

Colossians 2:1—7

October 6, 2019

“Let’s go for a walk.” If I say those 5 words, my two dogs lose their ever loving little doggie minds. They are more excited than you would be if someone said, “I would like to give you 10 million dollars.”

Walks to them are crazy fun and exciting.

Walking is the most basic way you and I have to get from point A to point B. Walking is—

Okay.
Mundane.
Ordinary.
Normal.
Typical.

None of us lose our minds with excitement at the word, “Walk.” Today Paul is going to say three simple words...

“Walk in him.” I don’t expect any of us to lose our ever loving minds. But, I do want us to understand that ‘walking in him’ living life following Jesus is more than just—

Okay.
Mundane.
Ordinary.
Normal.
Typical.

The main idea is simple but not simplistic. It is stated clearly and succinctly in verse 6, "Walk in him."

If I were to put it in different words, I might say..."Stay close to Jesus."

PROP: Walk close to Jesus.

I am going to read from verse 1 of chapter 2 as Paul spends a few moments describing his struggle for the Colossian church. But we are going to focus our time this morning on verses 6 & 7.

This week we go back again to an ancient letter with a modern message.

"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

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." Col. 2:1-7

PRAY

1. Remember The Jesus you received—

We can't afford to forget.

Vs. 6,

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord...”

Those simple words, ‘you received’ means more than just at some point in the past received Jesus like we received a text or an email. When we received Jesus we received did not receive facts about Jesus but received him.

It was not a simple transaction. Anyone who ‘received Jesus’ can never be the same. We can receive Jesus because Jesus made himself available to us.

Why?

Because Jesus loves us.

Before we knew him, he loved us.

Before we loved him, he loved us.

Before we received him, he loved us.

Before he changed our eternities, he loved us.

We must remember the Jesus that we received—otherwise we can think staying close to Jesus is just a lot of work.

We stay close to him because he loves us.

The Christian author James K.A. Smith wrote,

“What constitutes our ultimate identities, what makes us who we are, the kind of people we are is what we love. More specifically, our identity is shaped by what we ultimately love or what we love as ultimate.”
James K.A. Smith

That is exactly right.

Another way to say this is, our lives will follow what we love. And the book of Colossians presents to us all a Jesus to love with all our lives for all our life.

This book shows us Jesus not just so we can be intellectually stimulated but so we love him. Before we can talk about following Jesus we must love him.

We must love him as ultimate.

Not love what he might do for us.

Not love what he can give us.

Not love for what blessing I might get from him.

We must love Jesus himself.

What does this do with the passage we just read together? It can be easy to read vs. 6, “**Therefore as you received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in him...**” and think—all I have to do is obey and follow him.

That is true—but we need to go deeper. The Christian life is not just about doing the right things. More than that, the Christian life is about learning to love Jesus rightly.

If we hear, “Therefore as you received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in him...” and ONLY think, “Okay well I guess I have read my Bible. I should probably pray. I know it is probably a good idea to evangelize and reach out to the lost. I should go to church because I want to do the right things. I should probably watch how I speak and what I watch.” And list goes on.

If that is your idea of walking in him, your spiritual life will be thin and dry and brittle. You will be ready to topple over when the storms of affliction or gusts of prosperity blow your way.

Walking in him is more than checking the boxes and doing the right things—it is of loving him ultimately. We can be so fixated with our walk that we forget that is it IN him that we walk.

When we hear, “Walk in him...” Our life in him will be paltry if we are not taken with him. Do you remember who he is and why it is worthwhile—critical—to love him as ultimate?

Jesus LOVES you.

Not for what you can do for him. Not for what you have done for him. Not for what he thinks you might do for him. Not because you deserve it. But because he loves you. Why does he love you? Because he loves you.

Walk IN him makes more sense when we understand how much he loves us.

Jesus LOVES you.

His love for us is not just words, but his love is a love expressed in action for us. He created all things by the word of his power, including us. Mankind ran away from him and Jesus became one of his creatures to come and rescue us. He left his eternal home to come to our broken world.

He was born for us.

He lived for us.

He died for us.

He took the wrath of God for us.

He defeated the cosmic powers for us.

He made a mockery of Satan for us.

He rose from the dead for us.

He is praying for us right now.

He is working us into his image.

He is working all things for our good.

He is walking with us through trials.

He is preparing a place for us.

He is going to come back for us.

He is going to be with us forever.

He does these things because he loves us.

So when we hear, **“Walk in Him...”**

We MUST not think this is an exercise in raw obedience and self-will. NO we are walking in and with the one who loves us like no one else.

He loves you. Staying close to him is no chore.

But how do we stay close?

We remember the Jesus we received and—

2. We are rooted in him

I get that from verse 7. Look again there with me.

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him...”

It could be rendered, “having been rooted.” The idea is NOT that we do our best to be rooted in him. Rather ‘rooted’ points to what Jesus has already done.

He has rooted us in him.

Isn’t interesting. The first way we are stay close to Jesus is something that we don’t do at all. It is in the passive voice. In other words, he has already rooted us in himself.

Jesus has connected us to him. It can be said that when he saved he saved his people he rooted us in him. It does not start the other way first. At the risk of being overly simplistic, we don’t first root ourselves in him, he roots himself in us.

We don’t just make Jesus a part of our lives, as much as he comes into our lives and totally changes who we are and what we love. All authentic believers are already rooted in him.

Salvation is NOT just a matter of Jesus forgiving our many sins, but also of us being rooted in him. Think about it this way. If you think of salvation as just

forgiveness you don't go far enough. Forgiveness merely wipes away what we did wrong.

Jesus does so much more.

He does not just cancel our debts, he roots himself in us. Do you see the difference?

Forgiveness takes our debt to zero—which is amazing. But being rooted means we have all the blessings and riches due Jesus. We are now inextricably connected to him.

Think about that association.

He has committed himself to you. The connection is forever. There is no risk that he will get so embarrassed or fed up or exasperated or frustrated or aggravated or annoyed or bothered with you that he says, "I'm done."

No. He is already rooted. Because he loves you.

There is a sense in which as we hear the call to 'stay close to Jesus' that we see that he is already close to us. We don't have to go on a spiritual journey.

He is here.

Stay close to him

As you remember the Jesus you received and that you are rooted in him.

3. Be built up in him

We get that from verse 6,

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him...”

We stay close to Jesus by continuing to be built up in him. All followers of Jesus are under construction. All believers will always be under construction.

You’ve been driving on our AZ roads and seen the orange sign that says, “Road Work Ahead” or “Detour” and you know that you will have to slow down.

If there was a sign that encapsulated the Christian life it might be something like, “God at Work.” Because he always is.

We just heard that he is the one who roots us in himself. Being ‘built up in him’ is a cooperative. He is the one who does the work in our lives, but the work is cooperative. He works to build us into him, we work to build ourselves into him.

We can’t, must have a mentality of “Let go and Let God.” No, we let God AND work along with him. This building into him process will take all of our lives.

A word of warning is in order here.

There are many people sitting in many churches this morning across the world that don’t belong to Jesus.

You can tell who belongs to Jesus by their growth over time.

Are we saved by the amount of growth that they experience? No. At the same time, authentic Christians will grow because they continue to build into him.

There are too many people who think that salvation is a matter merely of—

- Praying a prayer
- Raising a hand
- Responding to a call
- Believing truth

None of those things alone a Christian make. Some of you here might think that because you believe the right things makes you right before God.

False.

Those who are his followers are continuing to build themselves into him. Over time you should look more and more like your savior.

Are you going to be flawless? No. Just faithful.

How do we build ourselves up in him?

- Fostering Good desires

Authentic believers are going to have a desire to please Jesus. The battle for our actions starts with our minds. We will love what we think about most.

Want to build yourself up in him more? Think about Jesus. One of the things the songs we sing are designed to do is to get us thinking differently.

Two stanzas from this morning:

*Come you weary heart now to Jesus
Come you anxious soul now and see
There is perfect love and comfort in your tears
Rest here in His wondrous peace*

*Oh the goodness, the goodness of Jesus
Satisfied, He is all that I need
May it be, come what may, that I rest all my days
In the goodness of Jesus*

With words like those bouncing around in our heads we are going to think differently. We are going to be drawn to Jesus.

How?

Fostering Good desires

How else are we to be built up in him?

- Following him

Another way to say that is obedience. We all know what is right and what is wrong. To follow him means that we are going want more and more to obey him.

Do you obey him when it comes to—

How you speak?
What you see?
Where you go?
Who you sleep with/or not?
How you spend money?
How you forgive?

It is not typically a mystery to know what obedience looks like—to follow him means you obey him.

We are built in him by—

Fostering good desires
Following him

- Building ourselves into others.

It also means that your relationships with others are rightly ordered. Part of building ourselves into him is building ourselves into other people. That is difficult.

We build ourselves into others by—

Using our words to encourage others
Overlooking wrongs done against us
Sharing our hopes and fears with others
Serving others where they need it—not what we want
Giving time to others and not just trying to get things done
Praying for others AND never speaking against others
Working to believe the best about other people

We are built in him by—

Fostering good desires
Following him
Building ourselves into others

We stay close to Jesus!

Remember the Jesus we received
We are already rooted in him
Being built up in him.

So that we might one day—

4. Be established in the faith

Verse 6 again,

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

The goal is that we would be firmly and established in the faith. Faith here does not mean how much we believe but in whom we believe.

One day the construction will be over and we will be all that the Lord has planned for us to be. We will be firmly established. There will be no possible shaking or shuddering. We will be completed by him.

That establishment will ONLY come as we stay close to Jesus.

Final establishment in Jesus does not come from some secret source but, 'just as you were taught.' What were they taught? The scriptures. It can be tempting to look for some kind of secret or obscure teaching that will be the key to a final establishment.

You have to look no further than the scriptures. Your establishment is hastened as you take the Word of God in.

As you—

- Read the Word
- Pray the Word
- Sing the Word
- Study the Word
- Meditate on the Word
- Hear the Word preached

Stay close to the teaching of the Bible and you will be established in the faith. We don't establish ourselves by ourselves. This means we are asking God to establish us in HIS faith.

He will work to establish us.

We are to be established in the faith.

Nabeel Qureshi, wrote a compelling book entitled, *Seeking Allah finding Jesus*. He was converted to following Jesus from a background of Islam. He describes the day after he told his still Muslim—still loving parents that he was now a Christian. He writes,

“I was a crumpled heap on the ground, trembling before God. Two weeks after accepting my Lord, I tried to plead with Him, while wailing and stammering through quivering lips.

The night before, I had looked into my Muslim father’s eyes as they welled with tears. To be the cause of the only tears I had ever seen those eyes shed, I could not bear it.

Though my father did not say much, what he did say has haunted me ever since. The man who stood tallest in my life, my archetype of strength, my father, spoke these words through palpable pain: “Nabeel, this day, I feel as if my backbone has been ripped out from inside me.” The words tore through me. I had not given up just my life to follow Jesus, I was killing my father.

My mother had even fewer words, but her eyes said more. “You are my only son. Since you were born, I have called you my jaan kay tuqray, a physical piece of my life and heart. Every day since you came into this world, I have loved you with all of me in a way I have loved no one else. Why have you betrayed me?”

Decimated before God, eyes pouring, nose and mouth unable to withhold the grief, I was finally able to sputter my question through tears and mucus: “Why, God, did You not kill me the moment I believed? Why did You leave me to hurt my family more deeply than they’ve ever been hurt? They never deserved this! Why, God?”

At that moment, the most agonizing moment of my life, something happened that was beyond my theology and imagination. As if God picked up a megaphone and spoke

through my conscience, I heard these words resonate through my very being:

“Because this is not about you.”

Exactly.

We are established in the faith. And that establishment says a lot more about him than us. Because, ‘this is not about you or me.’

Your life is not about you.

Stay close to Jesus—

Remember the Jesus we received
We are already rooted in him
Being built up in him.
Established in the faith

5. Abounding with Thanksgiving

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

It is so easy to read past ‘abounding in thanksgiving’ as if they are throw-away words or a mere suggestion. No.

We who stay close to Jesus must be the very same ones who abound in thanksgiving. When?

All the time.

If I were to make a composite sketch of love worked out in everyday life—the first characteristic would be thankfulness. Those that understand how much Jesus loves them and has done for them are abundantly thankful.

We are more adept to find things to complain about. They more easily and more naturally. We have to work to be thankful.

And it takes practice. Notice, we are not just encouraged to have a general disposition of thankfulness. Do you see what it says?

We are to be, “abounding in thanksgiving.”

We have to fight to be abounding in thanksgiving.

I wonder if gratefulness is one of the most overlooked of the Christian virtues. The NT pulsates to the rhythm of thankfulness, yet it seems that gratefulness in many quarters is derided as gullibility or Pollyannaish. A simple thought on gratefulness: Being grateful does not make one gullible or naive.

Many who foster suspicion and lob accusations can accuse the grateful as simpletons because don't freely share critiques to any open ear. A grateful Christian rings with the authentic tone of the gospel. It does not

take less discernment to be grateful, but more.

It is not as if grateful people are unable to see weaknesses and problems but they choose to overlook those and instead focus the active power of grace. Thankfulness is what love looks like in daily life.

Anyone can be a critic, but it takes a Christian with eyes open to abound in thanksgiving. Our world is coming apart at the seams as we hurtle toward Jesus' return. Even still, the Lord is working even in this dark place. When we see the shimmer of grace it is incumbent on us to celebrate it.

From the soil of thankfulness grows love for Jesus and for others.

I want us to be grateful—more than that—God wants us to be grateful.

Are you thankful?

Do you abound in thanksgiving?

Can it be said that you are a thankful person?

I think we might get this one backwards. Complain to God and ask for his help. Be thankful to others.

- Thankful people are better at remembering blessings from God than the slights of others.
- Thankful people speak blessing to others more than spouting complaints at others.
- Thankful people don't live as if they are owed

- from other but that they owe others.
- Thankful people pray things different instead of trying to complain things different.
 - Thankful people look for God's work and are ready to celebrate it.
 - Thankful people enjoy all gifts from God.
 - Thankful people are not ashamed to express their gratefulness for others.
 - Thankful people are positive without being unrealistic.

If you think God owes you, then you will think everyone else does too.
But we don't.

Walk closely to Jesus

Walk closely to Jesus—

Remember the Jesus we received
We are already rooted in him
Being built up in him.
Established in the faith
Abounding in Thanksgiving

PRAY

“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.”

