

Why To Persevere

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 November 2014

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Colossians 2, and we'll be reading verses 6-15. So then, just as you received Christ as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and build up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.

For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

In Him you were also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with the circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us.

[1:26] He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Well, we all need to reset sometimes, don't we, to get back on track when we've gone off, lost discipline, lost focus, something, and we need to get back to where we were.

Remember, I don't generally eat very well on vacation. Well, I eat well, but I don't eat well. And so when you get back, when I get back, first thing I have to do is get back to eating strict or more strictly.

And we need to reset, realign, get back to where we were. And spiritually, we need to do that sometimes too, don't we? It seems like the Christian life is a constant process of getting off track and then getting back on track.

Well, the passage in front of us is great for that. This section of Colossians is all about staying the course, keeping focused, not getting distracted, staying lined up, marching along as we ought to.

[2:46] Verse 6 said, he says, just as you receive Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him. This is this great duty that we have to continue to live in Jesus Christ.

That's the positive. In verse 8, he gives us the negative. Don't be aware of, don't get caught by these hollow and deceptive philosophies. And now Paul gives us the reason for those two commandments.

Verses 6, 7, and 8. Those two commands to receive, as you received him, continue to live in him and don't get distracted by anything else. Paul gives us the reasons why.

And I think we need those whys. We need to hear why. Why we ought to do that. Because even Christian books can be very long on the how or the what and do this and don't do that.

Put on this. Don't put on that. But we need more than just what to do. We need, why am I to do it? A lot of times our problem is not understanding what our duty is.

[3:54] A lot of times our problem is motivation and spiritual strength. And so tell me how. And so Paul gives us the good news.

He gives us the gospel. He's going to tell us why we need to stay in Christ. It's because of who Jesus Christ is. And so Paul gives us these two big truths in verses 9 and 10.

It's remember who Christ is. Why should you avoid and be aware of all those false and hollow philosophies? It's because of who Christ is.

And then secondly, remember what you have in Christ. Remember who Christ is. Remember what you have in Christ. Those are these two big truths, this bedrock for why we are to keep living for Christ and him alone.

But we're only going to get to the first one today. Remembering who Jesus Christ is. And that's verse 9. Verse 9 is the first big truth that we need to think about if we're going to get reset, realigned in our Christian life.

[5:01] He says, For, and so he's given us the reasons for what he's talked about before. For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form.

Well, every Christmas is an opportunity to remember this great truth. That in Christ, all the fullness of deity dwells, lives in bodily form.

But I think we need to remember this truth. And every month, not just December. I need to be thinking about the incarnation today and tomorrow.

And maybe some of my problems that I was facing yesterday and some of my falls yesterday were because I wasn't thinking about the fact that Jesus Christ is no ordinary Savior.

But he is God in the flesh and what God has done in order to save me. And so that's what Paul is doing here.

[6:01] He wants to fill us up with the glory of Jesus Christ. He wants to fill our minds with that. Let me put it this way. Husbands and wives, have you ever, husbands or wives, have you ever went into the bedroom and there's your spouse reading a book?

And you say something, you have something you need to tell her or tell him. And so you start talking and you talk and talk. And then you look over and that person is not paying attention to you at all.

You've said all this stuff and they haven't heard a single word because their minds are so engrossed. She's so engrossed. He's so engrossed in this book. She's in it.

There's no room for you in her brain. You were talking, but it wasn't getting through. Or maybe kids, you've been playing a video game and you're down to that last guy, you know, or the final one or the big boss.

And you're fighting him and you're in it. And your mom, not knowing what's going on, tells you to go put your shoes away. And you don't hear her. Now, I'm not taking your side in this.

[7:11] You need to hear her. You need to hear her. But you know what I'm talking about. Where you're in it, you're focused, you're mesmerized. All your heart's there.

All your mind is right there. That's what Paul wants us to do. He wants us to be all in with who Jesus Christ is. So he's going to tell us about how great Jesus is and what he's done for us.

He's already talked about that one time. Now he's coming right back to it. Remember who Christ is. He wants us to be so mesmerized with Jesus Christ that when those hollow and deceptive philosophies come by, we don't have any room for them.

We have no need for them. We don't even hear them. Because we're so satisfied with who Jesus is and what we have in him. And so when the world is starting to show us their goods and what they can offer us and their endless vanity fair, we won't be interested in buying.

Because we have a treasure in Jesus Christ that the world cannot even understand. That's what Paul wants us to do. He wants us to remember who Christ is.

[8:24] He's the fullness of the deity in bodily form. He's not partially God. He's not God-like.

He is not almost God. He's not the first created being. He is the fullness of deity. He is a big enough person that all of God and all of his attributes can fit into him.

Everything that it means to be God. Every attribute that it means to be God. He is. So he's all-powerful.

Omnipotent. And that simply means he has all the power he needs to do everything and anything that he wants. So he blinks.

And he can make a galaxy disappear. We saw evidence of his power this morning. Men can't subdue this demoniac.

[9:30] And yet Jesus brings them to his senses with a word. In the gospels you see Jesus speaking. And a sick man miles away gets better.

Now obviously there was no power necessarily in the sound coming from his mouth. But it was just the mere wish, the thought. That man was healed. He speaks to devils and they cringe in horror.

He's all-knowing. Simon the Pharisee had a dinner and Jesus was there. And a woman came in. An unclean, an evil woman came in. And she was washing his feet.

And Simon the Pharisee thought to himself. Thought to himself. Look at Jesus. If he knew who that woman was and what she has done. Then he wouldn't let her be touching him.

He'd never let her touch him. And I love what it says next. And Jesus answered him. The man thought. And Jesus answered out loud.

[10 : 39] He knew. He knows. He knows everything about you. Psalm 139. He knew you in your mother's womb. He knew every day that you would live.

He knew every word that you were going to speak. He knows the thoughts and the intents of your heart. And so your heart, the Bible paints it as this deep abyss.

And who can know it? But you're a picture book to Jesus. He doesn't struggle to read you.

To understand the things that you're doing and why you're doing it. You know, I don't struggle to read the cat in the hat to Cademan. No problem. It's easy. And he doesn't struggle to read my heart.

He knows me. He knows you. He's eternal. He says, before Abraham was, I am. I am. Eternal.

[11 : 42] Self-existing. Never created. There was never a time when he wasn't. He was never made. He's the alpha and the omega. He is God. And then it says he lives in bodily form.

Augustine says it so well. Man's maker was made man. That he, ruler of the stars, might nurse at his mother's breast.

That the bread might hunger. The fountain thirst. The light sleep. The way be tired on its journey.

That the truth might be accused of false witness. The teacher be beaten with whips. The foundation be suspended on wood.

That strength might grow weak. That the healer might be wounded. That life might die. And he learned by what he suffered.

[12 : 47] He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. And so he knows what it's like to be tired. And thirsty. And hungry.

And he knows disappointments. And he knows betrayal. And his heart broke when his disciples ran away in the night. And his heart broke when he saw Peter.

And he looked and he saw Peter denying that he even knew Jesus. I don't know that man.

Everything you have gone through. He's gone through.

And it says that he lives in bodily form. Not that he lived in bodily form. Not that he gave up that body. But he lives in bodily form.

And so before God in heaven right now is a man. And it will be a man who welcomes us home. And it will be a man who wipes away every tear from our eyes.

[13 : 49] It's a man who prays for us. It's a man who still holds out nail pierced hands before his father. It is a man that will judge both men and angels.

It's a man. God is not the man upstairs. But there is a man up there.

There's a man upstairs. A man who labored with sweat and strain. Agonized through a hell of pain.

Long years for his family. There's a man I know up there.

One who said farewell to ease. Tasked himself like Hercules. For sisters and for brothers. For weakened, wayward mothers. And the fathers who abused.

Their blessings. Lost, confused. There's a godly man upstairs. I know his name. Not yet his face. He's earned his rest.

[14 : 48] None more. But he's working still. He'll build until my home is all prepared. For once my heart had dared to trust this workman's skill. I knew his work in me he'd fulfill.

There's a man like me up there. Who could have saved himself from slaves' humiliation. Loss of privilege in the bitter cross. But no reward awaited him downstairs. Here where dragons roam.

And the drudgery finds its wretched home. Where his very kin berated him. And a felon's treatment faded him. And a father to Hades traded him.

There's a reborn man upstairs. One whose work could not be cursed. Or ever undone or reversed. But ever counts for me. When all of mine disqualified.

Lies burned to ash all swept aside. This workman took a throne upstairs. Where he, second to none. Works all things for my good. Hears my complaints and writes in blood.

[15 : 48] The notes that buy me free. And pledges me the golden key to enter in. And live with him upstairs. And Paul says, now who will you compare him to?

Who's his equal? And who else do you need besides him? So whatever problem you have, you can bring it to him. And whatever doubt you have, you can bring it to him.

And whatever fear you have, you can bring it to him. What weakness? What concern? You can bring it to Jesus. And so do you need a savior?

Jesus is the perfect savior. Invincible, cosmic power. In the heart of someone who knows what it is to suffer.

In the distress of human condition. He's perfect for us. He's so strong. And he's so close. He's the perfect savior for sinners. He can save you from the guilt and the condemnation of your sin.

[16:51] And so have you wasted your life? And selfishness and wickedness. Well, he lived a perfect life of love.

He was born under the law. He was put under the law that said do and live, don't do and die. And this man, as a man, he obeyed. He obeyed perfectly.

So children, listen to me. He was a little boy. And he obeyed his mom and dad when they weren't perfect.

He was perfect for them. That little boy was obeying to save his mommy and daddy from hell. And when his brothers and sisters were selfish and unfair, he loved them.

And I know that's hard. But he did it. And you know all the things that your parents tell you to do and God tells you to do and that you find so difficult.

[17:54] And that you can't do and that you don't do. He did. And as a boy and then as a teenager and as a man, he obeyed. But at the law, but at the end of that long life of obedience.

He didn't receive God's blessing. God's well done. He didn't enter into heaven and rest. At the end, he was mistreated and judged and condemned.

And then at the end, God says, now lay down your life for your people. Die for them. Suffer in their place. Your life for theirs. To spare them from death, you must die.

And so he suffered. As the God man, he suffered. And so that suffering is of infinite worth and infinite glory.

And there's no end to its power. That's why millions and millions of sinners have believed and have been saved. Because there's no end to its worth. And his blood can cover a multitude.

[18:56] A multitude of sinners and a multitude of sin. Because it wasn't for pretend sinners. It was for real sinners. And it wasn't for little sinners.

It was for big sinners. With big problems. Like you. Your problems. My problems. My sin. And so, do you have sin? You can bring it to Jesus. Because he's God.

He's man. You can lean all your weight on Jesus Christ. He's the fullness of deity. Living in body. Bodily form. And he's mighty to save.

But he doesn't only save from the guilt of sin. He can save from the power of sin. The power of sin. From the sin that works death.

The wages of sin is death. And so you feel its power. And you're a slave to it. He can break you. Break that slavery.

[19:52] Because his death and weakness was the working of his mighty strength. See, sin and death swallowed more than it could handle when it swallowed him up.

I saw a National Geographic video this week. And it was of this poisonous newt.

So a little amphibian newt lizard-like thing. And it was crawling on the shore of some pond. And it crawled right in front of a big frog.

And the big frog just swallowed the whole newt. Swallowed the newt whole. And then there was. It was a race. The frog's stomach acids.

Versus the newt's poison. Well, the frog hopped away. Crawled away. Apparently the victor. And all of a sudden dropped dead.

[20:54] And out of his mouth the newt walked away. Christ destroyed death from the inside.

By being swallowed up. It swallowed him whole on the cross. He became sin. And death devoured him. And for three days he was in the belly of the whale. And on the third day he walked out of the grave's mouth.

And he crushed death to death. And so sin. The power of sin. Death. Life. At his feet. Broken. Behind him. Destroyed. And now that God man lives.

He's alive. And he's on the other side. And so that means you can bring whatever sin you have. That stubborn sin. That difficult bit of obedience.

You can bring it to Jesus. Because he's broken the power of sin. And so you don't have to go off on your own. And try to manage it on your own.

[21:57] They're going to talk about different rules. And different things that you can do to get rid of this sin. And to gain some sort of power over restraining. Central indulgence is going to talk about.

And Paul says you don't need any of that. You have Jesus Christ. God living in the flesh. So bring it to him. So what need?

What doubt? What fear do you have? Fear of the future? What despair? You can bring it to Jesus. You can bring it all to Jesus. You can bring your past to him.

Your past. Is there some deep shame that lives in your past? Some deep hurt? Some abuse?

You can bring it to Jesus. The God-man hung naked on the tree. And he scorned the shame of the cross.

[22:56] But that is not to say there was no shame there. That he felt nothing. The cross was the ultimate abuse and victimization. And they were soldiers who were standing there.

And we would be naive to think if they left him his dignity. And it's right that we should even be embarrassed to think about these things.

Because they are shameful. But they happened. And the God-man knows shame. But he did not let shame have the final word. It's not just him saying, yes, I know how you feel.

He endured the shame. But in his shame, he covered our shame. You remember Adam and Eve. Their eyes were open.

And they saw their nakedness. And they were ashamed. And nothing they could do could make it go away. Nothing they could do. Nothing they could sew together could fix it. And God killed some animals.

[24:00] And dressed those animals in their... Or dressed Adam and Eve in their skins. A sacrifice covered their shame. And so in love, God didn't cover his eyes to Adam and Eve's nakedness.

In love, he covered them. And so dear Christian, if you are in Christ, you're not undressed. You're not alone. Jesus endured the shame of the cross to dress you in his righteousness.

And so the eyes of God in heaven, the eyes that pierce every shadow, when he looks upon you, sees righteousness.

Because of what Jesus did. And it's a righteousness that God himself cannot see through. Because it's his righteousness. And so you are covered.

Maybe it's not shame. Maybe it's guilt. A bit of sin that still haunts you from a long time ago. That Satan himself can bring up and say, yeah, you pretend to be good.

[25:08] You come here. You act good. But we know what you did. We both know what you did. You can bring that to Jesus. Because who was it on the cross?

And this is why it makes all the difference. Who was on the cross? It was the God man on the cross. And the son of God. And if he dies for sin, then what can Satan say?

He shuts the accuser's mouth. And so if Jesus dies for my sin, then isn't that enough? What more can God ask?

Justice is satisfied. To look on him and pardon me. So bring your past to him. Bring your present to him. What are you facing right now? What sorrow?

What weariness? What frustration? You can take those things, whatever they be. Take them up. And let's bring them into the light of who Jesus is.

[26:10] So what does the incarnation tell us about God's love for you, Christian? What does the incarnation tell you about God's love for you?

That the creator stooped to become the creature. To care for you. It tells you that you are loved. Whatever is going on now, there is something in your past, something so phenomenal of God's love that God became man.

The son of God became man. And so what does the incarnation tell you about the extremes that God will do to do you good? God. So let's just leave the cross off, which is the ultimate extreme demonstration of God's love for us.

But those trials seem extreme. And maybe they are extreme. And they seem so drastic sometimes. And we wonder, do I have to really go through all of this?

But God himself does drastic things in order to love you. The son of God became man in order to love you. That's not expected.

[27:28] That's not normal. That's not ordinary. He's not doing things in the way that would fit our conception of what would be helpful and what possibly could he do.

He goes far beyond that. He's not a tame lion. But he is good. Well, maybe it's communication. So this is a common problem.

Loneliness. Misunderstanding. So there you are. You're talking past each other. You're not hearing one another. Or they're not hearing you.

Parents, do you ever feel like you don't know what to say to your children? You don't know what to say to your teenager. You can't talk to them. And you struggle to know what to say. And maybe you feel like, I'm not being heard.

I'm being misunderstood. Well, Jesus talked and talked. And he was often misunderstood.

Sometimes, like the Pharisees, they misunderstood him on purpose.

[28 : 31] After a while, they don't like what he says. And so you bend everything that he says.

Sometimes it was like the disciples. They weren't able to understand. He tells them something and it doesn't make any sense to them.

But you can put yourself into his shoes. How lonely that must have been. With so few people and hardly anyone who could understand him.

But he's not just there in heaven saying, yes, yes, I know. I know what that's like. But what can you do? He's able to give you wisdom.

He's able to give you grace and patience to keep at it. To keep at those difficult communication.

Those difficult relationships. To keep at it when you struggle. When no one understands.

See, it's good news right now. That Jesus Christ is there. And he's available to us. And so we aren't alone in the middle of our communication problems.

[29 : 28] We're not alone in the middle of our relationship problems. The word became flesh. The very word of God became flesh.

And so he can help you. Bring your future to Christ. Bring your future to Christ. What does the future hold for our nation?

What does the future hold for our culture? Unless something amazing happens, it's not going to be good for us. But we can bring that future to Jesus Christ.

You can bring your own personal future to Jesus. We all face and are facing old age.

And it comes on us day by day. There's no cure for the common birthday, is there? And you get older. And so, how will you make it through those dark years?

[30 : 35] When the days of trouble come and the years approach. When you will say, I find no pleasure in them. Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark.

And the clouds return after the rain. What will get me, what will get you through that with your faith intact? With your hope still strong.

Without bitter regrets. Without saying in despair, all my life is gone. And you're miserable. What's going to get us through there where we are bearing fruit down to old age?

Well, it's this. The fullness of the deity lives in bodily form. He's alive now. He's not just an idea.

He's not just words on paper. He is alive in heaven right now.

But he was once dead. But he is now alive. And just as we have borne the image, the likeness of the earthly man. We will, we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

[31 : 39] Old age is a temporary passing stage for the Christian. But eternal life is in Jesus Christ. Second Timothy, Paul says that Jesus brought life and light and immortality.

Immortality, our life and immortality to light through the gospel. Life and immortality to light through the gospel. It's in him.

The promise of life is in him. And so if my hope and my faith is holding on to Jesus Christ, even as I age and even as this world wears away, I still can have hope.

Because it's in him. So God is in the flesh. So bring your past to him. Bring your present to him.

Bring your future to him.

And this week, let's strive to do that. To bring all of our circumstances to him. Bring it in light of this great truth. That in Christ, the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form.

[32 : 42] And so we can bring our successes and our trials, our difficulties, our circumstances, whatever they are. Bring them to Jesus. And let's live in the light of this great truth this week.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I do pray that you would help us to do this exact thing.

That every day we would wake up and remember that we are not alone. But you have looked upon us and had mercy.

You know and you knew our trouble and our distress and our slavery. And you sent a mighty redeemer for us.

Help us to remember that. Help us to remember that. So that we don't lose heart. So that we don't give in to sin. That we don't give in to unbelief. And start trying to manufacture some sort of spiritual strength that we don't have.

[33:49] Help us to live entirely and only on Jesus. Will you increase our faith? Holy Spirit, open our eyes that we might see unseen things.

That we might put our hearts in heaven. Where Jesus is. Seated at the right hand of God. Help our hearts and our minds to be constantly running there this week.

Thank you that there is a mighty Savior for sinners. Will you please bring salvation. Bring salvation from the power of sin in people's lives.

Bring salvation from the guilt of sin. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, we're going to close with hymn number 145.

Come thou long expected Jesus. Hymn 145. It is a Christmas hymn. And I'm not trying to act like Walmart and pull out the Christmas decorations already.

[34:55] But. God becoming man is something we're celebrating all year long. Let's stand and sing. 145. 5. 5. 5.

5.