

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

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Today is Tuesday, October 8, and as we continue to explore the reality of Christ as our cornerstone and firm foundation, I want to explore five pillars of life with Christ this week: Trust, Growth, Refuge, Alignment, and Unity. Today, we will talk about Growth.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious Lord, guide me to understand how my life should be deeply rooted in You. Help me to grow spiritually, allowing Your truth to fortify every part of my existence. May I be grateful for the foundation You've provided in my faith journey. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7

REFLECTION

One of the experiences that I have fairly often as a pastor has to do with questions of purpose and meaning. In a day such as ours, there is a real interest in what God's plan for a life is. Typically, people ask that question looking for a static answer to resolve the question of what they need to do in their careers or with their lives. I think the real question they're asking is "What does God want me to do here?"

Often times, they're discouraged by the immediate answer. "I don't know." That's usually followed, however, by one of my favorite thoughts. "Perhaps the better part of wisdom is not in having all the answers, but in asking better questions." The better question may be what does God desire for me. That, I think, is a little easier to answer. I say that because Jesus gives the answer. In his Sermon on the Mount, while describing what life in the kingdom of God looks like, Jesus says, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." That's it. Be perfect!

Now, before you walk away discouraged, let me say a little bit more. When we hear the word, "perfect," we tend to think in one dimension—without error or flaw. In that regard, perfection seems unattainable. But the word in the original language means mature, complete or fully developed, having gone through the necessary stages to reach the end-goal. In other words, Christ expects us to grow. If you think of the spiritual life as a race, the finish line is the goal, but the process to get there takes steps. Each successive step is growing toward the goal. So, Christ expects us to faithfully run the race—to continue our lives IN Him.

When we understand Christ as our cornerstone, we recognize that the proper way to grow into the fullest human being we can be is in alignment with Him. It is the only way we can fulfill his

desire for us—perfection. When we do this, we can fulfill the whole of the Christian life which can be summed up in four words—love God, love neighbor.

In “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection” (1777), John Wesley define Christian Perfection, or entire sanctification, this way. Let me invite you to read and meditate on these words:

*In one view, it is **purity of intention**, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the **loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.** ([Works, Jackson, 11:444](#))*

Ask: How can I more fully devote myself to Christ? What are the areas in which I need to grow? How can I invite Christ into the spaces and allow Him to help me to run on toward maturity?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

I thank you that your desire for me is perfection—that you long to see me live into the fullness of life you meant for me. Guide me on today, Lord, that I might trust you more deeply, love you more fully, and serve you more passionately. Give me ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart open to receive that by your grace and power, I would continue on toward the perfection you have purposed for my life. Amen.