

Complete Only In Christ

Colossians 2:9-10, 13-14



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FOCAL Read Responsively Colossians 2:9-10, 13-14
(9) For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (10) **And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ...** (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**^{KJV}

The Gospel of salvation is characterized by two opposing states, both introduced in our text by the words “**and you**”. In verse 10 the Gospel tells us:

“and you are complete in Him (Christ)”

This is the state that the Christian is born to. The Christian is supposed to be *light, complete, salt, life* – all *positive*. And no wonder, for God is Light, He is Life, He is complete. Then there is the opposing state:

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh”

This is where the Christian *came from*, a state of *darkness, incompleteness, unsaltiness, death* – all *negative*. Again, there is no wonder over this. The unbeliever, the unsaved, the person who has not surrendered his or her life to Christ is still the property of the world and of Satan.

You Are Incomplete Apart From Christ

FOCAL Colossians 2:10 And **ye are complete¹ in him**

The Bible does not say that you are **complete** unless you are **in Him, in Christ**. Jesus has said truthfully (and all His Words are truth):

John 15:5 ... without me ye can do nothing.

ILLUSTRATE There is absolutely no completeness to life without Christ, without a heart surrendered in love to Him. No person is bound to God by their *own good works* or by *their character or personality*. When God looks at any person apart from Christ He sees a sinner, lost and undone. I remember as a young boy running and playing in the tobacco fields of North Carolina with my cousins. As we ran and hid from one another we often lay in the dirt. By the end of the day our skin was darkened by that sandy but blackish soil – until momma made us get in the shower and scrub with soap. We could wash off our stained skin. But Beloved, only Jesus Christ can wash away the stains of your sins. The Bible labels all of humanity as sinful. The Apostle John wrote:

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we

¹ Perfect Passive Participle of G4137, πληρόω, plērōō, *play-ro'-o*, From G4134; to *make replete*, that is, (literally) to *cram* (a net), *level up* (a hollow), or (figuratively) to *furnish* (or *imbue, diffuse, influence*), *satisfy, execute* (an office), *finish* (a period or task), *verify* (or *coincide* with a prediction), etc.: - accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply.

deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Listen dear ones. All humans are *natural born sinners*. When born into this world, we are born – not with a desire to do the good – but with a desire to pursue that which is against God. Our forefather Adam brought sin – like a plague – into this world and onto every son and daughter born from creation's dawn. When you enter this world kicking and crying you enter it as a **son or daughter of Adam**. You are not **complete** unless you have given yourselves **to Christ**. Ritual is not enough. Remember that Jesus said to the religious Pharisees:

John 8:44, 47 Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. ... (47) He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God.

Though the Pharisees followed religious practices, their religion was rejected by God for it had no root in God. They had ritual without a relationship with Christ. They had dogma outside the direction of God.

ILLUSTRATE I remember years ago on a certain military base the Commander ordered that all fire

hydrants be painted *green*. The Commander thought that this would be more pleasing to the eye, more in tune with the environment if these hydrants no longer were painted bright red or florescent yellow. So it was done – hydrants were painted green or brown to blend in with the landscape. The only problem was, making these hydrants the same color as the background caused problems for the fire department. Hydrants are painted bright colors so that they stand out even in the dark. Bright colors are easier to see. It wasn't long before the Base Commander realized his foolishness and returned the hydrants to their bright, distinctive colors. Bright red and yellow is easier to see.

Like that foolish Commander, too often we paint our lives with the brush stroke of ritual and religion. Like the Pharisees we get focused on *what we're doing for the Lord, while forgetting the Lord Himself*. I am not complete unless I am **in Him**. I must be bound to God through the love of Christ. I am only complete **in Him**.

If you have painted your hydrant green, have used your good works to cloak your sin, remember that it is God Who judges you. If you stand before God apart from Christ, God will judge you apart from Christ. If you have ever told a lie, then you have violated God's ninth Commandment. God is eternal, and an offense against Someone for Whom time means nothing is to commit an *eternal offense*. You will stand before God one day and give an account for your lie. You will be convicted and cast away from God as a liar, for the Scripture says of Heaven:

Revelation 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

How dangerous to stand before a holy God without the cover of Christ! It is like standing in a rainstorm without a cloak or an umbrella. Have you looked at another **with lust in your heart (Matthew 5:28)**? Then Jesus said what your heart has spoken convicts you before God – you have violated His seventh Commandment. One by one each of God's Commandments stand before us, accusing us, showing us to be sinners in need of God's Gracious forgiveness. I thought myself complete until I was measured by God's Law. After His measuring like the Apostle I said:

Romans 7:9-11 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (10) And the commandment, which [was ordained] to life, I found [to be] unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew [me].

It is not God's righteous Law that makes me sin – but sin within me. **Am I complete in myself?** Absolutely not! In myself, apart from the operation of God's Grace in

Christ, that which is good (God's Law) points out my deficiencies. And if I am not in Christ I find the Law not only uncovers sin, but because of my natural sinfulness *the light of the Law acts as an irritant*. I come to God, not under ritual nor Law, but under Christ. I trust in His Cross.

FOCAL Colossians 2:13-14 **And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

I Am Forgiven “All Trespasses”: The word **trespasses** really means² **“a sideslip or deviation either intentional or accidental**. On the day that you believed on Christ Jesus the Lord you ceased being a *stranger* before God and became a *Son of God by adoption*. We are no longer *sinners but are Saints and Sons, set apart for God's service*. **We who are predestined to be Sons of God in Heaven are called to live as Sons of God on this earth (Ephesians 1:5)**. All sins were nailed to Christ's Cross on your behalf *not* so you could be apathetic or follow after more sin. No, Dear Ones! We who are Sons are *saved to serve*.

2 G3900, *παράπτωμα*, *paraptōma*, *par-ap'-to-mah*, From G3895; a *side slip (lapse or deviation)*, that is, (unintentional) *error* or (willful) *transgression*: - fall, fault, offense, sin, trespass.

2 Corinthians 5:9 **Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him.**^{HCSB}

You Are Complete In Christ

FOCUS Colossians 2:9-10 **For in him dwelleth³ all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power**

The world continually bids us to follow it and its ways – and many who profess Christ have responded to its sirens song. If you are going to the world for completion, you are going *to the creature rather than to the Creator*. You must resist the devil's call and temptations, remembering **“ye are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power”**.

You are complete in Christ *because Christ your Savior is completely God!* We are told **“in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”**. The word **“dwelleth”** in the Greek text means **“to be permanently at home with”**. All that God is permanently dwells in Christ. Jesus Christ has and will always have the full nature of God. Before Jesus ever came to this earth He was God:

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word,

HCSB Holman Christian Standard version of the Holy Bible

3 Present Active Indicative of G2730, *κατοικέω*, *katoikeō*, *kat-oy-keh'-o*, From G2596 and G3611; to *house permanently*, that is, *reside* (literally or figuratively): - dwell (-er), inhabitant (-ter).

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God.

Jesus Christ is fully God (**Philippians 2:6**). He is very God of very God. It is Jesus Christ Who takes the title of **Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End** and applies this magnificent Name of God to Himself (**Revelation 22:13**). It is this very God Who reminds us that those who enter Heaven are those who are **in Christ**:

Revelation 22:15 For without [are] dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Though all the world thinks Jesus no more than a great Teacher and Prophet the Scripture testifies that ...

1 Timothy 3:16 ... God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Jesus Christ is God. He is not a pretender to Godhood, as Lucifer was, but He is God and will always be God.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his

person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Almighty God in the flesh saved us, Almighty God in the flesh **purged our sins**. We entered the Kingdom following Him – shall we now, apart from Him, succeed in this life? Absolutely not! The world has no power to give you. The world cannot increase the quality of your life one bit. The world is dead because of sin – but if you are saved you are dead no more.

FOCAL Colossians 2:13 **And you**, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **hath he quickened together with him...**

The Christian truly saved is “Quickened Together” With Christ. The words “**hath quickened together**” is a Greek word⁴ which means “**has made alive or animated conjointly with**”. This word is only used one other place in the Scripture:

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved);

4 G4806, συζωοποιέω, *suzōopoieō*, *sood-zo-op-oy-eh'-o*, From G4862 and G2227; to *reanimate conjointly* with (figuratively): - quicken together with.

Because you are saved now, you are bound to Jesus *then*.
Because you love Jesus now, you will be with Jesus *when*.

I'm sure you've all seen railroad trains. A train is made up of a locomotive engine and many cars. Each car is bound together, and all follow or are pushed by the locomotive. The locomotive alone has life – the cars which follow it have *no inherent life in them* - only when they are bound to the locomotive do they do anything productive. They must go where the locomotive leads them.

If you are saved by faith then you are **animated conjointly with Christ**. Before you believed on Jesus you were bound to the locomotive of this creation. Your master was not God, not Life nor Light, but the twin rails of sin and of death. Your outward way of life reflected your inner animation. That which drove you was the created and not the Creator. Then you met Jesus. When you first met Jesus you believed Him to be just a great Teacher, perhaps a Prophet – but no more. Yet as you listened to Him your heart began to tell you that your way of life was not right. God convinced you that Jesus Christ is the Only Way to Him (**John 14:6**) – and you did as the Scripture commands:

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

What a joyful day it is when the weight of sin is removed from your life. The Christian is unhooked from the locomotive of sin and of death and hooked to that wondrous Locomotive of Life, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Are you saved by faith in Him? Then you are His. Make up your mind that you will not pull against Him, but that you will be be pulled along by Him. You have life because God Who is life now lives in you. Follow God, follow Christ's leading – **you are made alive conjointly with Him**. Salvation by faith in Christ is not a license to sin. **Dr. Adrian Rogers** gave a good illustration when he said:

The train that runs with incredible speed on ribbons of steel is far freer to be what it was made to be than the so called free train that may choose an excursion through the meadow. It is only free to wreck.⁵

You are **quickened together with Christ**. Jesus Christ our Locomotive follows the pathway of loving righteousness and we who believe are pulled along by Him. Apart from Him you can do nothing, but in Him you now live!

You are complete in Christ! Look how these two words are used in Scripture:

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and

redemption: (31) That, according as it is written,
He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

In Christ I am made **wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**. If you are in Christ, you are **redeemed**. You no longer belong to this world, nor should you follow its conventions and sinful ways. Who care what *Angelina Jolie* or *Madonna* does? You are in Christ, they are in darkness. You have been redeemed from this world, whereas they wallow in it! If in Christ you are **sanctified**, set apart unto God's use. You should be as conspicuous as a black peppercorn in a bowl of white rice while you are out in this world. Jesus called us to be *light in darkness*, not *dark in darkness*. We are in Christ. We are righteous because His righteousness is on us. We are in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore **if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

You are complete in Christ! You are a new creature from the moment of your New Birth. Seek to know more of Him Who saved you. Seek to be more like Jesus each passing day. If you are in Christ then you should be *like Christ* more and more with each passing day. If you are not like Him, if you are not striving to imitate your Blessed Savior, then you should ask yourselves “Am I truly in Christ?”. Listen Beloved, for this is important! The phrase **“in Christ” occurs 77 times in Scripture**. Are you in Christ?

CLOSING Redemption belongs to those who are “in Christ” (Romans 3:24). Once redeemed, we who are “in Christ” shall never see condemnation (Romans 8:1). The Church is composed of those believers who obediently “in Christ” come together to worship Him (Romans 12:5). In Adam there is death, but “in Christ” there is life (1 Corinthians 15:22) – not just now, but forever. If “in Christ” you were created to do good for God (Ephesians 2:10), works of light and life, not works of darkness and evil.

Wayne Stiles writes⁶:

“One of my daughters used to come to me as a toddler and request, 'In the air Daddy, in the air!' She wanted me to hurl her up and catch her. I did so to her utter delight. My other daughter saw this and asked me to toss her too. Yet as she leveled off, her face contorted into sheer terror. When I caught her she clung to me with all four limbs and begged, 'No Daddy! Not again!' Later I considered why the same flight gave joy to one and terrorized the other. One focused on my ability to catch her, and the other focused on her inability to control the flight.”

If you have been saved, quit trying to control the flight. **You are complete in Christ**. Trust in Him. He saved you, called you with a Holy Calling. If you are in Him, focus on Him with all your might. When temptations come focus not on the temptation, but on the One Who gave His life for you. When trials come, focus not on the

⁶ *Kindred Spirit* a publication of Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall 2006 Vol 30 No 3, page 12, article “In Good Hands”

suffering but on the One “by Whose stripes we are healed” (**Isaiah 53:5**). You were not able to save yourself. Life tossed you up in the air, and you were quickly falling to a place of eternal damnation. You cried out “Jesus”, and His arms reached out. It was not by your ability, but by His ability that you have eternal life.

Those arms ache to hold you now. Not just from hell – though that is very important - but throughout all the burdens of life.

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and Grace.**

May God touch your hearts with these words.

