

Class 3: Colossians 2.6-15 - “Fullness”

Introduction, vv6-8

- vv6-7¹, “continue to live” = “walk”, 1 Jn 2:6, Gal 5:16²
- v8 - “stoicheion” = elemental spiritual forces
- Questions:
 - What might take me captive?
 - Which empty philosophy tempts me?

1. Christ’s Identity, vv9-11a

a. Deity, vv9-10a

- “Theotetos”
- Brought to fulness, John 1.16, Eph 4.13³

b. Head, vv10b-11a⁴

- Questions:
 - What difference does it make to my thankfulness that Christ is “theotetos”?
 - What difference does it make to my thankfulness that Christ is “head over every power and authority.”?
- Suggestion: make these themes a focus for your times of prayer this weekend

¹ Receiving Christ here is not, as some Christian groups teach, about inviting Jesus Christ to enter someone’s heart to become a Christian. Such an interpretation would be anachronistic, since the NT does not record this practice. Those who hold such a view are reading back into the passage practices which started much later (in the 19th century). The phrase ‘Christ Jesus as Lord’ corresponds closely to the early confessional formula ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Phil. 2:11; cf. Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3), which converts would profess at their baptism. The reference to baptism in Colossians 2.12 shows that Paul has in mind their conversion at baptism. This is the point at which they not only ‘received Christ’ as their saviour, but all that went with following him as his disciple, which involved “living [walking] as Jesus did” (1Jn2.6 NIV11).

² Jewish teachers described their moral laws derived from the Old Testament law as halakah, which literally means “walking.”

³ Calvin put it thus” “Ye are made full,” does not mean that the perfection of Christ is transfused into us, but that there are in him resources from which we may be filled, that nothing be wanting in us”

⁴ See Col 1.18

2. Our Faith, vv11b-12

a. Obedience, v11b-12a

- Rom 6:6

b. Faith, v12b⁵

- New life is a present reality, Rom 6.4
- Questions: why did you get baptised? What was your inner motivation?
- Suggestion: take a few minutes to write down what comes to mind

3. God's Work, vv13-15

- What is God's work?

a. Forgave⁶

- Canceled - exaleipsas: Ac 3:19
- Cheirographon, the written code

b. Triumphed

- Heb 2:8, coming, Rom 8:21, in meantime live without fear, Rom 8:38-39
- Jesus spent his life disarming the evil powers - Matt 4:1-11, 12:29, Lk 10:18 etc.
- Questions: which power or authority do you fear most? Is it religious, political, societal?
- Suggestion: read passages in the Bible that show Jesus defeating "impossible" situations.

Conclusion

- Why would we "walk" away from this - seeking a shallower, non-divine solution?
- Instead - reflect on Christ's identity, your faith in action and God's work
- Suggestion: take some time this weekend to re-live your baptism. Go to the spot where it happened either in person or in your mind. Remember what happened and why. Pray a prayer of thankfulness.

⁵ A verse countering the efficacy of infant 'baptism' - Paul is clear that without real faith, baptism is an empty, meaningless ceremony.

⁶ The strict meaning of the Greek term is "to wipe out" or "wipe away" (cf. Acts 3:19; Rev 3:5; 7:17; 21:4).