

Sermon Text from 1/31/2010

Riverside Home Group Discussion Guide*

Christ is Enough: 6 And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. 7 Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. 8 Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. 9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. 11 When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. 12 For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. 13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

16 So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. 17 For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. 18 Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, 19 and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

20 You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 21 "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!?" 22 Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. 23 These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

Colossians 2:6-23 (NLT)

Note: This might be a good passage to break up over two weeks instead of one: 1. Fullness/pursuit of Jesus (Live it Out) 2. Temptation to digress from or add to (Be On Guard)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- How have you heard this question completed: "To be spiritually mature, a Christian must..."

Observation (what does the text say?)

- What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?
- V.6&7 have strong verbs and images. What are they and how does each of them help picture true spiritual growth? (application) Which of these connects best to your experience; why/how?
- V.9-10 paint a great picture of Jesus' identity. What is it, and how does it compare/augment the passages previously found in Colossians?
- V.8 gives a glimpse of the heresy being taught to the Colossians. What was wrong with this false teaching?
- Note: For Rome, every crucifixion was a symbolic triumph for Rome. Now read v.14-15 again. Paul never gets tired of relishing the glorious paradox of the cross.
- V.16-23 detail the "shadows" that the Colossians were adding to the "reality" they had found in Christ. What are these shadows or false teachings? (application) What "shadows" are we tempted to add today?

Interpretation (what does it mean?)

- Why is it important for Jesus to take care of our sinful nature (v.11) as well as our sins (v.13)?
- How does circumcision and baptism paint the picture of Christ work in us? (note: In circumcision, "putting off" a small piece of human flesh is trivial by comparison of "putting off" and entire way of life... which is reflected in the image of baptism in this Colossians passage).
- What ideas or practices have you encountered that suggest we need to add something to our faith besides Jesus to make us "true" or "total Christians?" Why do such humanly conceived additions to the gospel and to life appeal to us (v.18-19, 22-23)?
- Why are these additions (including legalism) useless in making us spiritually mature or more complete in Christ (v.22-23). Why, according to v.23, do they have such an appeal then? Contrast them with what characterizes the life of a true Christian (v.6-7, as well as the beginning of ch.3)

Application (what does it mean to me/us?)

- V.6-7 paints a great picture of what it means to Follow Jesus. How can you/we make this a reality for us on a daily basis (coupled with the warning in v. 21-23)?
- V.10 says we are "complete through your union with Christ." How do you respond to the idea of being complete or having fullness in Christ?
- V.11-15 describes some of what "fullness in Christ" means. Think about the most basic needs (acceptance, belonging, significance, forgiveness, purpose, love...). Which of these needs has Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection fulfilled for you? How have you practically experienced these through Jesus?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Celebrate the completeness we have in Christ. Pray for discernment to recognize false teachers who try to impose anything in addition to Christ. Pray for a pursuit of Jesus that mirrors v.6-7, to live daily with your focus on Jesus
- **Respond:** Spend this week thanking God for all you have because you have received Christ. Recall what that includes from this passage as well as Colossians 1:15-22 and 2:2-3
Read this week v.9-15 and insert your name every time Paul says "you" or "us." Journal how these facts affect your view of yourself.
Memorize portions of this passage this week (v.6-7?) to allow the wonder of being complete in Jesus saturate your heart and mind.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (2/7/2010) will focus on the Vision for Riverside's "Next step in the journey" (10am at the Resurrection Lutheran Academy). Then the following week's sermon (2/14/2010) will focus on Colossians 3:1-11. Take time prior to next Sunday praying about your role in Riverside, and then read & study the 2/14/2010 passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." **There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time.** These guides rely heavily upon James Reapsome's &/or N.T. Wright's study guides on Colossians & Philemon (ISBN 9780830830145 & 9780830821921), as well as Ryan Roeder's 2005 discussion guides on Colossians & Philemon.