

Colossians 2:6-8; 3:12-14

I live in a city that is built from a wetland. The foundations of the houses are on landfill. I clearly remember one stormy day while I was driving on a street, a big tree fell off right after I passed it. It was like 3 seconds after I drove by, and that tree laid across the road afterward. The reason it fell is tall trees in this street don't have good roots. Once the roots reach a few feet deep, the water content destroys it. Any vegetation requires a good root so that it can grow and flourish. Today, we will study about what it takes to be rooted properly and to flourish in life for Christ.

The book of Colossians in the New Testament was written by Paul. Paul wrote this letter during his first imprisonment in Rome to encourage the Christians in Colossae and churches near Colossae. Paul has never been Colossae but cared a lot about the Christians there, and thus wrote this letter. This letter encouraged them to be rooted in Christ, gave warning to guard against false teachings in the region, and provided rules for holy living (Col. 3:1 to 4:6).

### **1) Rooted in Christ**

When you received Christ Jesus as savior and Lord by faith, you have salvation (eternal life). Then the sanctification process starts that is you should continue to live your lives in Him (Col. 2:6). Col. 2:7 further states the how to properly live for Christ. "Rooted in Christ" as Paul suggested is the first step or the foundation step which requires a good relationship with Christ. The essential in sanctification is knowing God's truth and His will. We can't have a deep and healthy root unless we study and meditate daily on His word (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-4); otherwise, we will be withered (Matt. 13:6). Knowing His Words (Bible) gives us the understanding of Him like His characters, His will and commands. We also need to pray continuously because that is how we can know God's Will for each of us (I Thes. 5:16-18).

Rooted in Christ also means rooted in His love (Eph. 3:16-19). In His love, we have the assurance on our identity of God's children. That love gives us peace, confidence and strength as we grow in Christ under trials and temptations.

Rooted in Christ is the first defense against a fall in your faith where worldly deceptive philosophies and religions can deceive you (Col. 2:8). False religions are very common in the society at that time, and it is still true today. Knowing God's word well keeps you stand firm.

## **2) Grow in Christ**

The second action word stated in Col. 2:7 is growth or build-up. Growth is a continuous process. Our faith would be strengthened (Col. 2:7) as we were taught by a) God's Words, b) endured trials that are allowed by Him, and c) resisted temptations.

Just knowing His Words is not enough. We grow when we obey them. Colossians 3:12-14 tell us to clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bear with each other and forgive one another. Finally, love others! Luke 11:28 and James 1:25 tell us to obey and act on God's teaching.

Chapter 1 of James states we grow in faith when we encounter and overcome trails. Trails can also help us to grow in our characters like love and empathy.

As stated in Gal. 5:16-17, "for the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature". We grow in Him each time when we are able to resist temptation through His power in us (Gal. 2:20, I John 4:4, James 4:7).

## **3) Flourish in Christ**

My wife loves to plant flowers. She planted a few beautiful rose bushes. She made sure the roses have the proper amount of water, trimmed the brushes at the right time, fed them fertilizers, etc. Those roses flourished. Spiritual life flourishes similar to those rose plants that need healthy roots, proper nourishment and care to grow them to the point to flourish. We need to be rooted in Christ and grow continuously in order to flourish. The result is similar to the verses described in Psalms 92:12-15. Our actions can show how flourish we are. Colossians 3:12-14 list some of the characters we can flourish in. Finally, it is love. Others can see Jesus through our love for them. Our flourish-in-Christ characters and actions draw people closer to God.

King David was rooted in God's word as shown in Psalms 12:6 and 19:7-11. He did some mistakes (sins) but he also flourished in many ways. He led his people in the nation. His expressions of God's faithfulness, love and protection have encouraged and continue to encourage many Christians. Another person in recent history that was rooted in Christ is evangelist Dr. John Sung (1901-1944). While he was confined

in seminary hospital, he read the whole Bible repeatedly and in depth. He later was the key evangelist in His time in China and southeast Asia, and led many people to Christ. You don't have to be a king or evangelist to flourish in Christ. You can live out the characters described in Col. 3:12-14 as you flourish by being salt and light of the world. An example is Mother Theresa which she had great compassion. In summary, are you more like the fallen tree or a person that is flourish in Christ? Only when we are rooted in Christ and willing to grow, then we can flourish in Christ. Let us all strive for that to bring glory to God.