

Fullness in Christ — Colossians 2:6–12
Basil Howlett — Carey Baptist Church — 31 August 2008

A false religious sect, which belittled Jesus Christ, had arisen in the area around Colosse. It said, in effect, that he wasn't sufficient to meet the needs of men and women. In order to be a genuine Christian and really sure of heaven it was necessary to worship angels and observe various Jewish rituals. Paul wrote this letter to help the Colossians stand against this cult. Having assured them of his pastoral concern in chapter 2:1–5, he now makes an appeal to them in verses 6–8. *'So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthen in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness...'*

A basic definition of a Christian (verse 6)

Paul describes them as people *'who have received Christ Jesus as Lord'*. This is important because many people claim to be Christians but they have little or no interest in the person of Christ. What does it mean - *'to receive Christ Jesus as Lord?'*

- It means far more than just accepting Christian habits like church attendance, far more than just accepting Christian morals and even far more than accepting and signing a 'decision card'.
- It means that we have seen our desperate need of him, because of our sin and guilt, and that we realise he is the only one who can meet that need. A drowning man 'receives' the lifebelt thrown to him because he is aware of his plight. It's a matter of life and death.
- What an enormous privilege to have received Christ Jesus as Lord! Have you?

The blessed duty of a Christian (verse 6)

The false teaching enticed people to drift from Christ but Paul says that they must:

- *'Continue to live in him.'* It's not enough to say, 'I received Christ when I was 9 or 19 or 29'. We should have an ongoing, vital relationship with him.
- Continue to be *'rooted in him.'* A plant will only survive if it is rooted in good, moist soil and Christians will survive only if they get constant nourishment from Christ.
- Continue to be *'built up in him.'* A foundation is essential but if nothing ever gets built upon the foundation there is something wrong. (2 Peter 3:18).
- Continue to be *'strengthened in faith.'*
- Continue to *'overflow with thankfulness.'*

The big danger facing every Christian (verse 8)

They must see to it that no-one leads them astray with their false teaching because:

- It is not divine but mere human philosophy and speculation.
- It is deceptive.
- It is devoid of content: hollow and empty.
- It is dangerous. It *'takes you captive'*.
- It is devilish. The phrase *'the basic principles of this world'* at the end of verse 6 is very difficult but many take the view that it's a reference to evil spirits from which all false teaching, which is against Christ, ultimately comes. (1 Timothy 4:1).

WHY?

Why is it such a vital thing to receive Christ, to continue to live in Christ, to look out for false teaching which detracts from Christ? Because of two amazing things about him:

- *'In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form'* (verse 9). Look at that person portrayed on every page of the gospels. In him all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.
- In him we have all that we need. *'You have been given fullness in Christ'* (verse 10). *'You are complete in Christ.'*
 - A full and complete pardon.
 - A completely new nature (verse 11).
 - A completely new life (verse 12).
 - Full membership of the Kingdom of God.
 - Full assurance of heaven.