

ROOTED IN CHRIST

Faith In Christ
Rooted in Christ, Part 1
September 9, 2018

Read: Colossians 1:1-8. A key theme in this opening paragraph is: "Faith in Christ." But what does Paul mean when he talks about "faith in Christ"? Faith is placing your confidence, allegiance and identity in Christ. This is evidenced by living a life that is truly "in Christ." Faith acts on what it believes. So what does it mean to be "In Christ"?

To be in Christ means to be taken in to him so that he encompasses your entire life. This means that Christ influences and infuses everything in your life.

- To be in Christ means that you are committed to him above all others. And all other commitments fall under this primary commitment.
- To be in Christ means that He determines your attitudes and actions.
- To be in Christ means that you are inseparably joined to Him. This means that nothing can separate you from Him and His love.
- To be in Christ means that you are also joined to a new family where the dividing lines that separate and categorize people have been erased.
- To be in Christ is to have a new identity not based on your past or current status.
- To be in Christ is to have everything you need to thrive in this life and enjoy eternal life.

Then Paul shifts from a prayer of thanksgiving for their faith and lets them know how he and Timothy are specifically praying for them so that they will, in fact, stay rooted in Christ.

Read: Colossians 1:9-14. Paul shares the primary things that he is praying for them that I believe equally apply to us today.

God fills you with the knowledge of His Will. Often in the NT, the word "filled" means to be "controlled by." Paul's prayer, then, is that these believers might be controlled by the full knowledge of God's will. The good news is that we don't have to develop this knowledge in our own strength but is something that the Spirit gives.

When Paul prays that his friends may have wisdom and understanding, he is praying that they may understand the great truths of Christianity and may be able to apply them to the tasks and decisions which meet them in everyday living. In the Christian life, knowledge and obedience go together.

Live a life worthy of the Lord and pleasing Him in every way. Paul then breaks down what it looks like to please God in every way:

Bearing fruit in every good work. Christians need to work out their faith in the way they live. When it comes to being a Christ follower, we do not have a shortage of knowing, we have a shortage of doing. We are not saved by our good works but they should be an overflow of our faith in Christ. See 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Ephesians 2:10.

Growing in the knowledge of God. This is important for two reasons: 1) Knowledge of God is necessary for proper living; and 2) Knowledge of God shields us from false teaching.

Being strengthened with all power. Paul asks God to give his readers not only discernment of his will but also the divine power to act on it. Living out your Christian faith may lead to adversity. That's why Paul states that we need to be strengthened with all power "so that you may have great endurance and patience." Endurance is the power to cope and be content in all circumstances. But it does not mean endurance in the sense of simply giving in or succumbing to the events around you. It is a conquering endurance. It is the ability to deal triumphantly with anything that life can do to us. Patience has to do with people. It is the quality of mind and heart which enables you to bear with people and never lose patience with, belief in, and hope for them.

Giving joyful thanks to the Father. Since Paul commands thanksgiving, it must be something we can decide to do. Therefore it can become a discipline in which we can grow. Gratitude, as the gospel speaks about it, embraces all of life: the good and the bad, the joyful and the painful, the holy and not so holy.