



Rooted in Christ, Reaching our Community

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Another year has come and gone. How quickly it went! This last year we were blessed as a congregation as we witnessed new families place membership, and lost souls brought under the reign of our Lord through the preaching of the gospel. We enjoyed times of laughter and tears as a church family. We also learned about the beautiful subject of Christian charity as we followed our theme of “The Greatest of These is Love.” What a great year it was.

As we move forward as a congregation our eyes are constantly focused on our Redeemer, Savior, and Lord: Jesus Christ. We identify ourselves as the “church of Christ”; we are His possession and His people (1 Pet. 2:9). As a church we are saying to the community, “This is what Jesus is like.” That is a bold claim in a world that is so often confused about Jesus and Christianity in general. There are so many pressures to cave and conform to a secular image of Jesus. As each day passes the voices of opposition mount hoping to pressure the church into submission. Because of this, the elders have decided to make our theme for the year of 2017 “Rooted in Christ, Reaching our Community.”

In the epistle to the Colossians, the Spirit (through the pen of the Apostle Paul) is addressing a heresy that is infecting the brethren there. This false doctrine is weakening their hope in their salvation and the assurance they have in Christ. So often, heresy works in this way: it robs us of our joy, hope, and faith in the salvation of God. In fact, Satan’s greatest prerogative is to destroy our faith in the power and sufficiency of Christ.

In order to resist this spiritual infection, Paul reminds the brethren of their sufficiency in Jesus. Throughout the epistle he uses the words “all” (1:9, 11, 15-16, 17, 19-20) and “in him” (1:17, 19; 2:6-7, 9). Paul exalts Jesus as the fulfillment of all human existence. If then, by faithful obedience we have been added to His Kingdom, then why would we need anything else? The false teachers were telling the brethren that they needed “Jesus and...” something else to be saved. Paul lets them know that they already have everything in Jesus; they simply need to learn how to grow in their appreciation and understanding of what they have accessed through Calvary (1:9-10).

Because of the plausible arguments of these false teachers (2:4) Paul gives the remedy in Colossians 2:6-7:

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

The greatest defense against false doctrine is a heart that is grounded in love for Jesus. As a church, we must become enamored and enraptured by the beauty of our Savior. When our love for Christ grows our hatred of false ways will increase as well (Psa. 119:104). Yet, a high and exalted view of Christ does more than inoculate us from false teaching.

Notice that being rooted and grounded in Christ is closely linked to walking in Christ and abounding with thanksgiving. Whenever Christians are properly rooted in Christ there is a natural outgrowth that progressively extend to our community. Unlike other religions of the world who either aren't concerned with converting others or pursue conversion by coercion, Christianity seeks to share the love of Christ with others. Even in the face of hostility, the Christ centered life extends kindness to the most hardened of individuals. The Kingdom of Christ operates under the banner of transcendent, eternal grace by which we reach out to our neighbor. The more we grow in our love of God, the more we will grow in our love for our fellow man (Matt. 22:37-39).

So, as the church *of Christ* our goal is to **be rooted in Christ as we reach out to our community**. Both of these principles are intrinsically connected. We cannot properly reach out to our community without being grounded in the word of Christ (John 8:31-32). We also cannot simply be rooted in Christ without reaching out to our neighbor in love and grace as we talk to them about Jesus and the gospel. All of our benevolence, evangelism, and community outreach are fueled by our deep love for Jesus and His truth. In the pulpit, pews, and our personal lives we must cultivate a deep love for Christ. If we learn how to daily mature in our love for God by studying, meditating, praying and praising Him, then the natural outgrowth of extending that love to our fellow man will happen.

There is so much hope at the Dripping Springs church of Christ. We are growing, and the community is growing with us. As we move ahead as a church we must constantly stay focused on our Redeemer. In Him and through Him we will do much good for our neighbors and bring much glory for God.