



# COLOSSIANS

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**For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Colossians 2:5**

Paul had just said to the Colossians, "Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words." Building upon that, he says, "For." He understands that they will have deceivers come in among them, and attempt to lure them away from the truth which is found in Christ alone. As a note of comfort to them, he next says, "though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit." The question is, "Is Paul referring to his own spirit, as if his heart is with them; or is he speaking of the Holy Spirit, meaning a spiritual bond exists between the two?" The question is hotly debated, but the wording he uses gives us a clue. In 1 Corinthians, he says something similar -

"For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed." 1 Corinthians 5:3

In these words of 1 Corinthians 5, he uses the term "body." There, he was making an assertion that he is physically absent, but if he was there in person, he would have made the same rendering as he had while absent. In this passage, he says "flesh." The word is normally given as a contrast to that which is spiritual, not physical. To walk in the flesh is to walk in a carnal manner. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in step with the Lord. Therefore, Paul is making a spiritual connection to those at Colossae which goes beyond "as if I were there with you in the body." Rather it is saying, "I am with you in the influence of the Spirit." This then is revealed in the words, "...rejoicing to see."

The spiritual connection is realized in that he is filled with joy in the Spirit which is then a result of "your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." The word "order" is an ancient military term which describes how a military troop is ordered, going in descending rank. It thus signifies a detailed ordering instead of a general accounting of military troops. The word "steadfastness" is found only here in the New Testament, and it continues the military metaphor. Thus, the "steadfastness of your faith in Christ" gives the sense of the faith being a

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military host which is closely drawn together. It is as if they form a stronghold against the deceivers who would attempt to come in among them and confuse them. It is reflective of the words of the 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm –

“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” Psalm 18:2

Those in Colossae were a source of joy to Paul, because he knew that they were standing on the truth of the Lord, and allowing Him to be their true leader. They had ordered their troops, and they had drawn together closely in Him. Thus, He was their stronghold.

Life application: No man is an island. There is strength in numbers, and from the words of Paul to the Colossians, we can see the importance of aligning ourselves with other believers so that we can unite in the Lord and stand against the false deceivers who come against us. This is a wise thing to do, and it is what the Bible would direct us to do.

**As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, Colossians 2:6**

Paul now states for the consideration of those at Colossae (and thus us!), “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord...” The Greek literally reads “the Christ Jesus the Lord.” This is stated based on everything he has said about Christ Jesus to this point. All of the marvelous detail concerning Him in Chapter 1, and then the note in verse 2:3 that “in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” were intended to demonstrate what they had originally believed, that Jesus Christ is the Lord (meaning Yehovah of the Old Testament). As He is, then He is God.

This is the what they had received. He then reexplains this to them by saying “Christ Jesus the Lord.” Unfortunately, this article is missing in the translation of almost all versions in this verse. The ISV and the Weymouth correctly inserted it -

“So then, just as you have received the Messiah Jesus the Lord, continue to live dependent on him.” ISV

As you can see, “the article points out Christ Jesus in his full style and title as the Person whom the Colossians had received, and received as the Lord” (Pulpit Commentary). This then is highlighting the lordship of Christ Jesus, not his messiah-ship. The term “Christ” in Greek is the same in meaning as “Messiah” in Hebrew. The question of His messiah-ship is resolved by the use of the title, but what does that mean? It means that He is Yehovah; He is God.

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Having said that, if the Christ Jesus is not the Lord, then He would be a false Messiah. There are many supposed Messiahs, but there is one who is the Lord. Therefore, though the stress is on Jesus being “the Lord” in this verse, being “the Messiah” necessarily means that it is speaking of “the Lord.” The true Messiah will be the Lord, and Jesus is that true Messiah. This is what Paul is so carefully and meticulously telling his audience. With that in mind, he then says, “...so walk in Him.”

This is a note of care, caution, and confidence. They had received Christ properly. They had been re-advised of who he is with Paul’s careful explanation of the Person, and thus he asks them to continue to live out their life with this knowledge, and not swaying from it. They were not to be seduced by either the Judaizers who wanted them back under the law which was fulfilled by the Christ, nor were they to be duped into believing in a false Christ who is not the Lord by the gnostics or other Greek philosophers.

The term “walk” is used to indicate a manner of life. If one follows a false Christ, they will have an aberrant walk. But in knowing the true Christ, who is the Lord, one will be careful to walk in accord with His expectations.

Life application: The Christ Jesus is the Lord. Do you believe this? If so, you are in the sweet spot and on the heavenly highway. If not, you have believed in a false Christ, and you are on the road to the Lake of Fire. To walk in the Christ Jesus who is the Lord will keep you from an eternal swim with any false Christ who is not the Lord.

**...rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.** Colossians 2:7

In the previous verse, Paul said that we are to “walk” in Christ. Now, he changes the metaphor from walking to being rooted. The idea of being rooted is that of a tree’s roots which bury deep into the soil. They hold the tree firm, but even more, they draw up the nutrients and water with which the tree may live. This is comparable to our own position in Christ. It is through Him that we may draw up all the riches of what God offers to His redeemed. In this state, we can then be “built up in Him.”

There is a change in the tense of the verb here. The word “rooted” is a perfect participle. In other words, “be rooted.” It is a complete action he is directing for us. The word translated as “built up” is a present participle. In this, it means something more like, “being built up.” If we are rooted, we can then progress in the state of being built up “in Him.” The words, rather than saying “upon Him” which might be expected, show that Christ is the sphere in which we are being built up, not merely the grounding of something else.

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After this, he next notes, "...and be established in the faith." Again, it is a present participle which gives the sense of "being established." If we are rooted in Christ, our faith will be established as we continue our walk in Him. In these words, it needs to be remembered why Paul is saying this. He is attacking gnostic heretics who believed that knowledge was the highest attainment of the elite, normally possessed by a few. The common and unenlightened merely possessed faith. However Paul shows that it is just the opposite. We are rooted in knowledge, and this leads to continued establishment of faith. It is faith which is pleasing to God.

Understanding this, he says, "as you have been taught." In other words, "Hold fast to what you have received, and don't be duped by charlatans or led astray by heretics." In this state, he completes the thought with "abounding in it with thanksgiving." The word "it" is referring to faith. It is in a sound and continuously established faith that we are to abound in thanksgiving. All the knowledge in the world can be heaped up, and it will not naturally lead to thanksgiving. However, when one is in Christ, and understands by faith that all goodness comes from Him, then thanksgiving will be the natural result.

Life application: Knowledge is a wonderful thing to possess, and the Bible would teach us to pursue knowledge, but it is only a beginning step to wisdom, or the right application of knowledge. When one is truly wise, they will apply their knowledge to the fear and pursuit of the Lord.