



## **Growth Group Questions: April 30, 2023 – “True Life Comes Through Jesus”**

### **CONTEXT**

Colossians 2:6-7 essentially sums up the message of the whole letter of Colossians. We receive Christ Jesus as Lord, and we live in him. The Colossians had accepted the proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord. They had confessed their faith in Christ in the midst of a pagan culture that stood against much of what the apostle Paul was teaching. Their baptism was visible proof of them turning from their culture and turning to Jesus.

Paul talks about living in Christ. The Greek word used here for “living” really has to do with “walking”. The Colossians have not only believed, but they also continue to walk with Jesus as they live out their faith. Paul uses a number of images in verse 7 to show what a life in Jesus looks like. Rooted and built up, strengthened, and overflowing in thanksgiving. This is what happens when people are in Jesus.

As is often the case, the apostle Paul is concerned about false teaching. He reminds the Colossians that human traditions (see also Colossians 2:22) can get in the way of following Jesus. The traditions of the rabbinic schools where Paul had been taught the faith could lead people astray and away from the life-giving message of Jesus.

The apostle Paul then turns to baptism as the way in which the Colossians visibly show the world that they have joined the family of God. In Old Testament times circumcision was the sign of belonging. However, in the New Testament baptism is the visible sign of belonging to God’s family. Baptism is a dying to self and the things of this world and then a raising to new life in Jesus Christ (see Romans 6:1-4).

Paul concludes by talking about how when we were dead in our sins, God made us alive in Christ. In doing this, God “reckons” that what is true of Jesus is also true of us. He sees us through the lens of Jesus and thus he can love us because we have been made right with God through Christ. Our sin does not get in way of having a relationship with God. The cross has solved this problem and we have now received forgiveness.



## **Colossians 2:6-15**

<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you<sup>[d]</sup> alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

## **Romans 6:1-4**

<sup>6</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

## **Jeremiah 17:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> This is what the LORD says:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,  
who draws strength from mere flesh  
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;  
they will not see prosperity when it comes.

They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,  
in a salt land where no one lives.

<sup>7</sup> “But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,  
whose confidence is in him.

<sup>8</sup> They will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit.”



## **Acts 20:32**

<sup>32</sup> “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified?”

## **Matthew 12:33-37**

<sup>33</sup> “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. <sup>35</sup> A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

## **Questions:**

1. Pastor Paul told us that when we become followers of Christ, our identity is “in Christ.” What does it mean to be “in Christ”?
2. In Romans 6:1-4, the Apostle Paul spoke of “those who have died to sin” and said that “all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.” What does it mean to be dead to sin? How are we “baptized into Jesus’ death”?
3. In Colossian 2:6-7, the Apostle Paul told the Colossians to continue to live their lives “rooted and built up” in Jesus. What does it mean to be “rooted” in Jesus? What does that look like? How can we grow our roots in Jesus?
4. Acts 20:32 states: “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” How does God’s grace build us up? What is the role of God’s word in building us up?
5. The Apostle Paul said that as followers of Christ our lives should be “overflowing with thankfulness.” Is there a difference between “being thankful” and having a life that is “overflowing with thankfulness”?
6. What kind of connection might there be between being “rooted and built up” in Christ and living a life that is overflowing with thankfulness?
7. In Jeremiah 17:5-8, the Prophet Jeremiah contrasts the image of a “bush in the wastelands” with that of a “tree planted by water.” If you had to describe the central message of this passage, what would it be?
8. In Matthew 12:33-37, Jesus tells the Pharisees “For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of,” and goes on to say “For by your words you will be acquitted; and by your words you will be condemned.” What was He really saying to them? What meaning does this scripture passage have for us today?

