

Paul was many things to many people.

- apostle, a missionary, an evangelist and a Pastor or shepherd.

A shepherd

- loves the flock
- looks over the flock.
- prays for the flock,
- ministers to the flock,

He may even get beat up for the flock.

But at the end of the day, he's willing to stand in the gap for the flock.

When you know someone is willing to stand in the gap for you, it really knits you together whether it's someone in the church or outside of the church.

With that said, it's up to us to continue in our walk with the Lord as well, and not depend on someone to walk in our place.

Paul used the metaphor of sports at times.

But he also alluded to agriculture at times as we see in verse 7.

Col 2:7

7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

So wants the Colossians to stay the course.

The Psalmists said:

Ps 1:1-3

1 Blessed is the man
 Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
 Nor stands in the path of sinners,
 Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 And in His law he meditates day and night.
 3 He shall be like a tree
 Planted by the rivers of water,
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf also shall not wither;
 And whatever he does shall prosper.

Jer 17:8

8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,
 Which spreads out its roots by the river,
 And will not fear when heat comes;

But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

These verses speak of trees and being rooted.

- A tree's best friend is deep watering

When you deep water, the roots become stronger

- And will stand longer during a storm.

As Christians, we're to be rooted deep in our faith

Paul goes on in verse 7 to say that we are to be built up in Him and established in the faith.

This is an architectural term

- which speaks of laying a foundation
- and building a structure on it.

We shouldn't be content simply in being saved.

- The Lord wants us to grow.

When Paul spoke of faith he wasn't speaking of an individual subjective faith. He's speaking of the body of truth which we believe in.

In Jude 3, Jude exhorted the church

Jude 3

to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

How should we contend for the faith?

Paul said in verse 7, "as you have been taught"

Finally, Paul closes verse 7 by saying to abound in it with thanksgiving.

- Abound suggests a river overflowing its banks.

Many of you if not all of you in here have experienced Christ's abundance.

When the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 went to draw water, Jesus asked her for a drink. She then questioned His asking for a drink.

Jesus answered:

John 4:1

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

He spoke of living water from a well that never runs dry.

Later in John 7 Jesus said if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink

- He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said,
- out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

We are to abound and to abound with thanksgiving.

As followers of Christ, we have much to be thankful for.

I like how Warren Wiersbe sums up verses 1-7.

By reviewing these pictures of spiritual progress, we see how the growing Christian can easily defeat the enemy and not be led astray. If his spiritual roots are deep in Christ, he will not want any other soil. If Christ is his sure foundation, he has no need to move. If he is studying and growing in the Word, he will not be easily enticed by false doctrine. And if his heart is overflowing with thanksgiving, he will not even consider turning from the fullness he has in Christ. A grounded, growing, grateful believer will not be led astray.

Col 2:8-10

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Paul does 2 things in the next 3 verses. First he issues a warning in verse 8: Then in verses 9 & 10 he speaks of our fullness in Christ since He is the fullness of God.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you

The NIV says, "See to it that not one takes you captive"

The NLT says, "Don't let anyone capture you"

Paul opens with the warning, "Beware."

This is a stern warning to the believers. "See to it"

In Acts 20 he warned the church, For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Wuest word studies says to be constantly looking out, to keep a watchful eye ever open.

Phil 3:2, beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation.

Jesus said, beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Mt 7:15

Heb 3:12, Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

All too often people fail to remember that Satan uses people.

Eph 6:12 warns that our struggles are not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

We must understand that we are in a war!

- And during war, smaller fights break out.

According to Merriam Webster,

- battles involve combat between two persons,
- between factions, between armies
- and they consist of any type of "extended contest,
- struggle or controversy."

In the spiritual realm,

- there is always a battle going on

And, as with any other war, you emerge victorious or a victim.

Matt 28:18

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

He was saying, not only are you saved thru Me, but you can have victory in Me.

Col 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty conceit.

Another translation would be, beware lest anyone spoil you through philosophy.

To spoil as used here means "to be lead captive."

The Greek word for "spoil" describes the action of one kidnapping or plundering and then making off with the catch as a prize.

Then Paul mentions 5 ways that false teachers try to capture weak Christians.

He says: beware lest anyone cheat you or spoil you through philosophy.

1 is Philosophy:

Philosophy is a love of wisdom.

C.S. Lewis once said “Good philosophy must exist if for no other reason than to refute bad philosophy.”

Paul wasn’t condemning the love of wisdom,

- but he was condemning the hollow
- and deceptive wisdom of the false teachers.

That was the tradition of men

- and not the truth of God’s word.

The important thing to keep in mind

- whether we’re learning
- or teaching God’s word, is its origin.

Did it originate with man or with God.

There is the wisdom that views life in terms of eternity.

James 3:17

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Then there is the wisdom of the world which God will one day destroy.

1 Cor 1:18-19

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

God’s wisdom begins with a holy reverent fear of Him according to Psalm 111:10.

The second method false teachers use to capture weak Christians is empty deceit. Empty deceit speaks of something void of spiritual truth or power.

The NLT calls it high-sounding nonsense. In other words, it’s just impressive speech.

2 Tim 4:2-5

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away

from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

The third method false teachers use to capture weak Christians is the tradition of men.

I think we'd all agree that there are some good traditions and there are some bad traditions.

The word "tradition" can have two meanings, one secular and the other religious. In a secular sense they are long-established customs or beliefs that are handed down from generation to generation.

Some traditions mentioned in scripture:

2 Thess 2:15 stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Paul praised the Corinthians:

1 Cor 11:2

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

What were the traditions he delivered to them?

1 Cor 15:3

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

Religious tradition was in full force during Jesus' earthly ministry as well.

In Mark 7:3 some of the Pharisees and Scribes saw some of the disciples eating with unwashed hands.

What was the problem:

3 The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

They were more concerned about ceremonial cleansing.

They had a heart condition in that they valued the outward more than the inward.

Mark 7:6-13

6 He (Jesus) answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.

7 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' [1]

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. (it was more important for them to keep their man made traditions than it was to hold to the scriptures) 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" – ' (that is, a gift to God),

The Jews made up a tradition

- allowing them to escape the responsibility
- of honoring their father and mother.

They practiced "Corban."

In the OT "Corban" was a gift or an offering dedicated to God,

In the NT according to the WS NT Dictionary,

- this gift was used to excuse a person from doing
- his or her duty toward their parents.

Mark 7:12-13

12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Again, Jesus had some harsh words for them:

Matt 15:7-9

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.

9 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (All about tradition)

The fourth method false teachers use to capture weak Christians is thru the basic principles of the world.

The NL uses the term, "from the spiritual powers of this world."

False teachers were busy trying to get believers to follow them.

In fact, in verse 18 Paul warns them against taking delight in false humility and worship of angels.

The fifth method false teachers use to capture weak Christians is not according to Christ.

A person can know the scriptures from beginning to end and not know Christ.

What are some things that are not after Christ?

- Horoscopes
- Ouija boards
- Astral charts

The whole zodiac system is contrary to the teaching of the word of God.

Why follow empty philosophy when they can have the fullness of Christ.

Jeremiah spelled it out clearly:

Jer 2:13

13 "For my people have done two evil things:

They have abandoned me—

the fountain of living water.

And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns

that can hold no water at all!

This is like saying to turn away from the fountain of living water to the dirty cisterns of the world.

Col 2:9-10

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you (believers) are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (spiritual beings).

In chapter 1 and verse 19 Paul said that in Him all the fullness should dwell. That speaks of all of God's attributes and all of His being.

Paul makes three profound affirmations about Christ.

First in verse 9 Paul is saying that Jesus is God! In Jesus there is a permanent dwelling.

Second, we see Christ's full humanity. Paul says that the fullness of the Godhead is in Jesus bodily.

Verse 10 speaks of Christ's complete adequacy.

Eph 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Listen, the moment we were regenerated, when we went from death to life, when we surrendered to Christ, that's when we became part of God's family.