

**Colossians 2 v 6-23**

**Jesus is all you need – Leader's version**

**For an hour study, just do the starred \* questions**

**Check in** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

**What does the passage say and mean?**

90 minutes

1. Read Colossians 2 v 6-7. What does it mean for Jesus to be your Lord?

*It means to recognise Jesus as your King and as having ultimate authority in your life. When we recognise this, we try to behave, think and speak in a way that honours and obeys Him (because we love Him, not because we think that this is going to make Him love us any more).*

\*2. **STICKERS** What does it mean for someone to be rooted and built up in Jesus?

*To be growing in our love and knowledge of Jesus and for our lives to be increasingly shaped by our love and knowledge of Him. Think about what roots are for on a plant – a plant that is well rooted is well nourished, growing, fruitful, able to withstand temporary water shortage and strong winds etc.*

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Do you live your life in Jesus, rooted and built up in Jesus?

If not, what needs to change?

*It might help to think back to the question asked at the end of last week's session, 'We all have room to grow regarding how firm our faith is. What do you think you need to do this week in order for your faith to become firmer / more steadfast / more resilient?'*

3. How do you think being rooted in Christ is linked with 'overflowing with thankfulness'?

*The more we know Jesus, the more we realise what we have to be thankful for. We simply don't deserve to be saved and changed! We are sinners and don't deserve to be noticed by God, let alone to live our lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him!*

\*4. Read v8. What is the warning to the Colossians and why is it important?

*False teachers were saying that people should trust in traditions (things from the past) and basic principles of the world (contemporary arguments) rather than on Christ. Doing this is so serious that Paul describes it as captivity.*

\*5. **SHOUT-OUT** Can you think of some examples of traditions Christians might wrongly rely on in your culture?

*It might help to think of things that you feel you have to do in order for your faith or salvation to be maintained e.g. pray in a certain way, style of music at church, using only a specific version of the Bible, dress-code etc. You may have to help the group to understand that some of these things do help us in our faith but are not the reason that we are saved, e.g. taking communion helps us to consider what Jesus has done for us, but if you were on a desert island and couldn't take communion you wouldn't lose your salvation.*

Questions 6-8 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work in pairs.

\*6. Read v9-12. Paul starts to defend the gospel against this false teaching. What does v9 mean and why is it so important we understand this?

*Jesus is fully God and fully human. He is not a man who has been blessed by God or who channels God's power: He is God incarnate. When we understand this, we understand that, by definition, He is the only one who can rescue us from the penalty of sin and restore us to fellowship with God.*

*If we understand why Jesus came and what it means to follow Him but do not understand who He is, our faith is useless. Jesus becomes simply a good teacher with no power to save and the whole offer of salvation collapses.*

\*7. What does it mean to say that believers have been given 'fulness in Christ'?

*Jesus has done everything that needs to be done in order for us to be saved. We are not missing any knowledge (remember the Gnosticism Paul was countering in 2 v 2) or any personal action (including traditions). We are saved purely because of what Christ has done, not through anything we have done.*

\*8. Why does it matter that we know that Jesus is Head over every power and authority?  
(v10)

*So that we understand that Jesus is defeated by nothing. All spiritual powers and authorities bow in submission to Him. They no longer have power over us. (All human authorities will one day bow in submission to Him too, even though they may not recognise His authority today).*

## 9. SHOUT-OUT Why does it matter that Jesus is really risen from the dead?

*The resurrection proves that:*

- *Jesus' words are trustworthy (if he can predict his own death and resurrection accurately, it's fair to say we can trust everything else he says)*
- *Jesus' death wasn't a pointless execution (it wasn't just an unfair trial of a criminal, it was the mission of the Saviour, leading to the resurrection)*
- *Sin was truly paid for (death is the penalty for sin, Jesus has conquered death so sin has been paid for)*
- *There is genuine hope for us, as believers, in the face of death*
- *If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, then Christianity was founded on a lie.*

*(Christianity Explored Prison Edition, Session 5.6)*

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If God can raise Jesus from the dead, what confidence do we have when we die?

*As believers in Christ we will be raised from the dead too.*

Rather than them guessing the meaning of v11-12, explain these verses to the group in a paraphrase. For example, in my words,

'Just as men belong to the Jewish nation because they have had a piece of skin cut away, you who belong to Jesus have had your sin cut away. Baptism is a symbol of what Jesus did for you when He died. When you come up out of the baptism water, it's a symbol of your new, and eternal, life in Christ. Only God's power can give us new life.'

10. On our own, we are described as 'dead in our sins' or spiritually dead. How can someone become spiritually alive?

*By God, through Jesus. No other options are given. Only by Christ.*

*Note that we were made spiritually alive while we were spiritually dead i.e. unresponsive to God. God made the first move. A dead person cannot bring himself to life – he doesn't have the power or authority to do it.*

\*11. Read v13-15. What does it mean to be alive in Christ?

*To be spiritually alive is to be responsive to God and able to relate to Him. This happens when we are forgiven and restored to relationship with God. It means that you know that, when you die physically, you will have eternal life. We cannot make this transition to being spiritually alive ourselves. To be made spiritually alive is a gift from Christ, the source of all life.*

*'Cancelled the written code' – taken away the power of OT Law to condemn those who are forgiven in Christ (although the OT moral Law still tells us how we, as believers, should behave as followers of Christ).*

\*12. Read v15. When Paul says 'powers and authorities', he means the evil forces in the world – the devil and his minions. What has happened to them because of the cross?

*They have been disarmed. They no longer have power to destroy us if we are trusting in Jesus' work on the cross. This was done publicly to show everyone that it is done and that Jesus is victorious.*

### **\*Did you know...?**

World War 2 ended in the Pacific in 1945. One Japanese soldier, Hiroo Onoda, did not surrender. He spent another 29 years hiding out on a Philippine island and attacking local Filipinos until his former commander travelled from Japan to formally relieve him of his duty. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3FHeBnTnVs>)

We see the same sort of thing happening now with the 'powers and authorities'. The war is over. Jesus defeated them at the cross. But they haven't surrendered, they are still defending their position or fighting skirmishes. They may not act like it, but they ARE already defeated.

13. Read v16-23. What does Paul warn against?

*Thinking that keeping 'religious rules' will save us (observing certain festivals, v16, or rules about what you should eat or drink, v21).*

*The OT religious festivals were given by God as a shadow of things to come; pointing to Christ, but with no inherent power to save. OT food laws were marks of Jewish identity. OT laws about clean/unclean things helped the Jews understand about holiness and the lack of it.*

*None of these are applicable to Christians who are saved by Christ alone. Christ has fulfilled the meaning of the festivals, our kingdom identity and holiness (having given us His righteousness).*

\*14. Read Colossians 2 v 23. Why does keeping man-made religious rules make us feel good? (v23) What is the value in keeping these rules?

*They give us an 'appearance of wisdom', making us look very committed to God / very obedient / very special to God / better than other people. Keeping these rules makes us feel we deserve our place in God's kingdom or have earned it.*

*Keeping man-made religious rules shows we have not really understood that we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone.*

*The law is unable to restrain sensual indulgence – the law shows us what is right and therefore shows us our sin. But telling someone they should not do something is temptation to do it!*

\*15. Read v19. What has happened to the person who says we need 'more than Jesus'?

*He has lost connection with Christ and gone off down his own path of self-made religion. Sadly, he probably fully believes and trusts in this self-made religion.*

*Try not to get tangled up in whether we can lose our salvation – this is not the issue the passage addresses.*

**\*?**

How can we protect ourselves from going down the same path?

*We need to stay connected to the Head of the Body, i.e. Christ. Help the group to think about how to do that – prayer, reading the Bible, Bible study, fellowship, church etc.*

*End the session by thinking about v6-7 again which summarise the answer to this question!*

**‘So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,  
rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught,  
and overflowing with thankfulness’**

**(Colossians 2 v 6-7)**

**Check out** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

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If not, what needs to change?

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4. Read v8. What is the warning to the Colossians and why is it important?

5. Can you think of some examples of traditions Christians might wrongly rely on in your culture?

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7. What does it mean to say that believers have been given 'fulness in Christ'?

8. Why does it matter that we know that Jesus is Head over every power and authority?  
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