

**The Message of Paul**  
**Freedom from Human Regulations**  
Colossians 2:6-19

Intro: Here we have the secret for continuing to be victorious in our walk with Christ. We are to continue as we began—in faith. We are to be rooted in Christ, built up in Christ, strengthened in faith, and overflowing with gratitude.

Everyone is looking for the secret of a happy and peaceful life. Some thought that the moment of conversion would provide a permanent fix for all internal ills. Life since that time has proven more difficult than anyone would have predicted.

Sometimes false hopes are sown by misguided advice. Teachers come up with a secret idea or “knowledge” that will deliver on the promise of peace and joy. People who started in faith move toward some other orientation for their lives.

The Apostle Paul has a fundamental prepositional phrase: “in Christ.” He uses this term repeatedly, reinforcing each time the central idea of his manner of living in this world.

You may be surprised to learn where the victory actually occurred for you, and where it keeps on occurring. It’s there, not just in the text, but in your heart. And it’s all about the One who loved you enough to give his life on your behalf.

**I. Continue As You Began:** So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him (v6). “Continue to live” is the translation of one Greek word, *peripateo*, “to walk.” It is used to describe a lifestyle, how we make our way in the world.

A. Rooted and built up in him (v7).

1. Our root system sustains all that we do. The roots of our minds, hearts, and lives must descend deeply into Christ.

\*\*\*I have a picture here of me clinging to a gigantic root system.

2. We never grow out of our initial connection to Jesus Christ. In fact, we grow into him more and more just like a branch continues to grow into the vine with a stronger and stronger connection. We can grow as tall as a redwood if we have the roots.

B. Strengthened in the faith as you were taught (v7). Our strength comes from a continuing faith. Faith is not something that sits in the soul. It is the energy that drives the soul. It is only evident when it is active. It is a verb, not a noun. A little faith is sufficient for any and all tasks and challenges, as long as you use it.

C. Overflowing with thanksgiving (v7). This is Paul’s consistent message. Gratitude is the proper orientation for all people. The Gentiles who should have known something of God from the created order “neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21).

Have you ever seen an overflowing spring or well? Do some overflowing in your gratitude.

D. See to it that no one takes you captive (v8). He is talking here about the captivity of your mind to “hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (v8).

You began in Christ, and you will never need to depart from Christ as the center and source of your thinking and living.

1. Human tradition. Paul is speaking of religious tradition, not some secular form of tradition. He is talking about the Judaizers and others like them.
2. "Basic principles of this world" can become substitutes for Christ. They insert themselves between us and the Lord Jesus. We can study and know all the disciplines of science, math, history, and language. But we do not make these ULTIMATE realities in our lives. The ultimate allegiance is to Christ.

## **II. Experience Fulfillment in Christ:** For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (v9).

A. Christ is fully God—all the fullness of the Deity

B. We receive our fulfillment in Christ—and you have been given fullness in Christ (v10).

1. We do not look elsewhere for satisfaction and meaning in this life. We have Christ.
2. We do not look elsewhere for fulfillment and a sense of accomplishment. We find that in Christ.
3. We organize our heads and our hearts and our lives around the One who is God in the flesh, Christ the Lord.

C. We are positioned and empowered for maximum living through Christ.

\*\*\*"Fullness" is pleroma. Sometimes they used the word to describe a ship when it was fully loaded and ready to sail. It had all the crew, supplies, equipment, and cargo that it needed to make a successful voyage. This is you and your fullness in Christ.

1. We have been received into God's covenant—the sign of circumcision. This is not some outward, physical removal of flesh. Instead, it is a life-transforming spiritual event in the inner self in which the power of sin in your life has been forever broken.
2. We have been buried with Christ through baptism. This is the death of the old life of sin and rebellion against God.
3. We have been raised with him to a new life just as Christ was raised from the dead. This is an event of FAITH.

\*\*\*Last week the 5th and 5th grade girls had me in the role as the Prodigal Son. I had to think on my feet about why I would take my inheritance and run. And I think I know the answer. I wanted to do life MY WAY. And I did not have any grand vision when I left with all my father gave to me. No, I just wanted to feed my appetites. I thought that in this way I would find fulfillment.

## **III. Discover Victory in Christ:** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (v15). Internally, we are complete in Christ. But our relationship with Christ also achieves for us victory in all aspects of our lives.

A. We used to be dead in our sins: You were dead in your sins (v13). Death makes us truly helpless to save ourselves.

B. God forgave our sins. He sent our sin away.

\*\*\*Picture a boat that is cut loose from the tree where it is tied on the river. It drifts away until it disappears around the bend. That is the picture of what God has done with our sin through Christ. It is cut loose and sent away.

C. God CANCELED THE WRITTEN CODE, with its regulations, that was against us. Here Paul is speaking of the law that slays us. It stood in the way between us and God and between

us and all that we hoped for in this life. God “took it away, nailing it to the cross” (v14). All our failures to keep the law of God were nailed to cross of Christ. What a picture!

D. The powers and authorities have been disarmed. They have been led in a victory procession down the streets of the city. How? When? The victory came when Christ carried his cross out of the city of Jerusalem before that great crowd. It came when they nailed him to the tree and lifted him up to die before that crowd. This was the moment when God achieved for you the victory that you long for all your life. It is the freedom from law, the freedom from guilt, and the freedom from sin bought for you at this great price.

**IV. Find Freedom from the Shadows:** Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ (v16-17).

A. We live our lives dodging shadows. Have you ever been frightened by a shadow? I used to be scared, lying in my bed as a boy, when I woke up at night and saw the shadow above my closet. I could always conjure up some monster that was sure to get me.

We spend our whole lives chasing spiritual shadows. We “try” this system and that system. We think that we will find what we are looking for in laws and regulations. We get all caught up in the outward trappings of religion and faith.

B. The shadows disappear in the light of Christ. Christ is the light of the world. We do not live in shadows anymore. The reality of all those shadows from the Old Testament--food laws, priestly codes, rituals, and ceremonies—find their fulfillment in Christ.

C. Our Freedom resides in CONNECTION with the HEAD, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow (v19).

1. We are Jesus people. We live and breathe the life of Christ. We do not have a separate life. We share one life—his life.

2. We stay connected to the Head. We cannot live apart from Christ. We do not seek to develop some independent existence outside of Christ. Christ himself is the summation of existence, the beginning and the end. All power and authority are under him. He is the source of power and energy and love and light and life in this world. We never go elsewhere for our freedom, our victory, our fulfillment or our next step. Christ is all and in all. As Paul said, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

“I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I...”

CONCLUSION: