

Living Upon and For Christ

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Well, take your Bibles and turn to the New Testament book of Colossians. Colossians chapter 1. We're going to begin reading in verse 16 and read through verse 28.

Verse 16. For by him, that is Jesus Christ, all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

He is before all things and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

[1 : 08] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you wholly in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church.

I become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness. The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

[2 : 18] To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

To this end, I labor struggling with all his energy, which is which so powerfully works in me. What's in a preposition?

They're often just little parts of speech, but sometimes they hold rich veins of truth that help us live the Christian life.

And that's what I have found in three prepositions that I want to set before you this morning. And first, a little grammar lesson might be in order. Some of us, it's been a long time since we knew and studied what a preposition is.

[3 : 19] Prepositions. And I'll admit my definition may not satisfy some of you school teachers and English majors, but I hope that it will at least point out one of the primary functions.

Prepositions are a class of words that describe the relation between two or more persons or things. They describe the relation between two objects.

So take the preposition upon, upon. My Bible is upon the pulpit, isn't it?

The preposition is upon. And it tells you where my Bible is in relation to the pulpit. It's not under it.

It's not beside it. It's not in it. It's upon it. And the three prepositions that I am setting before you today are used to describe the relation between you, the believer, and Jesus Christ.

[4 : 26] Or even more pointedly, these three prepositions are used to describe the way you live in relation to the person of Jesus Christ.

You're to live upon him. You're to live for him. And you're to live with him.

Those are the three. Small words, only a few letters, yet conveying precious truths for life. So let's begin. We are to live upon Christ.

Let me give you three ways that we do that. The Bible says that living upon Christ is like building a house upon a foundation.

Now we know the importance of building a house upon a solid foundation. Something that can withstand the storms and winds and still be found standing at last.

[5 : 24] And that's the kind of foundation we need for our lives and all the storms that we must face. Now where will we find such a foundation? Well, God himself has graciously provided that sure foundation.

Isaiah 28, 16. Speaking of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, God says, this is what the sovereign Lord says.

See, I lay a stone in Zion, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation. The one who trusts will never be disappointed.

You see, the one who places their faith upon this person, Jesus Christ, will never get to the point in his life or in the next life where he says, you know, I really blew it.

I'm disappointed that I ever built my trust in Jesus Christ. Built my life upon him. No, he will be the sure foundation for your times.

[6 : 30] Isaiah 33 and verse 6. There simply is no other foundation upon which to build your life that is sure.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3, 11, for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So then to live is to build. You are building. But what are you building upon? What is the foundation for your life? I want to ask you, first of all, what are you building your hope of heaven upon?

Your hope of heaven. Are you going to heaven? You say, I hope so. Well, what have you built that hope upon? Here's your hope.

Well, what have you built it upon, that hope that when you die, you will go to heaven? Well, I go to church. I give money to the church.

[7 : 32] I have been baptized. I try to live by the golden rule and treat my neighbor as I would want to be treated myself. And I really work and do my best at the Ten Commandments.

And I must say, oh, so you're building your hope of heaven upon what you do. And I must tell you, that foundation will not stand.

It will not stand. For salvation is by grace, through faith, not of our works, lest any man should boast. Not of works of righteousness, which we have done.

But it's his mercy and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ. So we must build our hope of salvation upon what Jesus alone has done for helpless and hopeless sinners like us.

In Christ alone, my hope is found. He is my trust. This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

[8 : 44] That's it. And so, if you're building your hope of heaven upon what you've done, I plead with you to abandon that faulty foundation. And to build upon the sure foundation.

Confess your self-help salvation. Confess forever even thinking that your works could make you right with a holy God.

And put all your trust upon Christ alone. His perfect life, his atoning death. Because it's upon a life I did not live.

And it's upon a death I did not die. Another's life, another's life, another's death. That I trust my whole eternity. I put all my weight upon what another has done for me.

That's the sure foundation. What Jesus has done for sinners. Upon Christ, the solid rock. I stand.

[9 : 45] And all other ground is sinking sand. So that's how the Christian life begins. We build our hope of heaven upon Christ alone. And that's how the Christian life continues all the way.

Trusting and building upon Christ. So, to build upon Christ, to live upon Christ is first of all, to build our hope of heaven upon him.

But secondly, to live upon Christ. We live upon him by building our lives upon his word. Now that we are saved, we build our lives upon his word.

So how are you going to live your life? Your day by day life? Upon worldly wisdom? Or upon God's wisdom? Upon what the smart and successful people of this world are saying?

Or upon what God is saying? Upon your own ideas of what's right in your own eyes? Or upon God's revealed wisdom in his word?

[10 : 58] Matthew 5 through 7 records the Sermon on the Mount. That precious sermon that our Savior preached. And Jesus, the very wisdom of God incarnate, laid down truth after truth, command after command in that sermon.

And they were words not just to be heard. But to be taken on board. And believed and obeyed. And acted upon.

Lived upon. That's what they were for. And so before he dismisses the crowd, as he gets to the end of his sermon, he says, therefore.

Here's the conclusion of the matter. Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.

Are you putting his word into practice in your life? You are building your life upon the rock that cannot move.

[12 : 05] And though the rains come down and the streams rise and the winds blow and beat against your heart, your house. It will not fall. It will not fall.

Because it has its foundation upon the rock of Christ and his word. What a blessing to have this book.

You know, it was different for the foolish man. He built his life upon sand. Not upon the word and wisdom of God, but upon the wisdom of man. And so in the storm it fell with a great crash.

Man's wisdom will give you little help in this life and none for the next. Nothing at all to make you stand in that final storm of God's judgment when you stand before your maker and give an account of your life.

So I say, what is the privilege to have the word of Christ in our own language? Here in the scriptures.

[13 : 06] Here is truth. Here is something solid to build upon. It's not the ever-changing ideas of man. You hear this being propounded as truth one day and then, oh no, no, this is the truth.

And people are building their lives on things as changing as men's opinion. No, it's not the ever-changing ideas of men. It's the law of the Lord that is perfect. That's flawless.

That's forever settled in heaven. The unchanged and unchanging truth of God. It's not the discoveries of fallible man.

What man has discovered by his thought. Searching for truth. No, it's the proclamation of God to man. It's God telling us what is real and what is true.

And it comes from him who is the truth and cannot lie. So we not only build our hope of heaven upon Christ, we build our lives upon Christ in what he has said to us in his word.

[14 : 15] Everything you need to know for life and godliness is here. Everything. Are you building everything you do upon Christ's word?

That's why the Bible should be our favorite book. That we should read and meditate on day and night. That we might build each part of our lives upon him.

Stone by stone. Brick by brick. Truth by truth. Word by word. Day by day. We build our lives upon his word. And then living upon Christ, thirdly, means living in dependence upon Christ for everything.

Living not upon your own resources, but living upon Christ and his resources. So we come into this world leaning on our own understanding.

Leaning on our own wisdom. Wisdom. Leaning upon our money, our strength, our goodness, our experience, our ingenuity, our ability to get ourselves out of problems, and our ability to succeed.

[15 : 29] We lean upon ourselves. God's charge against Judah in Ezekiel 33, 26 is, you rely upon your sword.

You see, it's the question of upon. What is your trust upon? What is that, the relation between you and the thing you trust? Well, you rely upon your sword, upon your skill in battle, your superior military might.

That's what you trust in to win the day. Jeremiah 17, 5 says, Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends upon flesh for his strength.

That's where the weight of his dependence is. It's upon his own flesh. But the Christian life, in the Christian life, we're learning to not lean upon the flesh and the strength that we have, but learning to depend upon him.

A chorus of an old Fanny Crosby hymn puts it well, Not in the might of failing flesh, nor in my own righteousness, not in my strength, but thine alone I carry on.

[16 : 53] But it's not just that we trust upon our own strength and upon ourselves. We can also put our trust in other helpers other than Christ and make saviors out of them, expecting help from them without expecting help from God.

We can do that with doctors and medications. We can be trusting upon them and not God. That doesn't mean we don't go to the doctors, but it means that our trust is first and foremost upon the Lord.

Even in the matters of our health, we can trust upon others who are stronger and wiser than us. We can trust in those we know. You know, Israel was constantly falling into this sin when coming upon hard times.

You know, the Lord many times disciplined them by bringing other nations in battle against them, nations stronger than them. And it was a point of trust. So what are they going to lean upon?

Where are they going to put their trust and dependence? And instead of repenting and seeking the Lord and depending upon him to protect them, what did they do?

[18 : 09] They ran off to Assyria. Come and help us. We'll empty our treasures and give you all that we have. You just come and help us. Or down to Egypt and depended upon Egypt for help.

And so they kept finding that they were really no help at all. They even turned to other gods for help, depending upon other gods.

By contrast, the Bible commends those who depended upon the Lord. 2 Chronicles 13, 18, the men of Judah were victorious because they relied upon the Lord, the God of their fathers.

That's where their reliance was. The weight of their trust was upon him. Not substitute saviors, not themselves, but upon the Lord.

So where really is our reliance? You know, that's a slippery one to answer. We can deceive ourselves and think that we are trusting upon the Lord when, in fact, we're not.

[19 : 16] So let me give you a few helps to determining what it is we are depending upon. Who's your first go-to when in need?

Your first go-to. Who do we run to and tell first? Do we first tell it to Jesus? Do we first run to him and acknowledge that we're in over our heads.

We need you. We have a need and it's not in us. We're empty to meet this need. And then do we trust that there is enough in him for what I need?

And then pray and ask for his help and expect that help and thank him when the help comes. no matter what second causes or instruments that God used to bring help to you.

You trace it right back to the one you were leaning upon and he acted on your behalf and now he's the one that you run to to thank. Those are signs of a man or woman, boy or girl, who's living and leaning upon Christ.

[20 : 24] Isaiah 10, 20 In that day, the remnant of Israel will lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth.

To lean then is to shift your weight off of yourself and on to another, on to Christ. A little chorus, learning to lean, learning to lean.

I'm learning to lean upon Jesus. And what am I finding? Finding more power than I've ever dreamed. I'm learning to lean on Jesus.

Why are we so surprised that we would find more power in the Son of God who created all things than we find in ourselves? To live upon his all-sufficient grace, bringing all that I need to all that he is for me.

And what is he? Oh, in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form. And we find fullness and completion in him.

[21 : 30] So we bring the little thimble of our need to the bottomless ocean of his fullness of deity and it more than fills our need.

He's more than enough for you. So are you presently feeling your own lack of having what you need in some department of life?

I suppose we're bumping into that neediness often in life. Well, that's an important part of learning to live upon Christ. We must first feel our need.

In the words of Annie Hawkes, I need thee, I need thee. Every hour I need thee. That's where it begins. And then, turning away from ourselves, we lean upon him.

Oh, bless me now, my Savior. I come to thee because I find in you what I don't find in myself. That's learning to live and lean upon Christ.

[22 : 30] Christ. So I would learn to live upon Christ's unsearchable riches of grace than to live upon my poverty.

Too often we're like that poor Texan farmer on whom the bank is foreclosing but whose farm sits on a reservoir of oil that would make him wealthy for life.

He knows his need. But he doesn't know the riches available to him. While Christ is rich, can I be poor?

What can I want beside? Then let's live more and more upon Christ with the first awareness of our need to tap into that fullness of grace that is in Jesus.

And you know he loves to have his children living upon him. So that's the first preposition. Upon. Upon Christ for our hope of heaven.

[23 : 35] Upon his word for direction in life. And upon him and his resources for all that I need. The second preposition is for.

We are to live for Christ. Christ. And this describes the purpose for which we live. We are living our life for Christ.

Now that's crucial because what a man lives for charts the direction of his entire life. So Colossians 1.16 that was read for us speaking of Christ says all things were created by him and for him.

There's our preposition. You were created not only by him but you were created for him. What a blessing to know this in a world where most people just aimlessly drift through life.

They have no purpose beyond just making it through another making it to the weekend. That's as big as it gets. Just existing from day to day.

[24 : 49] we were created for much more than that. We were created to live for Christ. And until we do we will not know our purpose for life.

Why we're here. You see it's from such verses as what we read from Colossians 1.16 made by him and for him that we learn our purpose for life. It's again in his word and we learn the chief end of man.

Why do we live? Why do we breathe? Why does our heart beat? Why do we have our being? Why are we here? Why do we get up in the morning and do what we do through the day?

Is there any unifying purpose to it all? What's it all for? It's for him. For him. We're to live for Christ.

Now that wasn't our purpose from birth was it? We didn't start out living for Jesus. Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5.14 and 15. See if you can see what we start out living for.

[25 : 56] For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all and therefore all died. They died in him. And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves.

for themselves but rather for him who died for them and was raised again. Before we were saved we did everything we did for ourselves.

My purpose was wrapped up in me, myself, and I. Life was organized around me. What I wanted and what was good for me.

What was for my ease, my pleasure, my desire, my profit, my praise. Everything was made to orbit around me. And then something happened that the Bible says compelled me, squeezed me, moved me, motivated me to no longer live for myself.

I was born again. I was given eyes to see and what did my eyes see? What I saw was my sin and my guilt before God that deserved his infinite and eternal wrath but that Jesus, God's son, took my place and took God's wrath that I deserved.

[27 : 27] deserved. That's what my eyes saw. I did the sinning and he did the suffering. I incurred the debt and he paid it in full.

I live for myself and he died for me. He was treated by God as I deserved and so was condemned on the cross.

I was treated as he deserved and so was declared righteous and welcomed home. You see, it's the love of Christ for us on the cross that has given us a whole new purpose in life.

Did he love me? Did he give himself for me? Then I'll live for him who died for me. The love of Christ compels me to no longer live for myself but for him who died for me and was raised again.

And so his death and resurrection has given me new and eternal life. And that elicits a response in my heart that then let that life be lived for him, for his purpose.

[28 : 39] Becoming a Christian, you see, is far more than just having a little religion. It's far more than adding Jesus to our self-centered lives. No, it's to receive a whole new center to our lives, a whole new purpose that in all things Christ might have the supremacy, that we would live for him.

And so now everything is made to orbit around him. In Christ, our whole aim, goal, purpose, motive, reason for living has changed.

And we truly feel that we have lived enough of our lives for ourselves. for me, for my name, for my kingdom, for my will being done.

And now I want to live for Christ. So the most important thing to me in every situation is what does he want? What does he command?

And all the outward changes in a Christian's life can be traced back to this inward reality that someone else is now the purpose for her life.

[29 : 50] she's living for a new God. It's not her. It's Christ, a new king. Have you had that radical change of heart that has forever changed your purpose for living from self to Christ?

Now that does not mean that we Christians do so perfectly. It does not mean that we don't struggle with this. The flesh still remains in us and still hates Christ and his ways and still wants to be lived for.

So sinful self must be denied. Sinful self must be starved, refused, mortified, fought against. But in the Christian self no longer reigns as the purpose, the central reason for which we live.

Because we've been given a new heart that wants to live for Christ. For Christ. So just very practically and briefly, what does it mean to live for Christ?

Well, it means to live for his glory and praise. We live for his glory and praise. And so the all important question is no longer what pleases me or what do I want, but what does he want?

[31 : 13] do I live in a way that makes his glory known? That lets others see and hear from my lips how great and awesome my Savior is.

That's living for his glory and praise. To live in a way that reveals just how great and good and kind and loving he is.

not to draw attention to myself. No, I'm now living for him. And that purpose brings everything into its embrace.

1 Corinthians 10, 13 so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do it all for, you see, there's the proposition, for the glory of God.

So it's a call to connect everything in your life. I mean, from what you drink and eat to whatever you do to connect it to the glory of God, to the glory of Jesus.

[32 : 18] And to say, this is for you, Jesus. I'm doing this for you. I challenge you this week to write that over all that you do for you, Jesus.

And then it's not only to live for his glory, but it's to live for his pleasure. It's to live for his pleasure. And so the all important question is no longer what pleases me, but what pleases him.

And his word again, it tells us what pleases him. It tells us what he delights in. And so we aim to please him in everything we do and in the way that we do it, in the motive for which we do it.

It's for his pleasure. And we see this to perfection in our Savior. He's not living for himself as we read of him there in the scriptures, but he's living for his father in heaven, for his glory, for his pleasure, and driven by this moment-by-moment purpose to do the will of the father.

And so as the cross comes into view and presses in upon the consciousness of Jesus, he says, now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, but for this very reason I came to this hour.

[33 : 36] Here's my prayer. Father, glorify your name. And even if that means me dying on the cross, glorify your name. We saw last week Peter was to glorify God by a martyr's death, but by whatever it is, you see, glorify your name.

That's why I'm here, and that's why I live, and that's why I will die, for your glory, for your pleasure. And Jesus never swerved from this purpose.

He knew he was here to serve not himself, but the will and the pleasure of another. And you see it operative there in Gethsemane. If it is possible, let this cup, the cup of God's wrath for sin, let it pass for me, Father.

Three times he prayed, but each time he prayed, but not my will, but yours be done. That was his motto, living for the glory of his Father.

May it more and more be seen in every area of our lives that what we are after is his glory, his pleasure, what he wants.

[34 : 55] It's a privilege to live for something bigger than ourselves. We live for ourselves, little me. God. And now we've been called into this grand, the biggest thing in all the universe, to live for the glory of God.

Everything in history is coming to that glorious end, and I have the privilege of being a part of that. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to your name be the glory.

What is my being but for thee? It's sure support and noblest stand. Thine ever smiling face to see and serve the cause of such a friend. So we live for Christ.

We live upon Christ. And next week we'll have to see that we're to live with Christ. I really think it's the sweetest of all the prepositions in the Christian life, and I meant to cover it, but I feel like I would just be rushing through it, and I want you to taste the sweetness of what it is to live with Jesus.

For him, upon him. Are you living with a hope in heaven that's founded upon him? Are you seeking to shape your life upon his word?

[36 : 18] And are you relying upon him for everything you need every day? well, if you're living upon him, then you realize that these are things we can't do ourselves.

We come up empty again. But there's grace in Jesus to teach his people how to live upon him. And there's grace in Jesus to teach his people how to live for him.

Let's pray and ask him, shall we? Amen. we have sat before your word and we've delighted to know that you are still speaking to us through your word.

And it is our desire, Lord, that this word that we have received would have its intended purpose in our lives. for those that are lost, that they would stop building on sinking sand and they would build upon Christ the solid rock and all he's done for sinners.

Lord, there are areas of our lives that are out of touch with your word. Teach us to build upon your word by putting it into practice. things. There are things that we need and that cause us worry and all kinds of anxiety because we're looking to ourselves and looking upon the resources we bring to the table.

[38 : 01] But we thank you that you would offer yourself, you who are the fullness of the deity, that you would offer yourself as to be our fullness, the fullness of grace is in you that we might be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Would you teach us more and more upon the first feeling of our need to run to you and to acknowledge our need and to acknowledge that you are enough.

Give us a thankful heart overflowing whenever help comes to see that you are the one that we've lived upon and has acted upon for our needs.

and then draw a straight line from everything we do from our waking hour to our falling asleep at night.

Straight line to this is for you Jesus and that means we must die to the flesh that still wants us to live for it and we confess again our need.

[39 : 05] Help us. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or think according to the power that is within him.

We ask that all glory be given unto him and give us the joy then of looking forward to seeing that glory one day face to face.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Well it's Christ the only foundation let's take our grace hymns and we'll sing in Christ alone my hope is found.

It's number 15 in your grace hymns. Stand with me and let's sing. to go in the power of Christ living upon that power there's enough there to get you home to heaven.

There's enough to enable you to glorify him in whatever trials you're going through. And it all comes back to that cross we just sang about. That's where the apostle Paul found it.

[40 : 15] It's that love of Christ at Calvary that compelled him to no longer live for himself but for him who died and was raised to life. Praise God.

Amen.