

How to Walk in the Spirit

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Main Scripture Text: Colossians 2:1–10

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”

COLOSSIANS 2:6

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Introduction

Now, take your Bibles and find, if you will, Colossians chapter 2, and in a moment we're going to read the first ten verses. But this is a wonderful, wonderful passage of Scripture! Now what this scripture is teaching us is how to live victoriously in the Christian life, and it's going to be very simple. Now the Christian life is not so high that you can reach it; it's so low that you get down to it. The Bible says God *“preserveth the simple.”* (Psalm 116:6) And an ordinary person surrendered to the Lord can understand how to live the victorious life. You don't have to have a Ph.D.; you don't have to learn the Greek and the Hebrew to learn what we're going to learn tonight. Somebody said about the Bible, “The Bible is such a wonderful book. It is shallow enough that a little child can come and get a drink without fear of drowning, and so deep that the scholars can swim in it and never touch bottom.” I love that. That is so true about the Bible.

Let's read, beginning in chapter 2, verse 1—Colossians chapter 2, verse 1: *“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;”*—now when he says *“conflict,”* he means “have a deep concern in my heart for you”; and here's what it was that he had the desire for those in Colossae—*“that their hearts might be comforted, being knit*

together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ...—remember this morning we talked about the mystery of the Spirit? That's what he's talking about right now—*“the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom...”*—now here's a key verse right here. Two key verses: this is one of them—*“in whom...”*—that is, in Jesus—*“in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”* Now here's the key verse—I have it marked in my Bible: *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:”*—we're talking about how to walk in the Spirit. Now, how are you to walk in Him?—*“rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him”—*that is, in Jesus—*“dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”* (Colossians 2:1–10)

Now Paul is saying that there is an incredible treasure for you. Go back to verse 3—he speaks of Jesus, *“in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* (Colossians 2:3) In Jesus: it's all in Jesus! In Him you're complete. You don't have to look for anything else. All the treasure is in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's hidden in Christ. Why did God hide it? So you and I could have the joy of discovering it. The treasure is available; it's all for you. But you may not be aware, because the treasure may be hidden to you. So what you have to do is to discover and appropriate your treasure.

Years ago I read about a ship that was out in the ocean off of Brazil, and the ship was without water. And the people on board the ship, though surrounded with salt water, were dying of thirst. They saw another ship, and they sent a message to the other ship by semaphore and said, “Do you have any water? We need water.” The other ship sent a message back and said, “Let down your buckets where you are.” They said, “No, you don't understand.” They sent another message: “We need drinking water.” They sent back the message again: “Let down your buckets where you are.” They let down their buckets and came up with fresh water, because they were at the mouth of the mighty Amazon River, and that Amazon River of fresh water was flowing out into the ocean and bringing fresh water way out into the ocean where they were. Here they were, thinking they were dying of thirst, and surrounded by water to drink. But they failed to appropriate that which was all around them.

And when I see a congregation like this, and I see many people who are living in spiritual thirst, almost dehydration, I want to say with the Apostle Paul, “I don't want you

to miss the blessing that can be yours.” And, tonight, I want you to let down your bucket where you are.

They say that the South African diamond mines were first discovered when somebody noticed little boys playing with beautiful stones. They were using them like marbles. They were diamonds. They had them in their hands—treasure—but they didn’t realize the treasure that they had.

Now the devil will do everything he can do to keep you from hearing the message tonight—so don’t you let him. Don’t you let him steal it away. Pay attention, because the devil’s trying to keep you from doing this.

Notice verse 4. Paul said, *“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”* (Colossians 2:4) Look, if you will, in verse 8: *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world.”* (Colossians 2:8) The devil wants to keep you from understanding the blessing that you can have in the Lord Jesus Christ. The devil wants you to say, “That’s absurd to say that everything’s in Christ; that’s absurd to say that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ.” There’s more. That’s exactly the lie that he told in the Garden of Eden. He said, “Eve, God’s holding out on you. There are other things. You don’t need to be hemmed in by the will of God. You need to get outside the will of God to discover all that you can have and know.” And there are people today who will teach you that once you receive the Lord Jesus Christ now you’ve got to go on and get a second blessing. Folks, let me tell you, in Jesus you have everything. “In him,” this scripture says, “you are complete.” (Colossians 2:10)

Every now and then people will say to me—you know, I get kind of animated—they come up and kind of look at me and say, “You’ve got the second blessing, don’t you?” I say, “Yes, I do.” “Oh,” they say, “tell me about it.” I say, “The second blessing is discovering what I got in the first one.” Amen? Now I’ll tell you what: I also have the third blessing. And the third blessing is discovering I didn’t get it all in the second blessing. And there’s more and more to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ. Precious friend, you can go deeper into Jesus; but you’ll never go beyond Jesus. It’s not Jesus *plus*. It is Jesus completely, totally. In Him you are complete. And notice verse 10: *“And ye are complete in him.”* (Colossians 2:10)

Now if a person is complete, what else do they need? When you have Jesus, when you’ve said Jesus, you have said it all. Now the key and the secret of finding everything in the Lord Jesus Christ, and letting everything in the Lord Jesus Christ express itself through your life, and living victoriously, is found in verse 6. Now, remember I told you that God the Holy Spirit wants to inhabit your human spirit, and your human spirit is to speak to your mind and your emotion and your will, which is your soul; and your mind, emotion, and will are to motivate and drive your body out in this world as you walk the

Christian walk and live the Christian life. Now, look at it again in verse 6: *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord...”*—do you see that?—*“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”* (Colossians 2:6)

Four things I want to tell you about your walk in the Lord: “How to Walk in the Spirit.”

I. The Circumference of the Walk

And, first of all, I want you to think of what I’m going to call the circumference of the walk. It’s very strange language here. Look at it; look at it carefully. He doesn’t say, “Walk after the Spirit.” He doesn’t say, “Walk with the Spirit.” He says to “walk in the Spirit.” (Colossians 2:6) That is, the Spirit is the sphere, the territory, of your walk.

Let me illustrate. If I said to you, “Walk in this building,” where are you to walk? In this building. The parameters of this building are to contain your walk. This building would be the boundaries, the circumference, of your walk.

Now you’re told to walk in the Spirit. Now the natural man says, “I don’t like that. I don’t want to be hemmed in. Are you just telling me that this is all there is to it? How dull that would be! Adrian, are you just telling me that that’s all I can do—is just walk in the Spirit? I want more.” Well, friend, if you want more, it’s because you don’t understand verses 2 and 3. Look at it again. Paul says, *“[I’m concerned] that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches...”*—underscore that—*“all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* (Colossians 2:2–3)

Now you are to walk in the Lord Jesus Christ. What I’m trying to say is—listen to me; listen carefully—there is nothing worth having outside of Jesus—nothing worth having! You say, “Well, what about my car, my automobile?” No, no. You can have a house. You can have a car. You can have your clothes. You can have all of these things. But all of these things simply are things that are a subset of knowing the Lord Jesus. That is, if Jesus allows you to have them, if they’re a gift that He gives to you, that’s fine. But if you have to go outside of Jesus to get any of these things; if you have to transgress the law of God to have something else, then, friend, you don’t need it; you don’t have to have it. Everything that you need, He will supply. He will *“supply all of your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19) He, Jesus, is the circumference of your walk.

Now, how do you know therefore when you get out of bounds? Well, go over to the next chapter, chapter 3, and look, if you will, where he tells us that we’re to have a certain boundary in our lives. Look in chapter 3 and verse 15—I love it: *“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”* (Colossians 3:15) Now the word *rule* there means “referee”; it’s a word that

means “an arbiter, a referee, a judge.”

Now, let's suppose that this rug right here represents the Christian life, and the Holy Spirit is the referee, and I'm to play the game of life on this rug. If I get out of bounds, He blows the whistle. He says, “You're out of bounds, Adrian.” Well, how do I know when I'm out of bounds? What does the whistle sound like? Well, he says, “Let the peace of God referee in your heart.” Now if you've been walking with the Lord very long, you know exactly when you step out of bounds. You know how? The whistle goes off. What's the whistle? You lost your peace. That's all there is to it.

There are times sometimes that I'll get cranky and fussy and I'll say something to Joyce that I think is logical and right, and the whistle blows. God says, “Adrian, you're out of bounds. You can't act that way. You can't talk that way.” I have to go back and I say to Joyce, “Honey, I'm sorry.” You know how I know that I'm out of fellowship with God? I don't have the peace. It's such a simple thing. The circumference of my walk is in the Spirit; and when I get out of bounds, He'll blow the whistle. And, friend, I'm telling you, He will blow the whistle on you.

You let the peace of God referee in your heart. The circumference of your walk is the sphere of the Spirit. You are to walk in the Spirit; and when you step out of the Spirit, He'll blow the whistle on you, and you will lose your peace. There is nothing worth having outside of Him. I'll tell you, nothing! Absolutely, totally, nothing! No possession! No relationship! Anything you can want, if you can't have it in Jesus, you don't need it. And when you start getting out bounds, He'll blow the whistle on you.

II. The Commencement of the Walk

Now I want you to notice not only the circumference of the walk—you walk in the Spirit—but I want you to notice the commencement of the walk. How do you walk? Friend, you begin a walk by taking the first step. Again, the Bible says here in chapter 2, verse 6, “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*” (Colossians 2:6) How do you start the walk? Well, you receive Jesus Christ. Walking begins with a step. Now that's profound, isn't it? But walking begins with a step. What is the first step to walk in the Spirit? It is to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. You can't begin the Christian walk until you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

Now this is very important. I want to slow down here, because I think there are a number of people who are listening to me tonight through radio and some who will listen later by tape and some in this building tonight who have not ever really received Christ.

A. Salvation Is Not a Creed

Now some have received a creed. You're not saved by a creed. You say, “Well, I know the plan of salvation.” Well, wonderful. You can know the plan of salvation and go to

hell. *You're not saved by the plan of salvation; you're saved by the Man of salvation*—not a creed.

B. Salvation Is Not a Code

It's not a code. You say, "Well, I live right. I obey the rules of the Bible." Well, you may just be a Pharisee on your road to hell. "Well," you say, "I serve the Lord."

C. Salvation Is Not a Cause

Well, salvation's not a creed. It's not a code. It's not a cause. You can work yourself to death in the church. Jesus said, *"Many will say unto me in that day,"*—talking about the Judgment Day—*"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* (Matthew 7:22–23) What you call *"wonderful works,"* He called *"iniquity"*: *"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* "I never knew you." These are not people that had salvation and lost it; they never had it.

D. Salvation Is Not a Church

What is salvation? It's not a creed. It's not a code. It's not a cause. It's not a church. You say, "Well, I'm a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, and Bellevue Baptist Church is a Bible-believing church; and I was baptized into the fellowship of that church." You're still not saved. That won't save you. It's not a church. It's not a cause. Not a code. Not a creed. *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord..."* (Colossians 2:6)

There was a lady who gave this testimony. She said, "I started coming to church, and I enjoyed it. I was busy. I was in the ladies' work. I was in the music. I was in the social programs. I was enjoying it all, and I was relating to all of it. I related to the social programs. I related to the music. I related to all of this, and I was enjoying my church membership, when I got in a class, and the teacher in that class began to talk about Jesus, and she began to talk about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She began to talk about Jesus as a person, somebody that she knew, and she had a relationship with Jesus Christ. And," that woman said, "I realized I did not have a relationship with Jesus Christ."

And I'm afraid that our churches are crammed with people who can relate to programs. They can relate to music. They can relate to activities. They can relate to social ability. They can relate to all of these things. But the commencement of the walk—to live victoriously—is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord.

III. The Character of the Walk

Now, think with me, thirdly, about the character of the walk. What is walking in the Spirit? Well, again, it's in verse 6: *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,*

so walk ye in him.” (Colossians 2:6) When you walk in the Spirit, when you walk in the Lord Jesus Christ, that means that Christ is the Lord. He demands, deserves, absolute control of your life. When you walk in the Lord, you’re under new management.

Go back, if you will, to chapter 1 and look in verse 10: *“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”* (Colossians 1:10) And I’ve put down as an ancillary verse 1 John chapter 2 and verse 6: *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”* (1 John 2:6) Now if I’m walking in the Spirit, my life is to manifest the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. You ought to be able to see Jesus in me. I ought to be able to see Jesus in you. The character of the Lord Jesus Christ is the character of our walk. We walk in the Lord. *“As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”* (Colossians 2:6) To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the Lord; it is to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, folks, that’s what baptism is all about; that’s why we are baptized. Look, if you will; go down a few verses and see what he says about baptism in verse 12. Look at it: *“Buried with him”—with whom? With Jesus—“in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”* (Colossians 2:12) What is baptism all about? When you get saved, we take you up here to this tub and we plunge you beneath the water. What’s that all about? Friend, that’s a funeral. That baptistry is a liquid tomb. The old person you used to be is dead and buried—buried with Christ by baptism. According to verse 12, even as Jesus came out of the grave to a new, abundant life, He took your sins and carried your sins to the grave of His forgetfulness, and your sins are buried with Christ in baptism. And then you are raised to walk, the Bible says, in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

Now I’m not asking you whether you tithe. I’m not asking you even if you obey the commandments. I’m asking you, is the genuine life of the Lord Jesus Christ manifested in you? When God the Holy Spirit comes to the human spirit, the human spirit speaks to your mind, emotion, and will, and motivates your body, you’re going to walk as Jesus Christ walked, and He’s going to be the Lord of your life. You know, in the New Testament He’s called “Savior” twenty-four times; He’s called “Lord” 434 times. That ought to tell us something.

IV. The Continuation of the Walk

Now here’s the next thing I want you to notice. I want you to notice the continuation of the walk. Now, look again in verse 6. It says, *“So walk.”* (Colossians 2:6) Now the Greek tense—and I don’t want to get too complicated here; I’m certainly not a Greek scholar; I was exposed to it, however—the word here *walk* literally means “to keep on walking”—“to keep on walking.”

Now a lot of people are looking back to an experience. Well, we said that in a walk there must be a commencement. But that's only one step. You have to keep on walking. Now you're not saved because you keep on walking; you keep on walking because you're saved. There is a continuation of walking in the Lord.

Now, what is walking? It is but a series of steps. Now if you take one step and don't take another, you can't stand. The only thing you can do is put both feet down at the same time, because when you walk, you're off-balance. You take another step, and you're off-balance. You take another one, and you're off-balance. But as you continue to walk, the balance is maintained. But you can't step and stop unless you stand. Well, if you stand, you're stuck. What you're to do is to walk and not stand. And so one step has to follow another step.

"Well, Adrian, what does it mean therefore 'to walk'?" Well, we know what it means to walk, because he says this in verse 6: "*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*" (Colossians 2:6) Now, how did you receive Jesus? By repentance and faith. Isn't that how you received Jesus: by repentance and faith? How do you walk? You walk in repentance and faith. You repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus. Those are your first two steps: repentance and faith. That's how you receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, how do you walk? You walk exactly the way you receive Jesus. The way to live the Christian life is the way you got the Christian life. How did you receive the Christian life? By repentance and faith. How do you walk the Christian life? By repentance and faith. That's all walking is: just repentance and faith; repentance and faith; repentance and faith; repentance and faith.

You say, "Well, Adrian, I already repented." Well, so did I when I got saved. But I want to tell you something. I've done far more repenting after I got saved than I did when I got saved. And I have trusted Jesus more after I've gotten saved than I did when I got saved. You know why? Well, when I got saved, I gave all I knew of me to all I knew of Jesus—and I knew very little about either one. But, you know, I didn't have to have a Ph.D. in theology to be saved.

Romans 14:1 says, "*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*" (Romans 14:1) God takes weak faith. You see, it's not our strong faith that saves us; it's our strong Savior that saves us. And you put your faith, whatever it is, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust Him, and He'll save you. And He'll start with you where you are.

How did you receive Him? By repentance and faith. But I'll tell you, when I put my repentance toward the Lord Jesus Christ and my faith in Him, God saved me, and I began a walk. And then God convicted me of some particular sin: I repented, put my faith in Christ, and He revealed Himself to me, and I repented. And you just go through life one step at a time, repenting and trusting, repenting and trusting. And, friend, I want

to give you some news. You're not going to stop repenting till the Rapture—if you're walking in the Spirit.

You say, “Well, pastor, do you ever do anything wrong?” Well, I almost got angry at my deacons tonight talking about Tennessee winning that ballgame. Don't you clap, now.

You know, you never reach the place in your Christian life where you don't need to repent. As a matter of fact, Joyce came up to my study the other day, and the sunlight was coming in the window, and she looked at the glass-top table, and she said, “Look at that dust.” I said, “Honey, if it hadn't been for that sunlight, you never would have seen that dust.” But the sunlight was coming in, and it came on that glass table.

Friend, a person who says, “You know, I don't need any more repenting,” just tells me they're not walking in the light. You know, they're in the twilight zone. The closer you get to the Lord, the more imperfections you'll see in your own life. How do you walk in the Spirit? Repentance and faith. How did you receive Jesus? By repentance and faith. *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”* (Colossians 2:6) And, friend, if you'll do that, you will discover the treasures that are in the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, repentance is turning from self. Faith is turning to Jesus. And the more you turn from yourself, and the more you turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, the more real He will seem to you.

Conclusion

Now that's the way to live the Christian life—is to walk in the Spirit. You know, there are too many Christians who are looking back to some experience that they've had a long time ago, rather than walking in the Lord.

Now it's a very simple thing—a very simple thing: You come to the Lord, and you say, “O God, I'm a sinner, but I received Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, and I take the first two steps of repentance and faith.” He begins to walk and work in me. And as I continue to walk, turning from self—repentance—turning to Him—faith—my life begins to progress, and I get more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, those treasures that are in verse 3, I discover, and I say, “You know, it is really true. All the treasures are in Him, and in Him I am complete.” (Colossians 2:3) And once you do that, it's the cure for self-consciousness. It's the cure for greed. It's the cure for competition. It's the cure for comparison. You're just complete in Him. You're like the little guy who misquoted the twenty-third psalm—but I think he got it right when he said, “The Lord is my shepherd; I've got all I want.” You are complete in Him. You can go deeper into Him, but you'll never go beyond Him, amen?