

Life in the Sphere of Christ

Colossians 2:6-7 provide a key pivot point in the flow of the epistle. These verses summarize what has preceded and prepare for what is to follow. The apostle Paul has established that the Son of God's love is Lord over creation (1:15-17), that He is Lord over the Church (1:18-20), that He is Lord over you and I (1:21-22), and that He is the center of God's mystery (1:27), therefore as you have received...so walk in, having been firmly rooted in Him (2:6-7).

The preposition “in” [ἐν] in itself states that the location is within the bounds [i.e. “in,” “inside”] marked by the word with which it occurs [i.e. Him].

We are to “continuously live our lives in the sphere of Christ.” “The Messiah Jesus the Lord” sets the boundary for our lives and we are to continue to live our lives within that boundary. We are to live our lives within the compass of Christ's personality, power, and purposes. Christ is the sphere circumscribing the entire life of the believer.

It is the historical Jesus who is both Christ and Lord that we have received (παρελάβετε, aorist active indicative), not merely embracing a religion but a relationship. Note the connection between believing and behaving- “as you have received...so walk.” We have received the teaching and instruction that has been handed down and the content of that tradition that was received is Christ Himself. The receiving of doctrine is not to be seen as an act that is cold and sterile, but warm and life giving because it is He whom we receive and not merely the doctrine. As we have received Him we are to continue to live in light of this vital relationship.

The verb “walk” (περιπατεῖτε) is a present active imperative indicating that we are to “continuously be living” in the sphere of Jesus who is both Christ and Lord. What beautiful imagery of life as a journey and we take it one step at a time but we do so in communion with Christ. The apostle Paul has brought out the need to cling to Christ by use of chiasmic structure (verb, noun, pronoun, verb) (“have received Christ Jesus the Lord, in Him continuously be walking”) affirming the need to continue in vital union with our Lord and Savior.

To ground them in encouragement and hearten them in their Christian growth before he goes on to deal with the error facing the church the apostle Paul lays out the truths in verse 7. The apostle reminds them that God has firmly rooted (ἐρριζωμένοι, perfect passive participle) them in Christ and He is continuing to build (ἐποικοδομούμενοι, present passive participle) them up in Him and confirm or secure (βεβαιούμενοι, present passive participle) them in the faith they were taught. God is even now mightily at work in our lives and we as they should continuously respond with overwhelming thanksgiving (περισσεύοντες) like a river overflowing its banks.

