her morning in order to observe the congregation and take mental notes of all the activities, but she was pleasantly taken off guard by a deep sense of joy in those who greeted her. By the end of the worship, she had tears in her eyes, but didn't understand why. Somewhere down very deep, Ari knew she had come home and could not wait for someone to make sense of her homecoming.

1. *If you had been sitting beside Ari at worship, what might you say to her?*
2. *How might you encourage Ari to get rooted and grow in faith in Christ?*
3. *How might a congregation help Ari get established in faith in Christ?*

It sounds like the Colossian church was strong in faith, but still needed encouragement to be rooted and established in Christ. Otherwise, the Colossians might become spiritually kidnapped or be made captive by false teachings of the day. That is a legitimate concern for every generation as the church might get lured into complacency. It is too easy to be like Ari and chase after the latest fad.

Hearing once more that Christ alone is all that is needed is like finding water in the desert on our spiritual search.

4. *Have you ever been spiritually captive?*
5. *How does Christ meet your spiritual needs?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

In our baptismal waters, God has buried and raised us in Christ. Our sins are forgiven and we are freed to live a life rooted in Christ. That means we are freed to continue our lives in Christ with abundant thanksgiving and proclaim the good news of God in Christ through all that we do.

Our lives have been changed by God through Christ; we are encouraged to be vigilant when it comes to outside forces that might draw us away from the freeing grace of God.

6. *What do you need Christ to free you from this week?*
7. *Summarize what it means to say, "Christ alone."*

Prayer

Holy One, you joined us with Christ in our baptism. Keep us steadfast in faith. Amen

last word

Throughout this week, repeat the following words,
"Christ alone"

Daily Faith Practices

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2013 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

www.elca.org/dailyfaithpractices