

A Big Encouragement and a Big Warning

Colossians 2:6-15

(1) A Big Encouragement to Believers

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Col 2:6-7)

- Walk *in* him?
- Christians need the gospel, too: note how these verses teach this truth
- “Abounding in thanksgiving.” We’ll return to this at the end of the sermon, as we transition to the Lord’s Supper.

(2) A Big Warning to Believers

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits [*stoicheia*] of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Col 2:8; see also Col 2:20 and Gal 4:3, 9)

- Captive? Christ has set us free, but can we become *prisoners*? A big warning indeed!
 - Captive to “philosophy and empty deceit”
 - “Human tradition.” Uh-oh—opposing human tradition won’t be popular with everyone!
 - In an unbelieving society, we should expect traditions – common practices, values, thought patterns – to be in need of critical evaluation.

- Sidenote on a difficult word: *stoicheia* means elemental principles, spirits, or forces. What exactly does Paul mean by this?
 - My answer: “*stoicheia* of the world” is about whatever one thinks are the basic elements of this world (i.e. laws, food, matter, angels, the calendar, whatever). I believe it’s a bit of a catch-all category for different philosophies about the world and our lives in it.
- More important than the world and human traditions is Christ, who is God above it all (2:9-10)

To the Lord’s Supper

- This is the *Eucharist* (“thanksgiving”). The gospel means Christ feeds us, lest we die. Let us abound in thanksgiving! (2:6)

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. When you came to Christ, did you experience joy/freedom/power/etc.? What was it like for you? What’s it like now?
2. Read Colossians 2:6-7. Paul’s encouragement is that we *continue* in Christ. Have you? Have you done so completely and unreservedly? Honestly and prayerfully assess.
3. Read Colossians 2:8. Paul speaks as a pastor and friend here, noting how Christians can become captives, prisoners. To what specifically?
 - a. Examples might help, and we hear a little bit of these in 2:18-23.
 - b. How about examples today?
 - c. How can you apply Paul’s warning to your own life?