

Intro

We are 5 weeks into our series in Colossians titled “Fill Up! And Overflow”

And it’s titled that way b/c we keep seeing this fill up theme running through this letter that

Paul wrote to the Colossian church

And this section in ch2 really just continues to support that theme and even sums up the previous teaching and turns to some practical application of it

**Ushers. . .Bibles (worship ctr or live feed) / Turn to Col. 2:6-15**

As we read this section, I want you to notice all the times “in Him” shows up

*<sup>6</sup>Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk 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 by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

“In Him” over and over – 6x in 10 verses

In fact, if you were to look at all of the other letters that Paul wrote, you would see that he uses this phrase over 80x

So if we miss the meaning and significance of this phrase “in him” then we’ll miss much of what Paul was trying to get across to us – that’s why the title of the message today is “Fill up in Christ/in him”

At first, that may not make sense; How do you fill up, *in* something; or especially in someone/a person?

But this phrase is very important because . . . Being “in Christ/In him” has major implications for us; These two words are All-encompassing

And they begin to define who we are; Our identity in Christ

IOW the fact that you’re united with him; In relationship with him; In communion with him;

You’re under his influence, provision, and protection

You’re closely identified with him and his attributes

And under his Lordship; According to his ways; By his power

That’s a lot for two small words to hold; And that’s why we have to make sure we get this concept; To know for sure what “in him” means

Just as a fish lives and moves and has its being “in water” (think Finding Nemo); B/c fish and water go hand in hand; The water defines the fish b/c that’s where he lives

In the same way, Christians and Christ go hand in hand; We were designed to be shaped & defined by the characteristics of Jesus; You become more & more like Jesus that you begin

to look like him

It conveys an intimate integration of your whole identity with his

Whenever you hear “in him” just think united with Jesus; You take on his identity

And b/c of this intimacy and identification w/Christ, Paul begins to lay out many aspects of this being “in him” or “in Christ”; We’re going to call them . . .

**6 PROMISES FOR A BELIEVER WHO IS “FILLING UP IN CHRIST” . . .**

**1. You can think straight (v8-9)**

Don’t get sucked in (*taken captive*) by . . . strange beliefs or weird philosophy’s – we’ve talked about this kind of thing several times already

Not to get sucked into beliefs and systems of thought made up by man or influenced by Satan And they are out there; Just wonder into a bookstore and go to the religious/philosophy section and you’ll see some of the weirdest things

This week I looked up how many religions are in the world – 4.200; 4.200 religions full of *Empty deceit*; Religions/beliefs that sound good but don’t hold up under scrutiny, or deliver on what they promise

And Paul says don’t get caught up in that kind of thing!

Let me give you just a few examples of beliefs that are out there

“You determine your own destiny” – just visit a 3rd World country and this thought just shatters b/c you see people who the last thing in the world they can do it determine their own destiny

“If it feels good, it can’t be all wrong” – just talk to a heroin addict who’s trying to stop – sure feels good to shoot up but it’s a terrible thing to try to stop; If it feels good it’s not always best – it’s a philosophy that’s empty

“Truth lies within you, you just have to find it” – if that’s true, it’s obvious that some people have been looking in all the wrong places b/c their not finding anything close to the truth; Don’t hold your breath on that, the truth doesn’t lie within you

“Whatever works for you is best” – Prisons are full of people who operated under this philosophy – whatever works for me is best

These philosophies/beliefs are full of empty deceit b/c their either . . .

*According to human tradition* – or they are *according to the elemental spirits of the world (v8)*

*human traditions* are practices/beliefs that claim respect just because they are old

You get this a lot in religious circles, when tradition supersedes God’s Word, it’s empty deceit

Promises or claims that sound good or might even be reassuring, but they don’t stand up to the scrutiny of the Word or deliver what they promise

Or you get philosophy’s that are *according to the elemental spirits of the world* – Paul’s referring to the forces of darkness, often associated with the demonic realm or spiritual forces of evil

An example today would be – Astrology (wow, I had family that bought into this one a lot – going to get their palms read, or astrology cards, etc.)

There are so any thoughts out there that are not in line with God’s word and it’s like Paul’s saying, please don’t get sucked in – **think straight**

**You’re in Christ – think straight!** Make sure that you’re held captive by the truth of Christ . . . *v8-9 – according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*

Be confident of who he is and the truth he represents – don't get captured by the bad stuff – hang on to the good stuff; The truth of Jesus Christ and all that he represents *Anything* apart from him and his truth is an empty, man-made philosophy that deceives

Not only in Christ can you think straight, but . . .

## 2. You have everything you need (v10)

*v10 – you have been filled in him*

You've been given everything you need in your union, intimacy, and identification w/Christ

In the original language the use of *have been filled* here is a state of "fullness that has been accomplished in the past and continues to be accomplished in present"; We miss that in our translation into English; It's on-going – have been and are being filled

We see this also with what the apostle John says in *Jn 1:16 – From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace*

You've been given more and more peace, joy, patience, gentleness, humility, compassion, wisdom – grace upon grace

Being filled up in Christ with everything you need is like being this small cup (**hold up small cup**), sitting at the bottom of an ocean of Christ just constantly being fill with who he is – the joy, peace, grace, gentleness, humility, etc; You will be constantly filled!

Now, he moves on in *v11-12* to tell us that in Christ

## 3. You're set apart and free (v11-12)

*v11-12 – <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

I learned in H.S. (b/c I could never get it right back then) that when you break a sentence down and strip it of all the explanation type things (prepositions, etc.) – you get right down to the heart of what's being said (especially since Paul adds so many extra descriptors . . . *v11 In Christ you were circumcised . . . v12 having been buried and raised with him in baptism* Paul is using the picture of baptism here to symbolized salvation

Christ's *physical* death, burial, and resurrection is likened to your *spiritual* death, burial and resurrection; **Through faith!** (v12)

IOW, when he died physically **for** your sin, You died spiritually **to** your sin (You were released from its consequences and washed of its stain)

When he rose physically from the dead, You rose spiritually to a new life of righteousness

So, you were buried and raised with Christ in baptism spiritually, through your faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, physically

That's important to know b/c that's the basis for what he says in *v11* about circumcision

As a result of having been buried and raised with him, spiritually . . .

You have also been set apart as one of his people, free from the consequences/grip of sin That's what circumcision here is getting at – it's a setting apart and a freeing; And he uses the picture of circumcision to describe that

Here's a little history about circumcision

Before Christ, physical circumcision was God's means of . . .

- Setting his people apart from all the other peoples of the world
  - Reminded them of his covenant w/them, that he was their God, and they were his people
- It was a sign guaranteeing his promises/blessings to them

That was before Christ

And some have been tempted to use this passage to draw an analogy between circumcision and baptism

They think because you were physically circumcised before Christ, you were one of God's own And they think because you're physically baptized now, you're one of God's own

Problem is, they miss the faith part; this is a spiritual thing that has to do with faith!

Apart from faith, your physical baptism symbolizes nothing

*v12 – you were also raised with him through faith*

So, apart from faith, circumcision meant nothing for God's people

Paul also made that clear in the book of *Romans 2:25-29* – you can look it up this week; He makes it very clear that circumcision was a matter of the heart; **Faith** is the key In the same way, Paul is saying here that baptism is a matter of faith as well

Let's sum it all up by this; Paul is using the imagery of circumcision and baptism to say that . . .

B/c of your salvation in Christ (symbolized by baptism), you are *set apart* as one of God's own (symbolized by circumcision), free from the consequences and grip of sin in your life

Another promise you have as a believer, that Paul gives us, is that in Christ . . .

## 4. You're alive (v13)

*<sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses*

*Dead* meaning that before trusting Christ as your savior you were spiritually dead AND *Trespasses* means– specific and willful rebellion against God's standards

And Paul adds that you were dead due to *the uncircumcision of your flesh* – due to your sinfulness in general

Do you realize the awesomeness of that? If you know Christ as your savior?

What he's saved you from to make you *alive together with Christ*

But if you've never trusted Christ as your savior then you're still there – you're spiritually dead There's no joy, peace, hope, or freedom

If that's you, I would urge you to get past whatever is holding you back (unbelief, lack of information, laziness, maybe its pride) and put your faith in Jesus as your savior

That's the first step toward embracing God's love for you in Christ leads to be made *alive together with him v13*

And then the basis of being made alive is Christ is the 5<sup>th</sup> promise . . . and that's forgiveness

## 5. You're forgiven (v13b-14)

You're alive because God has forgiven you of your willful rebellion against God's standards that stems from your sinful nature

*<sup>13</sup>God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses*

He forgave you <sup>14</sup>*by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

Let's break this down a little:

*Record of debt* refers to a figurative list or record of your sins that condemn you (*stand against you*) and demand payment (*legal demands*)

And God demands payment for our sins, b/c ultimately, all sins are against him

The payment for our sins (that we deserve by the way) is death

And he goes on to say that this record of debt that we had was *set aside* (if you know Christ) *v14 This he set aside* – IOW, it was removed, taken away, destroyed; It was set aside ... *by nailing it to the cross*

Now, there's a word play going on here; Check it out

It was a common practice at the time of Christ (about 100yrs before and a little while after) of nailing a person's indictment to the cross next to him or with him. Like a way of declaring "look what this guy did"

The difference from that and the list referred to here, is the list itself of a man who was crucified then would often still be there after the person was taken down and gone. But in Christ, our list (when we trust him as savior) is not left there; It's *set aside* he says here in *v14*

Which means you could say that Christ became your sin list – When he died, so did your list; When he was destroyed, so was your record of debt

*1 Peter 2:24 – He himself bore our sins, in his body on the tree*

And then, wow! Promise number 6 for a believer who is Filling up in Christ just reinforces this whole mind blowing thought of being forgiven even more

#### **6. You're safe (v15)**

<sup>15</sup>He [referring to God] *disarmed* [literally means, stripped naked] *the rulers and authorities* [dual allusion to the evil earthly rulers at the time and spiritual forces of darkness that he already alluded to earlier] *and put them to open shame* [exposed them], *by triumphing over them in him* [Christ dominating over the earthly rulers and the forces of darkness]

That whole thing should sound familiar

B/c those earthly rulers/powers and forces of darkness did the same thing to Jesus

They stripped him naked, held him up/expose him to public contempt and shame, and celebrated what they thought was a triumph over him

But here's the striking irony that Paul is trying to get across . . .

All that they thought they were doing to him; God was actually doing to them

He was stripping them naked by exercising his power over them (*disarming them*)

He was holding them up to public contempt/shame

Ultimately resulting in triumph over them

Here's the bottom line of what this means for you and I

God made the earthly and spiritual forces, powerless . . .

Powerless to stop his purpose of establishing his kingdom

Powerless to prevent you from entering into it

Powerless to remove you from the protection found in Christ

**In Christ You're safe** – from both earthly and spiritual forces of evil

No one and no thing can hinder your hope, weaken your joy or separate you from Christ

That brings us back to *v6-7*; I wanted to come back to those verses after we went thru Paul giving us all these promises

<sup>6</sup>*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

These two verses transition a bit from Paul telling us about who Christ is and that we are in him, to now taking the rest of the letter to talk about more and more specifics of what it means to live and act like it

#### **LIVE LIKE YOUR IN CHRIST (V6-7)**

When you're united with him, under his Lordship, within his realm, with his identity

**You act like it; Act like who you are!**

That's why he used the word *walk in him*; Live your life in Christ . . .

*Rooted and built up in him* [based on a solid foundation of biblical truth that is faithfully applied] *Established in the faith* [knowing the truth about Christ, and holding firm to your relationship with him] *Just as you were taught* [if you've been taught the truth straight from the Bible, don't deviate from it] *Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord* [with the same passion as when you first followed him]

*abounding in thanksgiving* – When you live this way, you won't have any problem being thankful for all this

#### **(Summary)**

In Christ . . .

You think straight -- You have everything you need -- You're set apart and free – You're alive – You're forgiven – You're safe

So, **ACT LIKE IT**

Here's my challenge to you this week:

- Live like you're in Christ
- Write something down each day for the whole week (or more than one thing) that you're thankful to God for (*abounding in thanksgiving*)

#### **Pray**

**Close:****Welcome Packet & Step 1 at Guest Central**

We'd love to connect w/you for about 10 minutes; don't forget to bring us your filled out register and we have a gift for you

**Prayer**

Dave & Cheri Krakklio (deacon)

**Harvest Women & Harvest Men**

Meet tonight – 6-8pm

+ **CHILDCARE** provided

**Alive & Free at this campus, begins this Tue, 6:30-8:30m** + CHILDCARE provided

If, in life, you deal with hurts, habits, or hang-ups (and who doesn't!); Then Alive & Free is a great place to come to get help with those things; Short term or long term

We are excited that Derek & Bessie Tan will be heading this up and I'm going to direct you to see them after the service right up at the keyboard if you have any questions

**Moms in prayer@ this campus begins this Tue, 10-11am**

**You Are Loved**