

:00 (6) Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith --- just as you were taught --- abounding in thanksgiving.

(8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ!

(9) For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

(11) In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hand, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

(13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.

Think on these things:

- 1) “Walking” in the Lord (v.6) refers to daily living as a Christian. “Abounding in thanksgiving” (v.7) arises from spiritual stability and recognizing God’s engagement in life everywhere. Being well-rooted brings to mind Psalm 1:1-3. Now consider Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 2:15 and 3:16. From these verses and your own thoughts, share some ideas on becoming “established in the faith.”

Psalms speaks about avoiding bad company and taking time to meditate on God’s Word. Acts speaks to God’s Word building us up. 2 Timothy 2 says believers should strive to obtain God’s approval on how they understand and apply God’s Word, which, from 2 Timothy 3, is deemed profitable for believer’s instruction, reproof, correction and training in righteousness. Other ideas might include faithful attendance in church and Bible studies, etc....

- 2) Paul’s concern is that believers might be deceived – beguiled or duped – by competing ideas and existing religious traditions emphasized in our world. The reference to “elemental spirits” in v.8 links these ideas to demonic origin and/or influence. Can you think of some worldly ideas or traditions that might lead to people abandoning their faith in Christ? One example is 1 Timothy 6:10, others might be Darwinism or Bahai teachings. What is Paul’s admonition in v.8a?

Perhaps fringe religions that acknowledge Jesus differently from the Christian Bible, such as one of many teachers (Bahai), one of many prophets (Muslim/Jehovah Witness), or one who evangelized the American continent after His Jerusalem death and resurrection (Mormons). Then there are those comparing scientific explanations of life’s origin to God’s creation, which is embraced by our public school systems. Paul’s admonition is to not let ourselves be caught up in these philosophies and deceptions arising from human origins

Admonition? (2 Timothy 4:3-4) People will leave sound instruction from God’s Word to find teachers whom they agree with, who inspire their passions, and end up following myths.

- 3) Jesus is **God (fullness of deity)** in the flesh (v.9). Consider John 1:14 and Philippians 2:6-7.

- 4) Which ruler or authority on earth is greater than Jesus? Consider Philippians 2:9-11.

Jesus is “above” all other names and authorities. Everyone will confess that Jesus is LORD.

- 5) Circumcision is a “covenant” confirmation for the Jews (Genesis 17:3-14). Here in vs. 11-12, as also in Romans 9:6-8, we learn a broader application of being circumcised --- and it now includes females! 😊 Referred to as the Circumcision of Christ, a deeper purpose is disclosed to identify the true descendants of Abraham. Define what this new circumcision is all about, and also how it is explained through baptism. Consider also Romans 2:29 and 6:11-14.

Christ’s Circumcision? **The “circumcision of Christ” is a term to describe believers putting off our body of flesh in order to serve Christ. Romans 2 says this circumcision is a “matter of the heart, by the Spirit.” Romans 6 says we must consider ourselves dead to sin and not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. We are to present ourselves as being raised from death to life.**

Baptism Reveals? **In the practice of baptism, a believer is “buried” with Christ when put under the water, and then “raised” with Christ as we emerge from the water.**

- 6) Before we are saved, how does Paul describe us in v.13a?

Paul says we were dead in our sins (trespasses) and our uncircumcised flesh (the heart).

- 7) Do you remember Jesus speaking to Nicodemus in John 3:3? What does Paul say God does for us in salvation (v.13)?

In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus he must be “born again” to see the Kingdom of God. Paul says that when God finds seekers dead in their trespasses, He makes them alive together with Him and forgives us their sins.

- 8) Describe the picture language of v.14 expressing how God deals with the “list” of our sins (“debts”) each of us has accumulated according to the written code (NIV). Does this visual help you to see that your sins --- and my sins --- put Jesus on the cross?

The “paper” citing all our sinful failures and the penalty (death) we need to pay for them is nailed to the cross of Jesus. With this, the legal demands against us are set aside. Everyone who has been forgiven has his/her “paper” nailed to Christ’s cross...!

- 9) Crucifixion is a humiliating and painful execution, but it was God the Father’s plan all along. Jesus endured that public shame to save the world. The Father used the “result” of Jesus’ sacrifice to reconcile the world to Himself, and to put worldly rulers and authorities to shame (v.15). What does 1 Corinthians 2:1, 8, tell us about earth’s rulers?

Earth’s rulers (in particular, Satan) would NOT have allowed the crucifixion of Jesus if they understood this was God’s plan of salvation from the very beginning. They thought putting Him to a humiliating death was their triumph over God --- but it was exactly the opposite!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: