

Series: **Leadership 2022**
Today's Title: **"Deeply Rooted" - part 1**
January 2, 2022 – *Colossians 2:1-9*

Objective: To help people know that the Christians knowledge of Christ gives them the ability to deal with adversity.

Opening prayer

Since March 2020, we have seen our nation enter a time that is without precedent as we have witnessed riots, violence, a controversial election, school board meetings with enraged parents, unprecedented government actions via mandates, and other *"emergency measures"* that seem to do more long-term harm than help.

Going into 2021, after 9 months of shut-downs and isolation, we realized the need for our people to 're-Connect' with each other - and in corporate worship, in small groups and ministry teams. So, we made 're-Connect' our theme for this past year - ***which I believe we made some great progress toward this goal.***

As we enter 2022, What is the average person thinking when they consider the times they are living in?

Is the average person, including the average Christian - more anxious and worried about what the near future holds?

I think the answer is 'yes'.

Front yard tree...

I've talked with several people going through difficult health battles - with sickness - disease - never-ending pain - uncertain diagnosis.

I've talked with someone this past week who is struggling with the sudden death of their son and whether he is in heaven or not.

I've talked with others who are anxious about the next few years in our nation - the economy - access to health care - various mandates.

I've talked with others who are concerned and uncertain about rogue nations of the world and what they will do in the next few years.

2022 Theme: Deeply Rooted

I believe this theme can help people - especially our church family - to find stability in unstable times.

Peace during chaos and storms.

Turn to Colossians 2:1-9 -- Context of Colossians

In the 1st century, the city of Colossae was going through difficult times.

Colossae used to be on the main trade route in that region, which led to great opportunities for wealth and importance.

But in Roman times, the trade route was re-routed to go through nearby Laodicea, which led to great financial and cultural losses to Colossae - like a mining town that goes 'bust' when the mine is closed.

By the 8th century Colossae was abandoned, and it was completely destroyed in the 12th century.

The people of Colossae were living with uncertainty about the future - and their culture was changing in various ways.

Epaphras (1:7) started the church in Colossae.

He probably met / heard Paul during Paul's stay in Ephesus, which is just over 100 miles from Colossae. Paul never went to Colossae (2:1).

It is believed that Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome.

This means that Epaphras was so worried about the Colossians faith that he traveled over 1,000 miles (no small feat in the 1st century) to visit Paul in Rome and seek the Apostle's advice on how to pastor and lead the church in Colossae through this crisis of faith.

Colossians is one of what's called 'The Prison Epistles' (letters) - letters the Apostle Paul wrote while he was imprisoned in Rome - the others being Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

With that as an introduction and some context to our passage today, let's turn to our text: **Colossians 2:1-9**.

The focus of the Church's ministry: Christ. vs. 1-3

The first thing we see in our passage is the pastoral heart of the Apostle Paul.

We see his desire - his struggle (Gr: *agona*) - for them and for those in Laodicea.

He never met them - but he agonizes over their faith - and he agonizes and prays for them that they will remain faithful to Christ and that they will understand the greatness of Christ and the greatness of the riches we have in Christ.

Read vs. 1-3

Even though Paul never spent time in Colossae, this didn't mean he didn't care about the Colossian believers.

A pastor's primary concern is the spiritual health and obedience of the church he leads.

My primary concern is that this congregation is known for its love - and known for being faithful to our Christ-given mission.

Don't take this the wrong way...but I'm not so concerned that you're happy - I'm more concerned that

your loving others and faithful to the Gospel call of Christ!

vs. 2 - Paul says he wants them to be “knit together in love”.
United in love - together in love - striding together in love - identified by their love for others.

Love should be the main identity of Christians.

Ephesians 4:2b-3

“...bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Love - leads to unity - which leads to peace.

But the Church is more than love.

- There is also truth.
- The truth of Christ.
- The truth of the Bible.
- The revelation in the Bible about Jesus Christ.

Some Christians don't think it's very important to study the Bible.

They think going to church is enough.

They think knowing the basic Gospel message is enough.

These Christians never spend any time outside of a church service thinking about God - or spending time and energy learning more about Christ.

If you're never spending time learning about Christ - digging into the Scriptures - then you'll never really understand the depth of the riches we have in Christ. Your faith will be shallow - unable to stand up to difficult times.

You can't read vs. 2-3 and think attending a worship service each week is enough.

I don't care how good the service is - your life of faith requires more study and more input from God's Word - so you can have all these verses describe.

Ephesians 1:17-18

"...remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints..."

Do you know and understand the "riches" of Christ?

Do you know and understand your amazing, "glorious inheritance"?

Do you have "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation" that is based "in the knowledge of Him"?

Have the "eyes of your heart" been "enlightened"?

Do you know "the hope to which He has called you"?

The more you know about Christ - the more you understand what His work on the cross accomplished - the more you know what awaits us in heaven...

The more assured you will be - more confident in the faith and in your standing with Christ.

The danger in our midst. vs. 4, 8

In every age - every era - every culture - there are false beliefs about the nature of mankind and the nature and reality of God.

There are false beliefs and philosophies that try and give reasons and explanations for the way things are.

This is what Paul is referring to here in **vs. 4 & 8**.

He is referring to the beliefs, ideologies, and philosophies that may sound intelligent and might be held by influential people in the culture, but they are false.

Read vs. 4, 8

He is trying to make sure Christians are aware of the dangers - the spiritual dangers that are trying to lure them.

Ephesians 4:14

“...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”

These false beliefs - when you get down to it - will always end up at 3 points of contradiction with the Gospel.

- They will deny the Bible is God's inspired, authoritative Word.
- They will deny the deity of Christ.
 - They will honor Jesus - say He is a great teacher, philosopher, great role model and example for all of us - compassionate leader - but they will deny His deity.
- They will deny that Jesus is sufficient for salvation.
 - They will say faith in Jesus is good...necessary...but you also need _____.
 - You need to attend this type of church.
 - You need good works.
 - You need to do this...don't do that.
 - It's always 'Jesus + something'.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the city of Laodicea was very close to Colossae. Paul mentions Laodicea in **vs. 1**.

It's an argument from silence, but it seems that the Colossians took Paul's letters to heart, and their faith remained strong.

But according to **Revelation 3**, Laodicea did not.

Laodicea is one of the churches mentioned by Christ in **Revelation 3**, and their faith had lost its strength.

Revelation 3:15-17

“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!

So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

The Laodiceans were taken captive by the pleasures of the world. Their love of Christ was replaced with their love of their money and their stuff - to the point that they were convinced they no longer needed Christ.

Strong faith is deeply rooted in Christ. vs. 5-7

Read vs. 5-7

Paul was with them “in spirit”.

The report he received from Epaphras brought concerns regarding the dangers they were facing, but it also brought good news about their faith.

vs. 5 - “rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.”

“good order” - In the Greek this is a military term and it refers to keeping rank - they are unified - together.

They are still 1 - unified in the faith.

It can also refer to an organization of their faith.

Their understanding was not haphazard - random - but ordered - reasoned belief.

“firmness” - refers to a solid body - strength - stable.

Their faith was strong - not shaky.

vs. 6 - They had received Christ, a clear reference to their conversion when Epaphras started the church in Colossae, and Paul tells them - “so walk in Him”.

In the N.T. “walk” is a metaphor for daily living - day-to-day practice.

1 John 2:6 (NLT)

“Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.”

Being a Christian is not a 1-day / week thing.

It’s an everyday thing.

It’s living your life as you believe Christ would live if He were in your shoes.

vs. 7 - we see faith that is “rooted...built up...established” on the person and truth of Jesus.

These are 3 participle verbs - and they tell us some important details about our faith.

The 1st participle: “rooted” is in the perfect tense - telling us this was an action completed at a specific point of time in the past.

This is a ‘positional’ statement.

This refers to our salvation - the moment of our conversion - and in that moment we were “rooted” in Christ.

The 2nd participle is “built up” - and it is in the present tense - meaning being “built up” is something we do now - every day - it’s a continual action - it should become part of our normal existence.

Jude 20

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith...”

The 3rd participle is “established”, and it’s also a present tense verb.

Both “built up” and “established” are either passive or middle voice verbs - meaning, that our being “built up” and “established” are things God does to us / for us - or we perform this action upon ourselves - for our own benefit.

The ultimate result: Thanksgiving.

vs. 7b

“abounding in thanksgiving.”

Overflowing with thanksgiving.

God doesn’t want you deluded - confused - uncertain.

He wants you confident - assured - deeply rooted - built up - established - abounding in thanksgiving.

Apply it...

vs. 9

“For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...”

The primary point of the faith - and of your faith - is Christ.

But it's knowing who Jesus was / is.

Knowing He is God incarnate.

This verse draws the whole issue of Christianity to this very specific point: **Jesus is fully God in bodily form.**

This changes everything.

- Jesus no longer is simply a wise man - one of many spiritual leaders through history.

- Jesus is no longer simply another revolutionary who came to speak truth to power.

- Jesus is no longer someone who simply loves and gives value and significance to the poor and the marginalized in every society.

Jesus - the physical, bodily Jesus is fully God.

As God, we must follow Him...

We must obey Him.

To ignore Him - or to minimize Him would be a grave mistake and great foolishness.

Ephesians 3:14, 17-19

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to

comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Small groups are designed to help you grow in your faith - get deeply rooted, built up, and established in the faith.

A small group is where you will practice the ‘one another’ commands of the N.T.

A small group is where you can ask questions, dig deeper into God’s Word, pray for one another, weep and rejoice with one another.

Are you deeply rooted, built up, and established in Christ - and are you overflowing with thanks?

Let’s make this our resolution for 2022 - that as a church - each of us will be confident that God has rooted us in Christ - and let us work to build ourselves and establish ourselves in a deeper knowledge of Jesus and His truth - so no matter what 2022 holds, we can stand strong with the truth in love.

Close in prayer