**CONTINUE TO LIVE YOUR LIVES IN CHRIST**

Colossians 2:6-23 (Key verse 6)

*“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him.”*

In today’s passage we are going to learn how we should live our lives as Christians who have accepted Jesus as the Lord. From the key verse it says we must continue to live our lives in Jesus just as we received him as our Lord. We are therefore going to learn in detail what it means to continue to live our lives in Jesus, and how we can do so in the midst the many confusion that roams around in our society such as post modernism, false teachings and the likes. I pray that God may have mercy on us and help us to receive one word from this passage so that we can truly live our lives in Christ Jesus.

**Part 1 - Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him.**

In the previous passages we have learnt about who Jesus is, his supremacy, we have learnt about the mystery of God which is Christ Jesus himself, we have learnt that without Christ we cannot do anything that pleases God. In the letter apostle Paul acknowledged the work of God in the lives of the people of Colossae, how Epaphras the servant of God dedicated his life to teaching the people of Colossae about Jesus. Through these teachings the people of Colossae could meet Jesus personally, they could spread the word about Jesus bearing much fruit. The attitude of the Colossae Christians was evidence that indeed Jesus meant something more to them than just a prophet, than just a teacher. The people of Colossae saw the supremacy of Jesus, they were convicted that Jesus is the Lord, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the saviour of their lives from the power sin, the one who God had sent into the world to give them life. Moved by this fact, the people of Colossae accepted Jesus as Lord.

Today as well we too have been given opportunities to encounter the supremacy of Jesus. Through our Bible studies, Sunday messages, Bible fellowship with our family and friends, testimony writing and conferences, many of us have been touched by the supremacy of Jesus, we have been left in great awe concerning the mystery of God being Jesus. Because of this we have been left with praises for God and confessions of Jesus’ Lordship in our lives. Now the question is how can we maintain this wonderful state that God blessed us with? How can we ensure that we do not fall away? Normally when we have conferences, during easter or spring, on our last day after we have been blessed with graceful words of God filled with encouragement, we normally pray that God may help us that even as we go back to our ordinary lives, we remain encouraged. And glory to God for today Apostle Paul is going to help us on how we can do just that. In **verse 6** he said: “*So then,* *just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,*” In the same way we received Christ, we must continue to live our lives in Jesus. What does it mean in the same way we must continue to live our lives in Jesus? How can we do this?

Firstly, when the people of Colossae accepted Jesus, they were very sincere, filled with praises, surrendering their lives to Jesus, and here Apostle Paul says with the same attitude we must continue to be in Jesus. With a sincere attitude filled with praise we must live our lives in Jesus. How can we live our lives in Jesus? In **John 8:31–32** it says: *“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* To live our lives in Jesus is to sincerely be his disciples, it is to live according to his teaching and commands. Jesus promises that when we live in this way, we will know the truth, we will not be shaken, and we will live life freely under the grace of God. In **verse 7** Apostle Paul further emphasised how we should live in Jesus saying: “*rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*” Here Apostle Paul mentioned 3 very important things that people of Colossae needed to do, things that we need to do as sincere disciples of Jesus.

**Firstly**, as sincere disciples of Jesus we must be rooted in Jesus. What does this mean? In **Psalm 1:2-3** it says: *“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”* Being rooted firmly in Jesus is about meditating on the word of God until our thought patterns are firmly established in Jesus and the gospel. Being rooted in Jesus is about clinging on his word over our own strength, even amid adversities. The word of God says those who do this will prosper, even though outwardly it may seem like we are suffering, inwardly we will experience victory, joy, and peace in Jesus.

**Secondly**, as sincere disciples of Jesus we need to be built up in him. What does this mean? In **Matthew 7:24** Jesus said: *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock*.” To be built up in Jesus means, we should put Jesus’ teaching into practice, obeying his words in our practical life. Jesus is the cornerstone, when we built our house in him through putting his words into practice, we can stand firm against adversities, we can stand firm in the midst of confusion. The word of God must not just be head knowledge, we should not only be concerned about knowing the word of God but rather we must strive for the word of God to work in us, to change us and refine us to be like Jesus. When Jesus came into the world, his message had power because he put every word of God that he taught the people into practice. Jesus loved, he had compassion unto the people, he depended on the father through prayer and hence he could stand firm to the very end.

**Lastly**, as sincere disciples of Jesus we need to be strong in the faith, overflowing with thankfulness. How can we do this? We can do this by continuously meditating and remembering who Jesus is, what he has done for us. While we were sinners, with no consideration of God and his will in our lives, God sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ into the world, to have compassion on us, to love us, to take care of us and ultimately to die on the cross for our wrongdoing. We were deserving to be punished and suffer an excruciating death, but God through his mercy and grace offered Jesus to die on the cross in our place. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we have been saved, our enemy sin and death has no power over us. Indeed, this is good news, and when we remember this daily our faith will be strengthened, and we will be filled with overflowing thankfulness to God regardless of our surrounding circumstances.

I therefore pray that God may help us to not fall away but live our lives in Jesus by sincerely following him as his disciples, rooted and built up in him filled with faith and overflowing thankfulness.

**Part 2 - See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy.**

After Apostle Paul had encouraged the people of Colossae to live as sincere disciples, rooted and built up in Jesus he went further to address the spiritual issue in the Colossian church. What was the issue? Let us look at **verse 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.”* The Colossians’ faith was being attacked by false teachings, based on hollow and deceptive philosophy. Apostle Paul warned them that if they followed such teachings, they would be taken captive. The people of Colossae and all people in the world are set free by Jesus, but these teachings put everyone in danger of falling back into slavery of sin. The teachings were hollow and deceptive because they were based on human tradition and worldly principles rather than on Christ. These teachings suggested that Christ Jesus is not enough, they suggested that for one to be saved they need to do more than accepting Jesus as the Lord and living in him. In **verse 16** Apostle said: “*Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day*” again in **verse 18** he said: “*Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.*”

The teachings were false and focussed on the works, rather than Jesus, they emphasised fulfilment of traditions, the participation in festivals, the keeping of Sabbath laws, new moon celebrations. They focussed on appearance, false humility and worshipping of angels. However, Apostle Paul referred to this behaviour as unspiritual, these teachers were lost and had lost connection with Jesus the head of the church. Their teachings were hollow, meaning they were empty and not adding any value to the people’s inner spiritual life, but rather posing a danger to the people of Colossae, a danger of returning the people into the old, the life of slavery by making the people’s faith to depend on human tradition or worldly principles rather than Christ. But glory to God who through Apostle Paul is urging the people of Colossae and us today to watchout for the false teaching, the hollow and deceptive philosophical teachings that roam around. Apostle Paul is urging us that Jesus is sufficient, he has done it all, no additional thing needs to be done.

How can we be sure that Jesus has done it all? How can we be protected from this hollow and deceptive philosophies and false teachings? In **verse 9-10** it says: “*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, /and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.*” In Christ all the fullness of God lives in bodily form. Therefore, when we have Jesus, we already have everything, we do not need to do something extra, we do not need to do something by our own strength to be accepted and be saved. Christ Jesus who is the fullness of God in bodily form is sufficient, when we receive him as our Lord, when we live in him, when we sincerely surrender ourselves to him as his disciples, the fullness becomes us too.

Furthermore, through Christ we have been given true circumcision. In **verse 11–12** it says: “ *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, / 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.* Circumcision in the Old Testament represented becoming holy – being set apart for God and becoming one of his covenant people. In Jesus, God gave us true circumcision, the new and living way to become holy, putting off our sinful nature. We were circumcised in Jesus by being buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith. By faith alone in Jesus’ death and resurrection, we die to our sins so we can live a new life for God, in the fulness of Jesus.

And finally, through the blood of Jesus we have been set free from the legalistic requirements of the world. In **verse 13-15** it says: “*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, / 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*.” When we broke the law’s regulations, the law itself became like a written statement of our guilt. The law was our enemy, working against us to condemn us. We were dead because the debt we owed to sin was our very life. But on the cross, Jesus purchased forgiveness of all our sins. God took the record of our sins and nailed it to Jesus’ cross. He cancelled the written code, so that no legalistic requirements have any power over us.

Under the law many people suffered from guilt, they suffered from insufficiency to meet the requirements of the law, because of human beings’ sinful nature. Today many young people wonder around with guilt, shame and disgust, to free themselves from this they indulge in more sin for a momentary high. Christians today cover up public image by indulging in sin, they are kept as slaves, they live burdensome lives because of the false teaching to keep a good image. They are held captive, they do not know that Jesus has come to pay it all, they are blinded to see that Jesus has taken it all away, and all he wants is for us to come to him confess our sins with repentance and we will be restored. Through the grace of God, we no longer have to be subjected to the law because Jesus has fulfilled all the requirements of the law. Through Jesus, God has disarmed the powers and authorities, he has stripped off the devil’s power over us.

The Lord has done all this, revealing that indeed Jesus is sufficient for our salvation, Jesus is sufficient for us to come before God. We no longer have to suffer from guilt and insufficiency to please God through our own strength. All we need to do is to continue live our lives in Jesus, rooted and built up in him filled with faith and thanksgiving.

**Conclusion.**

From today’s passage we have learnt that as Christians saved by the blood of Jesus through confession of his Lordship in our lives, we need to continue to live our lives in Jesus. Living our lives in Jesus means we need to sincerely follow Jesus as his disciples, living according to his words and commands. Apostle Paul encouraged us that in following Jesus we must be rooted in him, meaning we must continuously mediate on his word until it is firmly planted in our hearts. As Jesus disciples we must not depend on our own strength and capabilities, we must not depend on our connections but rather we must depend on his word through continuous meditation. The word of God promises that when we do this we will prosper. Apostle Paul added that as sincere disciples of Jesus we must be built up in Jesus, meaning we must build our house on Jesus the cornerstone, we must do this through putting the words of God into practice. For our faith to be stronger, for the word of Jesus to work in us we must not just keep it as head knowledge, rather we must put it into practice just as Jesus our Lord has shown us. Apostle Paul further encouraged us to live by faith, and continuously meditate of Jesus supremacy and give thanks to him always.

Lastly, we have learnt that in Christ, we have fullness, not hollowness; we are made alive, we have been transformed from our state of death in sin into a new life which is everlasting. So, let us not be kept captive by the hollow and deceptive philosophies and teaching of this world. Let us not be discouraged and burdened by the false teachings to keep up with all the laws and traditions, for in Jesus we have been made full. Jesus is the fullness of God in bodily form. Therefore, let us live our lives in him as his sincere disciples, rooted and built up in him.

Amen. Key Verse.