



Complete in Christ Colossians 2:6-12

FULL LIVES

LIFE COACHES

The video shows a growing trend in modern life for Life Coaches. It's starting to become a professional service – and it's possible to get spiritual life coaches too. These people are paid mentors to help guide people through life.

In fact, as soon as I saw ads and presentations for life coaching I thought “isn't that what the Church has been doing for the last 2000 years.” In fact they even use the same methods and imagery. In fact it's what we do with God taken out and replaced with self. Many of the ideas about self esteem and self worth are laudable, but I would suggest that if you take Jesus out, the only button you press is the destruct one. That's why I ended the video by returning the meaning of life to what it's really all about!

I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. (Good News) Do you want a life that's full, complete? Then it must be anchored in Christ!

Last week we explored how we should keep ourselves firmly rooted, anchored in Christ and we found four practical ways.

- ◆ Walk with Christ
- ◆ Build up your roots and shoots
- ◆ Be thankful
- ◆ Know what your life is based on.

This week I said we'd look at the final one. The church at Colosse wasn't one Paul planted personally but was started by Epaphras, one of his protégés. They were taught all the same stuff Paul would have taught them, but he was now writing to affirm the teaching they had received because there were those who were in the church that were questioning the very central plank of their faith – that Jesus was God's Son, God who had become a human being.

As far as they were concerned, for whatever reason, Jesus was just a man or at least certainly wasn't God. There were those into Greek philosophy that considered all flesh evil so God couldn't possibly have become human – so therefore he was just a powerful created being. For Jewish people, it was heresy to even suggest that Jesus was God – he had to have been just a man, however good.

Paul leaves nothing to doubt in this letter and if you don't come in the evening then my sermon notes are online.

This is what Paul says in verse 8: *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*

We still live in a world where quite a lot of old tripe is still taught about the Christian faith and folk religion generally. What's hollow and deceptive philosophy? I'd argue that it's anything that doesn't have Jesus at the centre. Modern philosophy puts self at the centre – you don't have to go any further than the average life coach to experience that.

What's also hollow is new age type philosophy which is usually nothing more than spiritualism dressed up in new clothes – it gives people a hope of the “other side” - but of course you need a special intermediary to get you there – on payment of a small fee of course.

Then there's folk religion that says you must do all sorts of things to gain God's favour and if you're not good enough – if the scales don't balance – you're doomed.

These are all the principles of the world – not of Christ. We are here to celebrate communion this morning – and at its heart is Jesus Christ – the One who died, whose blood was shed and who is now alive.

Our faith should be firmly anchored in Him. And that is achieved by knowing what we believe and why.

God has made us His people through Him. If I was looking for a short description of this particular passage of scripture this morning, I'd say that in Christ, God has made us complete in Him. In Christ we're everything we need to be to be the people of God, to enter into His presence, to reflect His glory. So what has God made us in Christ?

1. God has made us complete in Christ

9 For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity, 10 and you have been given full life in union with him. He is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority.

Those of you who know this verse may be more familiar with the NIV version: *NIV 9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.*

Full is used twice here it's the Greek plērōma which means something that's been filled. It is a maritime word that was used to describe the ship when it was full of cargo and crew and ready to put to sea. When the last container is on board, the last crewman back on board, everything is complete and ready for its voyage.

So verse 9 tells us that Jesus was completely God – there was nothing missing. And in Christ, we have everything we need and are complete in Him: we are the people of God. Remember the verse in John we started with: Remember that first verse we had this morning: *I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. (Good News)*. The word is the same – pleroma. In Christ our lives are complete. They are everything they need to be to set us up for life and for eternity. The bread and wine this morning remind us of that fact. Nothing else is required for us to be in communion with God and spend time in His presence.

And why do we know we are complete in Him? Because He is completely God so has the authority and power to give us that completeness. It's important to remember this. I am always saddened by Christians who think they are not good enough for God. In Christ you are already complete. Live like a complete person. Live like the person God has re-created you to be. To underline this the second point adds to it.

2. God has made His covenant with us

11 In union with Christ you were circumcised, not with the circumcision that is made by human beings, but with the circumcision made by Christ, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful self.

We have been circumcised, but not with human circumcision but by Christ. Circumcision was and is for Jews a sign made by parents on their child to show that they are inheritors of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is a mark of promise.

Physical circumcision is not part of the new covenant, but in Christ we are marked out by Christ as His people as inheritors of the Covenant that God makes with men and women in Christ.

How does that mark show? In changed lives, different lives, holy lives. In Christ, we live lives that are complete – full lives.

3. God has raised us to new life

12 For when you were baptised, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death.

Finally we realise that in Christ, we have been raised to new life. This verse echoes the early verses of Romans 6. I'm going to look at this verse and the ones following more closely this evening. What this emphasises is that we were spiritually dead, but as a result of our faith we have been immersed into Christ and now we have been made alive – raised to life. Come back tonight if you want to know more about that process.

We are people who are living new lives, resurrection lives – or should be. That's why

baptism is so important for believers. It recognises that through faith we have become in Christ new people because we have died with Him and should be living new lives in Him. He gives us the power to live life as complete people, as covenant people, as resurrection people. Claim all three afresh this morning as we come to communion.

Let's be uplifted by these truths of what God has made us in Christ . Let's come in confession that we so often don't reflect what we are in Christ.

Let's affirm afresh that we are a complete people, a covenant people, a resurrection people.

Let's claim afresh those promises this morning, and let's ask the Father to pour out the Spirit afresh on us this morning as we come to Jesus' table, that in His power and in the authority of the risen Christ, we might live who we are, and as we do so, bring glory to Him, experience His glory, and reflect that to a world of people who so desperately need the same completeness, the same new covenant and the same resurrection to new life that we have experienced.

Prayer

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