

As You Received Him, Part Two

Colossians 2:6-7

Last week we took a look into the past. No, it wasn't a history lesson. We didn't discuss the wars of the world, or the spread of Christianity, or the development of this country as a nation. We didn't talk about the Great Depression, or when you could buy a Coke for a nickel, or when gasoline was considerably less than it is now. What we did examine in the past was that point in time when we received Jesus Christ into our lives, when we were born again in the Family of God.

We simply followed Paul's outline when he said, "*As you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*" And we asked ourselves, "How *did* I receive Christ into my life, and how does that affect the way I live right now?"

We saw that we received Jesus as *Lord*, primarily. He came into our hearts and lives as Lord, or He didn't come at all. Jesus wants all of you, or He doesn't want any of you. And it all depends on how much of ourselves we are willing to surrender. We also saw that we received Jesus as *Nourishment*. He is the One into Whom our lives are "rooted." Jesus is all we need to be fulfilled deep in our heart and lives. We have a Christ who satisfies!

But while Jesus is *Lord*, and while He is *Nourishment*, that wasn't all Paul had to say about the way we received Christ. And he says that the way we received Christ should determine the way we live for Christ today. We pick up with verse seven:

3 Jesus is our Foundation, v. 7

Paul says that not only are we to be "*rooted*" in Christ, but we are to be "*built up in him,*" as well. First, Paul used the metaphor of a tree rooted in the soil, and now he speaks of a building. The word translated "*built up*" is used to refer to a building's being constructed or being added to. The word Paul uses when he tells us we are "*rooted*" in Christ in verse six tells us that it is something that is accomplished once for all in the past, an event never to be repeated.

But the tense of this word—"*built up*"—tells us that this building process is to be constantly going on. Layer upon layer of our life with Christ must be added. It is never complete, never finished, while we live in these bodies. Someone has said that we should never think of the Christian life as a one- or two-story house, but as

a skyscraper with a deep foundation and reaching into the sky as the construction continues throughout all our lives.

In fact, we Christians could hang signs around our necks which read, “Under Construction,” and that would adequately define what is to be happening to us all the time. I’ve mentioned before that I have a little plaque which reads, “Please be patient. God is not finished with me yet!” I’m not all I can be—yet! I am not all God wants me to be—yet!

One of the great neglected truths of the walk in Christ is that becoming a Christian means that you are involved in a continuous process of becoming what God wants you to be. We make a serious mistake when we join the church, accept Jesus Christ as Lord, and then sit down and pretend that we’ve got it made. That is only the foundation. We are to be built up in Christ! And this building we speak of is not one of those pre-fabricated buildings. This building up into Christ is a gradual process, and it lasts an entire lifetime.

But every building needs a foundation. You can throw a lean-to shack up without a foundation, but if you want to build a building that will last a lifetime, you need a foundation. If our lives can be compared to a building, then Jesus is the Foundation and Jesus is the Cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19-21 reads, *“You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.”*

And just as the cornerstone and the foundation work together to hold up the building, even so Jesus is my Foundation. He holds me up. He is the Foundation upon which my life is built. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”* (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Listen to what Jesus said: *“Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been built upon the rock”* (Luke 6:47-48). Jesus is my Foundation!

When I received Him as Lord of my life, I cast my life upon Him. There the foundation was laid. Just as I received Him as Foundation of my life, Christ Jesus

the Lord is to be foundational to everything I do or say or think or believe. He is the basis for our lives; He holds us up. He is the only real and sole support of our lives. And just as any building must conform to the shape of its foundation, our lives must conform to Jesus.

If you know anything at all about typing, then you know that, using the touch system, you keep eight fingers on the keyboard on certain keys, called the “home” keys: A, S, D, F on the left, and J, K, L, and the semi-colon the right. Every time you strike a key, your fingers should automatically return to the “home” keys. But when the typist’s fingers are off the starting position by even one key, the result can be some pretty strange-looking words. If your fingers aren’t on the right keys to begin with, everything you write will be wrong. Even if you use the correct posture, the right motions with the fingers, and even if you do everything else right, if you don’t start on those foundational keys, you come out wrong.

That is why it is so important to live our lives with Jesus as Foundation. We accepted and received Him that way—why are we so prone to slide off the foundation? And if the proper foundation for your life has not been laid, then everything else you try to do in the Kingdom of God will turn out wrong. Perhaps that is why there is so much backsliding and unfaithfulness and quarreling and bickering in God’s House among God’s people today: *somewhere* there is a faulty foundation.

Our attitude should be that of the hymnwriter Edward Mote:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.
(The Solid Rock, 1832)*

God spoke through His prophet Isaiah: “*See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed*” (Isaiah 28:16). Jesus is my Foundation. He is the One Who shapes me and the One Who holds me up and gives support to my life. He was when I first believed, and He is now.

4 Jesus is our Strength, v. 7

There is one other thing that Paul wants to remind us about the way we received Christ. We received Him as *Lord*. We received Him as *Nourishment* when we rooted ourselves in Him. He is the *Foundation* for our lives. But He is also our *Strength*. We are to be “*strengthened in the faith*” as we were taught. The King James Version of this portion of the verse reads, “*stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.*”

The word Paul used here is very important, because he speaks of something that is so firmly established that it cannot be moved. It is firmly fastened. But look! Paul is not speaking about the Christian’s mind. He does not mean that Christians should have a closed mind, because he knew that a closed mind is inevitably followed by a closed heart.

And he didn’t mean that they should freeze their ideas and attitudes so hard that they could not be changed. What Paul says is very plain: “strengthened,” or “established” *in the faith*. Why is that so important? Faith is what gives us stability for our lives. Faith is what enables us to live nearer to the Lord today than we lived yesterday. Faith is what enables us to keep on getting stronger and stronger and stronger in the Lord.

It is so important that Christians be established in the Lord. We stray so much because we are not firmly fastened to Him. It is rather ironic that we human beings, of any age or description, become so firmly fastened to sports, or possessions, or opinions, or habits, or attitudes—but in many ways could not care less about being fastened firmly to Christ, about being established in Him.

The Psalmist wrote, “*He brought up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings*” (Psalm 40:2). And Isaiah told his people, “*In righteousness shalt thou be established...*” (54:14).

Jesus is our Strength! I am weak, but He is strong. My foot sometimes slips but He establishes my goings. He sets my feet on a solid rock, and keeps me from falling. He makes me strong on the inside, so that I can withstand anything and everything that the world or anybody else should fling at me. Ephesians 6:10 reads, “*Be strong in the Lord.*” He is our strength.

David wrote once, “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*” (Psalm 27:1). And again, “*The Lord is my strength and my shield...*” (Psalm 28:7). And still again:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). The Lord is the One Who strengthens us, and establishes us.

I received Him that way into my life when I was born again at fourteen years of age. He became my Strength when I surrendered my weakness. And He’s “proved it o’er and o’er” that He’s sufficient for every need, every weakness, every fear and every doubt that jumps up in my life. And just as we were so eager in the past to surrender to His Strength and give up our weakness, in the exact same way we are to be established in the faith **now!** This is the essence of the Christian life: that it is a present tense life, as well as a future tense life! And the way we accepted Christ in the past determines how we live for Christ in the present.

The words of a little poem come to mind:

When we look to man for help, we get the help of man.
When we trust society, we get its tangled plan.
When we depend upon ourselves, our impotence shows through.
But when in faith we turn to prayer, we get what God can do.

(Viola Jacobson Berg)

How often we human beings fail at this point! We like to think of ourselves as being strong, but we are really weak. And until we see that we are weak, we can never know the strength of Christ! As long as we insist on being strong in ourselves, the amazing strength of Christ will never become reality for us. It will just be something we read about in the Psalms, or hear in a sermon, or read in a book, or hear others talk about. And when our world caves in around us, we cave in with it. The Strength of Christ is there to pick us up and hold us up and keep us going.

And it is faith in that Strength that firmly establishes us so that we shall not be moved.

Today we’ve thought more about the way we received Christ, and I strongly urge and encourage you to allow the way you received Christ to affect the way you live your life for Him **now!**

You received Jesus as Lord—live that way! You received Him as Nourishment for your spirit—live that way! You received Him as the Foundation for your life—live that way! You received Christ Jesus as the Strength of your life—live that way!

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.