Putting Down Roots

Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC – 8/4/24

Deb and I planted a tree in our front yard recently. To do that, we had to cut out roots from an old tree. We literally laid the ax to the roots. Then we dug out clay and replaced it with potting soil. We used root stimulator and we watered twice a day then once a day. That tree is thriving and growing.

We did that because several years ago we planted a tree in our backyard. We just planted that tree and did nothing but water occasionally. One day we noticed that the tree was turning brown. Leaves were falling off. This tree was definitely not flourishing. Why? It was being neglected. We started watering it every day and feeding it and the tree came back to life.

We all are like one of those two trees. Some Christians are like the first tree:

They are growing and bearing fruit because they are being fed and watered by the word of God.

They are in relationship with other Christians who stimulate their spiritual roots to grow.

They are growing in their faith because they are rooted in Christ.

Other Christians are like the second tree.

They are dying spiritually because they are not being fed and watered by the word of God.

They are not flourishing because they are not in relationship with other Christians who stimulate their spiritual roots to grow.

They are not growing in their faith because they are not rooted in Christ.

We’re going to look at how to overcome that in a new series called Putting Down Roots. We just finished a series called Greater Freedom where we saw the importance of roots in our lives. We all have roots that drive the fruit of our behavior – either good or bad.

In the Greater Freedom series we learned that the bad roots need to be cut out of our lives. We get that principle from Matthew 3:10 where John the Baptist said:

***The ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.***

In that series, we saw that we:

Lay the ax to the root of sin by repenting of our sin and placing our faith

in Jesus Christ.

We lay the ax to generational iniquity with the blood of Christ.

We lay the ax to deception through the Word of God.

We lay the ax to a broken heart by grieving our losses and putting on a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness.

We lay the ax to offense, anger and bitterness through forgiveness.

We lay the ax to selfishness by dying to ourselves.

We lay the ax to the occult by shutting out all demonic influences.

We lay the ax to dishonor by honoring those in authority.

We lay the ax to rejection and condemnation by accepting that we are accepted in the Beloved – in Christ.

We lay the ax to our blind spots, self-deception and denial by being doers of the word and walking in the light as He is in the light.

At the end of the Greater Freedom series I felt led of the Lord to follow it up with a short series on how to put down good roots in our lives. You see, it’s not enough to lay the ax to the bad roots. You must also put down good roots. How do you do that? Well – that’s what we will be teaching on for the rest of this month and then, when we begin our Grace Groups in September, we will also begin teaching through the book of Galatians.

Our key text for this series Putting Down Roots is Colossians 2:6-7.

***Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built up on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.***

Notice that we live in Christ the same way we received Him. How did we receive Christ? By grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8 says:

***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.***

We enter the Christian life by grace through faith. We live and walk out the Christian life in the exact same way – by grace through faith. The Chistian life starts by grace through faith and everything after that in the Christian life is by grace through faith.

We are saved by grace through faith!

We are filled with the Spirit by grace through faith!

We move in the gifts of the Spirit by grace through faith!

We live a holy life by grace through faith!

Everything we do is by grace through faith!

That’s how we become rooted and built up and established in faith. By the grace of God and by faith in Jesus Christ.

During the Great Reformation of the 1500’s, God restored to the church 5 truths called the 5 solas that had been lost over time. The word sola means alone.

The 5 solas are *sola scriptura*(Scripture alone),

*sola fide*(faith alone),

*sola gratia* (grace alone),

*solus Christus* (Christ alone),

and *soli Deo gloria* (glory to God alone).

The Word of God is the only inspired word of God that reveals truth to us.

Jesus Christ is the only Savior. Christ and Christ alone.

Salvation is through faith alone.

Everything we receive from God is by grace alone.

Everything we do and say must be to the glory of God alone.

This is the core of the gospel and we must be rooted in these truths! What does it mean to be rooted? It means to remain firmly and strongly in a particular place.

Notice – Colossians 2:7 say to ***Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built up on Him.***

When you are rooted – you are also built up. 2 Kings 19:30 is an example of this.

***Once more a remnant of the house of Judah will take root downward and bear fruit upward.***

When your roots go down, your life grows up.

When your roots spread out, your life starts to sprout.

When your roots go deep, you grow and bear fruit.

To be rooted means to be firmly fixed into place, like a tree that is deeply rooted and therefore immovable. Jeremiah 17:5-8 says:

***This is what the Lord says: "Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the Lord.***

***They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with no hope for the future.***

***They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty land.***

***But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank,***

***with roots that reach deep into the water.***

***Such trees do not fear when heat comes or worry in a year of drought.***

***Their leaves stay green, and they never fail to produce fruit.***

Again we see the comparison of two trees. One trusts in itself rather than God and as a result they are always dry, their growth is stunted, they live in a barren wilderness producing no fruit and they have no hope for the future. Wow! That describes a lot of people.

But there’s another tree! It represents those who trust, hope and confidence is in the Lord rather than in themselves. They are rooted and grounded in faith. As a result their roots go deep into the water and as a result of that they don’t fear hot times or dry times! Also – their leaves stay green and they always produce fruit.

If that first tree describes you, you need to get rooted and grounded in Christ.

Not only does Colossians 2:7 say to **Let your roots grow down into Him**, but it

also says: and **let your lives be built up on Him.**

Built up speaks of something that grows upward and is built on a strong, solid foundation — just like a tree’s root structure that holds the tree firmly in place and provides it with a constant stream of nourishment. Tree roots have to go down deep and spread far and wide. That is how trees get nourishment. Deep roots also protect the tree from being uprooted during strong winds.

When I was a kid we usually had real Christmas trees. Sometimes we had artificial trees. The real tree requires more attention than the artificial trees.

The base was a bowl that you had to keep full of water so the tree wouldn’t dry out to quickly. But because this tree had no roots, it could not survive for long.

Neither can you!

God does not want us to be like artificial Christmas trees that look outwardly beautiful, but they have no life. And He doesn’t want us to live “brittle and dry” as though we’ve been cut off from Him as our source of life. That’s why we must maintain our connection to Him, continually drawing our nourishment and life from Him.

That’s why God commands us to focus on rooting ourselves deeply in Him so we can then be “built up” in Him. This can only happen as we regularly commune with the Lord in the Word and in prayer, allowing Him to refresh us continually with the waters of His Spirit that we need to stay alive and vibrant.

By the way - What causes roots to go deep? Dry times! Shallow water results in shallow roots! None of us like dry times, but when you remain in faith it causes you to press into God and let your roots go deeper in Him.

How do you know when you are rooted and built up? Colossians 2:7 tells us.

***Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.***

When you are rooted and grounded in Christ - you will be strong in your faith and you will overflow with thankfulness. Do those two things describe you?

Are you a person with strong faith or weak faith?

Do you overflow with thankfulness or do you overflow with ungratefulness?

Listen –

If you fall every time life gets tough – you are not deeply rooted in Christ!

If you are weak in faith – you are not deeply rooted in Christ!

If it is easier for you to doubt than to believe – you are not deeply rooted in Christ,

If you lose your praise easily – you are not deeply rooted in Christ!

If you cannot give thanks in all things – you are not deeply rooted in Christ!

Your roots still have some growing to do.

Jesus taught on this in the parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:20-21 says:

***The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.***

People who are not rooted in Christ fall away from the faith quickly and easily.

As soon as times get tough, they instantly start doubting. When trouble arises, they fall.

These are the people who say things like: God didn’t answer my prayer like I wanted when I wanted, so I don’t believe in Him anymore.

Those people don’t really know Christ!

Christ is the One who left the glory of heaven and came down to earth as a man so that He could die a horrific death on a cross for their sin and save them from an eternal hell and give them eternal life.

He is the One whose blood saves you and heals you.

He is the One whose name gives us authority over all the works of the devil.

That name is the name above all names!

And you want to turn on Him because your prayer wasn’t answered how or when you wanted?

You lose your faith in God because you went through a tough time?

That shows that you don’t know the sovereignty of God.

You don’t know the wisdom of God.

You don’t know the goodness of God.

You don’t know the grace of God.

You don’t know the love of God.

I know you don’t know Him because you don’t trust Him.

If you truly know God you will love God and trust God!

I urge you in the name of Jesus to get rooted and grounded in Him!

How do you do that?

In my study – and some of it was on a cruise ship and a plane – I looked up every Bible verse with the words root or roots or rooted. These are some powerful passages that show us the good fruit that results from being rooted in Christ.

One of my favorites is Ephesians 3:16-19 which says:

***I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.***

***And I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

We all want to be filled with the fullness of God. But the Bible teaches that we must be rooted and grounded in Christ and in the love of Christ and understand the depths of God’s love for us in order for us to be filled with the fullness of God.

There are many people who are saved, but who are not really rooted and grounded in Christ. And there are consequences for that! Paul talked about this in 1 Corinthians 3:11–15 when he said,

***For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is,***

***because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the***

***fire will test the quality of each person’s work.***

***If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.***

In other words – some people are barely saved. This is remarkable! They will be saved – but they will suffer loss! Suffer loss? In heaven? Loss of what? Loss of the rewards they could have received. 2 John 1:8 says:

***Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.***

This shows us that there will be varying degrees of reward in heaven. Some people will receive a full reward – some a partial reward – and some no reward at all. They will be saved and in heaven – but with no rewards.

God will judge how we built on the foundation of Christ. Wood, hay and stubble represent the works of the flesh, self-effort, dead works. All these things will burn in the fire. Gold, silver and precious stones represent those things in us that are pure and will not perish.

When we stand before God, who we really are will be exposed in His presence.

Only what will stand the test of a direct encounter with a holy God will be left and rewarded.

How we live here on earth impacts our life in heaven.

What you believe in this life determines where you spend forever.

How you behave in this life determines your reward in heaven.

You must be rooted and grounded in Christ your sure foundation.

But you must also build upon that foundation.

Here’s some important questions: are you rooted and grounded in Christ?

Are you building for today or for eternity?

Building for eternity means we choose to have faith in Jesus for our salvation AND we choose to live in a way that is rewarded in heaven. Some people think we should do right just because it’s right and they’re right! But God says He rewards certain behavior. God rewards us because He is a giver.

You can believe in Jesus, barely make it into heaven, and waste much of your time on earth with nothing to show for it when it’s all over.

Being rooted and grounded in Christ is the only way to bear good fruit!

And building your life on Christ is the only way to stand in the storms of life and to be rewarded in heaven.

Jesus Christ is the only way to true salvation!

He saved us, He is saving us, and He will save us!

Jesus said in Matthew 24:13

***He who endures to the end will be saved.***

He’s not saying that endurance will save you.

He IS saying that true salvation results in endurance!

When you are truly saved, you know that Jesus is the only way!

When you are truly saved, you know that good fruit in your life is never the result of self-effort!

You know that apart from Christ you can do nothing.

But in Him and through Him you can do all things!

When you are truly saved, you know you don’t have the strength to make it through tough times on your own.

But you know you are rooted in Christ and Christ alone.

And you know that when your life is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ,

No matter what comes your way, you can stand!

No matter what the devil throws at you, you can resist it in Jesus name!

No matter what storm rises, you have peace that passes understanding!

Even if you are tempted to quit and give up, you know that you have true salvation through Jesus Christ and you will endure to the end!

And because you are rooted and grounded in Christ, you will not fear hot times or dry times, your leaves will stay green and you will always produce fruit in Jesus’ name!