



Deep Rooted Colossians 2:6-12

HONEY MESQUITE

This tree is found in the semi desert areas of North America, particularly in Texas. It distinguishes itself as the deepest rooting plant in the world. It can extend its roots down 175 feet. Why? Firstly in semi-desert areas, water is found only deep underground for much of the year.

EXPOSED ROOTS

Secondly, desert areas have high winds and flash floods. Deep roots anchor the mesquite and ensure it neither gets washed away or blown away. They are a vigorous plant and is quite invasive because of its strong roots. It also is a tough woody plant what has thorns. It doesn't get damaged or eaten easily – it's tough!

In our reading this morning Paul encourages us to be rooted in Christ – to ensure we have deep roots. In fact he mixes his metaphors a bit (he often did). He says: Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. Don't just have deep roots, but make sure you're tough too!

This is one of those rare occasions when I bring the contents of the evening service into the morning. There has been an overlap of contents recently and I am going to take a necessary break from The Hope of Glory to renew our focus on Jesus as we are going to explore some themes of heaven in the later part of the Hope Of Glory series and it's important to know where we are rooted when we study future things.

BLOWN OVER

Why? Think of the plants which reach highest. They are the ones with deep roots and tough trunks and branches. The higher they reach upwards, the more pressure they experience from storms. In our garden we have lost two trees over the last 5 years. Both of them blew over in the wind. They had lots of leaves, but their roots were shallow.

If we want to reach out at heaven, then we must realise that the only reason we can do so is because we are in Christ. Well-rooted Christians are ones that were best equipped to resist the attacks of the evil one and the storms of life. If you really want to know more of the glory of God and experience more of it, and reach out to understand more of your destiny than you'll soon find that satan neither wants you to know let alone experience it. He will try to discourage or distract you. Even when he doesn't, there are plenty of other things life throws at us.

REDWOODS

To grow upwards, the mighty redwoods need to have strong roots and well-developed trunks. If as His people here on earth we want to reach upward, our faith needs to be

firmly grounded.

So before I come to exploring the subject of heaven – the glory we are coming into – I want us to be sure that we are firmly rooted in our faith and that we are growing – that we are toughening up. This passage helps us, both in telling us what helps us grow (this week) and what the basis of our being rooted is all about (next week).

So what helps us grow. Let's read some of the verses again: *6 Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. 7 Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving. 8 See to it, then, that no one enslaves you by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the teachings handed down by human beings and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ.*

Since you have accepted Christ, live in union with Him. It's better translated as ESV *Col 2:6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.* The Greek word used here is peripateo – a verb that basically means to walk but is in the sense of walking through life, how we pass our life, conduct ourselves. So the Message gets the sense well: *My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him.* If you have accepted Christ – then live Him.

◆ Build up your roots and shoots

Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught.

I've already talked a little about this. To reach upward we need to be well anchored. If we don't take care of our roots, the storms of life will take us down. How do we make sure we are anchored well so that our roots receive nourishment. Same answer as the last two weeks. Place ourselves in the position where the Holy Spirit can minister to us – prayer, reading God's word, worship, fellowship. It's so sad that when many of God's people go through the storms of life, they stop praying, they stop reading, they stop worshipping, they don't seek fellowship.

It's all about making Jesus the focus of our lives. There should be no area in our lives, no relationship, no activity, no part of our lives that hasn't been committed to Him in prayer. There's always the tendency of Christians to compartmentalise their lives – there's the God bit and then there's my bit. But if we are to live Jesus, then what's mine is His. It's a different mindset. If we are to be rooted and built in Him, then do we need to change our mindset?

Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught.

◆ Be thankful

Then we get to my final point for this morning *7 Keep your roots deep in him, build*

your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving.

Be thankful. We live in a society where we tend to be more discontent than thankful. Despite all the talk of recession and the rest, most of us live privileged lives – lives that our parents and grandparents probably never had/ We have things that they only read about in science fiction books. We have a standard of life they dreamed about. We have freedoms and education that were only aspired to a century ago. We are blessed. As Christians we have freedoms, opportunity and means to bring good news to people today that they had and more because we have the ability to reach a wider audience worldwide and in our own social networks. We are blessed.

As we look back through our lives and we see the footprints of Jesus walking with us and sometimes carrying us. We are blessed. Many of us have been Christians 30, 40, 50 years. We see his love and grace in our lives. Are we thankful? Yes? Then how does that reflect in our lives? Thankfulness should drive us to worship, should drive us to service.

It's one thing to thank God for and in all the good times but take a look at this verse.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ESV

Give thanks in all circumstances – even in the difficulties of life? How can I give thanks? How can it be God's will? God doesn't bring calamity on us. He doesn't bring the problems. But being a Christian doesn't excuse us from life. God allows us to end up in these situations. Why? He's not the cause, but He's the answer. One of the most difficult things to do is to thank God for the things we don't yet see and the answers we don't yet have – even though the present makes no sense. And when we are in a situation that places us at rock bottom, it's a prime opportunity rest in Him. I find that being thankful it is one of the hardest things to do when I feel down and out.

That's where I find the testimony of the older saints valuable, because one of the advantages of being a Christian for a long time then you've been able to walk with Jesus through both the good times and the hard times. You've been able to live Him, you are still rooted and built up in Him.

Ephesians 5:20 Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ESV.

Take every opportunity to recognise what God is doing in your life, in the lives of others around you – and be thankful! For those of you doing the Colossians series on a Sunday evening, you'll find the command "be thankful" comes up a few times. It is one of the anchors of a healthy faith because it means we are looking for what God is doing, we are recognising His presence, His power and His purposes. Let's always be thankful.

◆ Know what your life is based on.

Yes, I know there's another point to this – we'll do that next week and we'll find in all the storms and pressures of life knowing what – or who – our lives are based on makes all the difference!

Let's Pray

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