DG Guide: Colossians #7 - The Way In Is the Way On (No Upgrade Needed)

1. Opening Prayer

Father, we thank you that the fullness of your nature dwells in Christ and in us. Help us to stop looking for an upgrade to the gospel we already have and instead grow deeper roots in what you've already given us. Holy Spirit, take every thought captive to Christ and help us walk in the sufficiency of Jesus today.

2. Starter Question

Think about the last time you downloaded a free app or game, only to realize you need to pay extra for the "premium" features to actually use it well. What was that experience like, and how did it make you feel about the free version?

3. Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **The gospel is a complete package, not a starter version.** We don't receive Jesus as a free entry ticket and then pay for the real life later; the fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ, so we have everything we need from the very beginning.
2. **The enemy doesn't always use obvious lies; he uses arguments that sound reasonable.** Paul warns against philosophy and empty deceit because these ideas sound plausible, use the same words as Scripture, and come from the same soil as the gospel, but they twist the meaning to take us captive.
3. **Our relationship with Jesus is a continuous walk, not a one-time transaction.** Just as we received Christ as Lord when we first believed, we continue to walk in Him; the way we came to Jesus is the same disposition with which we approach Him now.
4. **Gratitude is the antidote to bitterness and the mark of a healthy root system.** When we truly acknowledge that we have everything in Jesus, thankfulness overflows naturally and chokes out the bitterness that comes from thinking we are lacking something.
5. **We are already rooted, built up, and established in Christ.** We don't need to ADD traditions, disciplines, or knowledge to have salvation in Jesus (even though we love God-honouring traditions, disciplines, and knowledge!); we simply need to grow our roots deeper into the soil of Christ (the salvation we already have) and grow up into Him.

4. Scripture Reading

Read together: Colossians 2:4-10

5. Discussion Questions

Understanding the Gospel as a Complete Package

1. Don compares the false teaching in Colossae to a "freemium" model where Jesus is the free version and the false teachers sold an upgrade. What does this comparison tell you about how some people view their faith versus how the Bible presents it?
2. Read Colossians 2:9-10. How does Don explain why adding other things to Jesus (like philosophy or secret knowledge) is actually a subtraction rather than an addition?
3. Don says, "The way in is the way on." What does this mean, and how does it change the way you think about your daily walk with Jesus?
4. Read Colossians 2:6. Don says Paul gives the full title here: Christ Jesus the Lord - Messiah, the man from Nazareth, the Lord. Which of those three do you find easiest to believe about Jesus, and which do you most often forget?
5. Don says the tenses in Colossians 2:7 carry the sermon: rooted (done once, and it holds), built up and established (still happening). Which is harder for you to believe right now: that you are planted for good, or that God is still building? Why?
6. Don notes that we come to Jesus as empty-handed and dirty-clothed, but now we leave blameless, clothed with His righteousness. How does this truth help you when you feel like your own efforts aren't enough?

Looking at the Battle for Our Minds

7. Read Colossians 2:4-5. False ideas "sound reasonable" because they use the same words as Scripture but twist the meaning. Can you think of a belief or idea you hold that sounds reasonable but might be based on a misunderstanding?
8. Don explains that the word "captive" in verse 8 means being taken away as plunder in war, not just losing an argument. How does this change the way you think about resisting false teaching?
9. Paul warns against human tradition and the elements of the world, not against tradition itself. How do we distinguish between a helpful church tradition and something that takes us away from Christ?
10. Don gives the diagnostic question: "Does this idea come from King Jesus?" How would you apply that test to a popular cultural idea or trend today?

Looking at Our Hearts and Response

11. Read Colossians 2:7. Gratitude is the fruit of a healthy root system. If you felt unthankful this week, what might that tell you about where your roots are?
12. Scripture talks about "taking every thought captive" rather than being passively captured by it. How can you practically apply this in the next 24 hours?
13. One line from the sermon was "We have everything if we have Jesus." If you truly believed that, what would be the first thing you would stop worrying about or trying to fix yourself?

Living It Out in Community

14. Knowing we are not alone in our struggles is a huge encouragement. Who in your group or church might be going through a season where they feel isolated or tempted to look for an "upgrade" in their faith?
15. The enemy wants to take us captive through philosophy and empty deceit. What is one specific area where your group could pray for each other to guard their minds this week?
16. The passage talks about "being rooted, built up, and established." If your DG could do one thing this week to help each other grow in these three areas, what would it be?

6. Personal Reflection

- Where is God exposing something specific in your life through this passage? Is there an area where you feel like the gospel isn't enough, and you are looking for something else?
- In what area of your life have you been trying to "level up" your faith by adding things like discipline, philosophy, or extra religious practices?
- What is one concrete step you will take this week to rest more fully in the sufficiency of Jesus?

7. Group Commitments

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to as a group: 1. Prayer commitment: Spend 5 minutes each day this week praying for someone in your group who is struggling with a feeling that their faith isn't enough or that they need something more. 2. Scripture study: Read Colossians 2 this week, and meditate on the section that most stands out to you. 3. Accountability: Share with a partner this week where you notice yourself thinking, "I need more to be a better Christian," and pray together for that thought. 4. Relational: Reach out to one person in your group who you suspect might be feeling isolated or deceived by false teaching, and check in on them specifically. 5. Practical: Consider any habits or practices you have been tempted to add to the sufficiency of Jesus.

8. Closing Exercise

Don counted seven thanksgivings in Colossians (1:3; 1:12; 2:7; 3:15-17; 4:2) - gratitude is the letter's own marker of a healthy root. Each person write down one thing they are thankful for in Christ that they know they can't earn on their own. Read the list aloud as a group and let it sit in silence for 30 seconds.

9. Closing Prayer

Pray together, focusing on: - Worship for the fullness of God that dwells in Christ, and in us. - Confession for times we have tried to add to Jesus or fix ourselves. - Thanksgiving for the fact that we already have everything we need in Him. - Commitment to guard our minds and grow deeper roots in Christ this week. - Boldness to walk in the truth that we are filled with the fullness of God.

10. For Next Week

- Follow through on your group commitment from this week.

- Memory verse: Colossians 2:10 - “and you have been filled by him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.”
- Preparation: Read Colossians 2:11-15 before the next Sunday gathering.

11. Leader Notes

- Be careful not to let the “no upgrade needed” message sound dismissive of genuine spiritual disciplines. We aren’t against discipline, but against the idea that we need more to get what Jesus already gave.
- Watch for members who are struggling with a specific area of life (health, finances, marriage) and may be tempted to believe they need more from God. Gently redirect them to the sufficiency of Christ.
- Maintain a grace-centred tone by emphasising that we come to Jesus as empty-handed and dirty-clothed, not as people who need to earn His love.
- Take time to share your own struggles with feeling like the gospel isn’t enough, so members don’t feel alone in that feeling.
- Remember that this is a battle for the mind, and your own mind needs to be guarded too.

12. Alternative Discussion Prompts

Or, if you just want a bunch of discussion prompts:

1. What does it mean to be “rooted” in Christ, and what are some practical ways we can grow our roots deeper?
2. How does Don explain the difference between a healthy tradition and a false teaching that takes us captive?
3. Why does Don say that gratitude is an antidote to bitterness?
4. What does it mean to be “built up” in Christ, and how is that different from being “rooted”?
5. How are we already “established” in Christ?
6. What is the difference between receiving Jesus as a Saviour versus receiving Him as Lord?
7. Why does Don say that we shouldn’t try to graduate from the gospel?
8. How are we “filled” by Christ?
9. What does it mean to be the head over every ruler and authority?
10. How can we practically apply the truth that we have everything in Jesus in our daily lives?