

Colossians 2:6-15

Week 5 - New Life In Christ

Learning Objectives

- To see what it means to be “in Christ” as a believer.
- To gain an understanding of what it means to have ‘new life’ or be ‘made alive’ in Christ.

Pray for your time together as a group.

? Can you describe a time when you or someone you know has been forgiven for a debt they owed?
What happened?

Optional Transition: In this study we'll talk about the biggest debt we have in our lives—to God.

Read Out Loud: Colossians 2:6-15 (NIV)

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

? Look through the passage again. How many times does Paul use the phrases “in him/Christ” or “with him/Christ”? What is the significance behind Paul using those phrases so many times?

Possible Answers: Paul uses those phrases 8 times in this passage alone. Paul uses these throughout the book to stress the relationship and dependence that we have with Christ.

? Verse 6 instructs us to “continue to live our lives in him,” and verse 7 tells us how to do that. What does it look like for you or your small group to be rooted, built up, and strengthened in Jesus with overflowing thankfulness?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary. However, Paul is using an image of a building or a tree. Having a good foundation in the Gospel of Jesus, growing or being built up by the Gospel, and growing stronger to the point where we can't help but have thankfulness for what Christ has done.

? We often hear voices from society and culture trying to distract us (vs. 8) from how we have been built up in Christ. How have you seen these distractions in your life and in the lives of those around you?
Possible Answers: Postmodernism (no absolute truth, "believe what works for you"), wealth, social media, the busyness of life in general, etc. There are a lot of things that can distract us from pursuing a deeper relationship with Christ.

? According to verses 9 and 10, all authority and the power of God is in Jesus, and yet it says we have been "brought to fullness." What does it mean to be full or complete?
Possible Answers: It means to lack nothing. In this context, it further means that Christ, fully God (vs. 9), was able to use every power and authority (vs. 10) to ultimately "cancel the charge of our indebtedness" (vs. 14).

? In what ways are we made full, and with what are we filled?
Possible Answers: Those who are in Christ lack nothing. There is not lack of grace to be given to a follower of Christ. With Christ as the head, there is no need to look to other sources of grace such as tradition or philosophy.

Read Out Loud: Continuing on in the passage, verse 11 references circumcision, saying that we have been "circumcised with Christ", but noting that this was a circumcision "not performed by human hands." Circumcision was a sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham in the Old Testament. A correlating passage in Romans will help us deepen our understanding of what Paul's meaning is behind being circumcised with Christ in Colossians.

Read Out Loud: Romans 2:29

²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

? This verse and verse 11 in our passage are not talking about actually being ethnically Jewish, or physically being circumcised. What is the main point that Paul is trying to teach us in these verses? What is significant about these statements?
Possible Answers: Someone doesn't become a follower of Jesus by obeying a set of rules or looking the part. One is a follower of Jesus because of what Jesus has already accomplished on their behalf. This inclusion to be part of the body of Christ is available to all people.

? Optional: According to verse 12, what allows us to be buried with Christ as well as raised with Him?

Possible Answers: Faith in the promises of God; the same promises that God made with Israel in the O.T. This is why Paul makes the connection with circumcision - it is our faith in the work of God, through Jesus, that makes us alive.

? We read in verses 13 and 14 that we were in debt to God for our sins committed against Him. What is the image that Paul brings to mind to demonstrate how we have been forgiven?

Possible Answers: He tells us that our sins have been nailed to the cross that Jesus died on, for our sins.

? If you were left to try to defend yourself before God, how would you go about trying to justify your actions? Have you seen others attempt to do this?

Possible Answers: There is nothing we could ever do to justify our sinful actions against a just and holy God. Sometimes people may try to say "my good outweighs the bad", "I try to be a good person", etc.

? How does it make you feel knowing that we were found guilty and yet made innocent, found condemned and then made free, through the love and suffering of Jesus?

? Even for those of us who are in Christ and made alive, what are some ways in which we forget that we are forgiven?

Possible Answers: We have shame surrounding our sins; we try to do things to earn favor with God, etc.

For Discussion And Accountability

? How do you need to let the knowledge that you are forgiven and made alive in Christ change your attitude or perspective this week?

? What is distracting you from living "rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (vs. 7)?