

**“To Be Received”  
Colossians 2:6-15  
July 25, 2010**

<sup>6</sup>As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup>when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

I attended North Avenue Presbyterian Church for the first time. The church was located in downtown Atlanta near the Georgia Tech campus. The sanctuary was huge and so was the church membership. They were some 1600 members. As I left worship that day, I spoke to the pastor. I told him my name and let him know that I was a seminary student.

I returned some weeks later and worshipped there again. I spoke with the minister again at the door. The most amazing thing happened. He remembered me.

Through the years, I have always thought of how special it was to be remembered by that pastor. No one intentionally fails to greet visitors, but the church is not always as good at greeting people, as we should be. It is easy sometimes to be caught up in speaking to friends and family. We want to know what’s going on with them. We want to speak about the latest in sports or politics or both. In so doing, we miss the opportunity to make folks feel at home.

Today’s text speaks of being received. It is not speaking of how folks are received at church. It is not talking about folks being greeted at the door to Walmart. It has nothing to

do with a server seating us for lunch or supper. Over the next few minutes, we are going to look at what it means to be received.

Paul begins by helping us understand what believers are receiving. The text says, **“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord...”**

What do believers receive? We receive Jesus Christ. Notice that Paul begins with Christ. We cannot be received by Christ unless Christ is willing to receive us.

What does it mean to receive Christ? We use all manner of terms to express the meaning. Some folks speak of public professions of faith. Others speak of being born again. Some speak of making a commitment to Christ.

Regardless of the language used to describe the event, receiving begins with Christ. What symbolizes the willingness of Christ to receive us? The answer to that involves the cross. Christ went to the cross out of obedience to God, but Christ also went out of a desire to give us the possibility of eternal life.

Have you received Christ? For many who have grown up in the Presbyterian Church, we squirm when we talk about receiving Christ. For Presbyterians, there is not the clarity of going forward during worship or at a revival. We speak of folks being raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Regardless of how it happens, we are received by Christ.

Why are we received? The text provides the answer. Paul writes, **“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him,<sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”**

First, we are to continue to live in Christ. Paul puts it well in Galatians. Paul writes, **“it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”**

Continued living in Christ can be difficult. There are many opportunities to forget who and what we are as believers. Those opportunities are called temptations. We must remember that the Christian life is not a sprint. It is a marathon. Often folks bust out of the gate earlier, but after a few years, the joy is gone. We must continue to live in Christ.

Second, we are to be rooted. Roots are essential for trees. Not only do they provide food and water, but they also stabilize the tree so that storms cannot uproot it. In the same way, our roots must be set in Scripture so that we cannot be moved.

Third, we must be built in Christ. If our children fail to grow or mature, we'd rush them to the doctor. When believers don't mature, we seem to overlook it. We must spend time growing and maturing in our faith. We must take opportunities that are given to us so that we can be continually built up in Jesus Christ.

Fourth, we must remember that which we have been taught. Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit coming to help the disciples remember what He told them. We must look for the Holy Spirit as we seek to remember.

Finally and most importantly, we are to be thankful. We tend to dismiss gratitude. However, God enjoys our gratitude as much as we enjoy receiving thanks. We must not forget to be thankful to God.

The remainder of today's text speaks to what it means practically to be received in Christ. We don't have time to look at everything that Paul says. However, I want to touch the high spots.

Paul starts with his most significant warning. The text says, **“<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.”**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke to the problem. He said, <sup>13</sup>“**Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”**”

Believers must realize that we are to be in the world, but not of the world. The world is not a friendly place for believers. This has become more factual as time has passed.

There are many philosophies and lies which seek to derail a Christian from the narrow way. This is especially true for the humanists. Their desire is to remove God from everything and everyone. We must fight against that tendency to give in to what the world thinks.

How can we resist the world, as we are encouraged to do? We resist because we have received Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul speaks to this issue. The text says, “**No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”**”

Isn't it great to know that God provides for us as we try to live out lives in faithfulness to Jesus Christ? That support is found in so many places. Not the least of those is fellow believers. Fellow believers can hold us accountable. They can also pray for us. Finally, they can stand with us as we seek to avoid falling into the traps that Satan sets for us.

We started out by talking about being well received in church. I want to close with another church story. When I was in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, I attended and

**became a member of Hurricane Baptist Church. One of the reasons that I joined involved a friend whose parents faithfully picked me up and took me to church.**

**Mr. Bishop was my friends Dad. He was deacon in the church, but he also directed the choir. Because they were congregational in government, everything had to be voted on by the whole congregation. I will never forget how he responded when my name came up for a vote. As the pastor said, what is the church's desire for Shane, Mr. Bishop stated that I should be received.**

**God voted for us by sending Jesus Christ. God continues to vote for us each and everyday because we have been received by Jesus Christ.**

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