

Colossians 2:4–7

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 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.

The Danger of Enticing Words — Satan's Pattern

Verse 4's warning connects the danger at Colosse with the oldest pattern of deception. Darby renders it: *to the end that no one may delude you by persuasive speech*. The words used to delude are not crude falsehoods but persuasive, plausible-sounding speech — the same kind of speech Satan used in Eden: *hath God said? ye shall not surely die*. There, the deception held out the prospect of superior understanding, a profundity that God was supposedly withholding. The Colossian danger had the same character: the lure of philosophical depth, of mysteries beyond what had been revealed. The remedy in both cases is the same — the plain word of God received and held.

Joying and Beholding — Order and the Firmness of Faith

The apostle, absent in body, was present in spirit — identifying with the things he could rejoice in among the Colossians: their order and the firmness of their faith in Christ. Order here is not merely the orderliness of a well-run meeting —

though that has its place — but the order that flows from the preeminence belonging to the Lord Jesus. When He has the first place, when the members are not set ahead of the Head, there is a right ordering of things. The children of Israel crossing the Jordan kept a wide space between themselves and the ark — there was an ordering that gave the Lord His place.

Firmness of faith is something the apostle could see and rejoice in. Doubting is not humility — it is a failure to believe what God has said. The apostle could write to the Corinthians, who were in disorder, that all things should be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14). But he could write to the Colossians of beholding their order. That is a very different position to be in, and he rejoiced in it.

As Ye Have Received Christ Jesus the Lord — Walk in Him

Verse 6 is one of the foundational statements of the Christian life: *as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*. What was received at the beginning is what the whole walk is to be consistent with. And what was received was Christ Jesus *the Lord*. The suggestion that one may receive Christ as Saviour now and perhaps acknowledge His Lordship later finds no support here or anywhere in Scripture. Romans 10:9 states: *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord*. 1 Corinthians 12:3: *no man can say Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost*. To acknowledge Him as Lord is the fruit of God's action in the soul — not a subsequent choice the believer may defer.

The two errors — that Lordship need not be owned from the first, and that if He is not Lord of all then He is not Lord at all — both miss the point. The first turns the acknowledgement of Lordship into an optional second step. The second makes the acknowledgement depend on the degree of practical submission, which is a standard no honest believer could claim to meet. The truth is that when God saves a person, what is received is Christ Jesus the Lord — that is who He

is, and that is who is believed on. Practical failure in carrying out the implications of that is another question entirely. The confession and the walk flow from the same source: what God has wrought in the soul.

Rooted and Built Up — Two Tenses, One Reality

Verse 7 presses the walk further with two images that sit together strangely: *rooted and built up in him*. Trees are rooted; they do not walk. Men walk; they do not put down roots. Yet here the walking Christian is described as rooted. The rooting is a completed act — the past tense speaks of something done, the foundation laid, the connection with Him established. The building up is ongoing — the present tense of continuous growth upon that established foundation. To be rooted in Him means sustained by Him, drawing from Him, not moving independently. In Ephesians 3:17 the expression is *rooted and grounded in love* — here it is rooted in Christ Himself.

The Colossian saints are also to be *established in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving*. Sound teaching establishes; it is not a substitute for experience but the ground of it. The abounding is inward — like the well of water springing up that the Lord promised to the woman at the well, not a small supply that depletes but something that overflows from within. And thanksgiving accompanies it — thanklessness was one of the marks of the heathen in Romans 1, and characterises the Laodicean condition of Christendom in its decline. The soul that is genuinely established in the faith of Christ abounds in thanksgiving because it knows what it has.

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