

Welcome

Announcements: Special Offering for July-Meals on Wheels, the new one for August will be The Arc. White Rose is in memory of Frank Meis.

Fellowship of Love

Song

Call to Worship

L: We come into God's presence,

P: like green olive trees in the house of God.

L: We drink deep from the waters of life,

P: like young saplings in the courtyard of the Lord.

L: We ripen in the light of God,

P: like the fruit of God's vineyard.

L: Come! Let us worship.

Unison Prayer

Loving God, your presence in our lives is like a green olive tree--a joy to the heart and a blessing to the spirit.

Your movement in our midst is like a basket of summer fruit--a delight to the eye and a pleasure to the tongue.

Speak your words of life to us that we may sit at your feet and know that we are yours. Amen.

Offering/Song

Scripture: Colossians 2:6-15

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him,

7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 Watch out that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

10 and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

11 In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ;

12 when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses,

14 erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

L: The Word of God, for the people of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

Message: Is Christ Sufficient?

Last week, we were introduced to some complex topics relating to the formation of the letter to the Colossians. I introduced you to Gnostics and some of their fundamental beliefs, reminding you that we are examining them through an argument. What we discovered was that Paul is concerned with the church itself. Who the church says it is and how the church strives to live out that calling in the community it is in. Today's scripture presents us with some of the same thematic issues. The primary issue today, though, is whether Christ is sufficient?"

Have you ever been in a conversation or situation where you know that you are never going to measure up to whatever a person may want, or maybe trying to get from you? Maybe it's someone looking at you to solve a problem, and as they ask you about it, you realize you are in well over your head, or you realize you're talking about something else entirely and essentially talking cross purposes. I've shared the story in the past where I was out in the garage of my in-laws' home, "helping" to install new brakes on Katie's car. Now I say "helping" with quotation marks because I've never been much for helping with cars. Pssst! Let me tell you a secret, I'm not a car guy. I like cars, and I can identify cars sometimes. I can do minor repairs or know when something is messing up, and why it might be. But I am severely limited in my knowledge about cars. It's not because I can't learn about them; I just don't care to learn that in depth.

My father-in-law was the one working on replacing the brakes, and he was telling me step by step what we were doing and why. Like any socially acclimatized deaf person, I was nodding my head and affirming what he was saying. His response was "You don't know what I'm talking about, do you?" Mind you, I have now been

with his daughter for probably around 10 years at this point. I said, "I've never known what you were talking about." The point of this story, however, is in his response, "I know, but at least you're here." Our scripture relates to that as well. What is the role we see Christ in? In my example, I'm not saying my father-in-law, nor I am Christ, if anything, my father-in-law is Paul. Pointing to the basics of what is best in the relationship we have.

Paul is pointing to us with Christ that we should be focusing not on rules and regulations, but on relationships and gratitude. Okay, let's tackle this from another direction. Do you pray regularly? Do you fast? Do you do bible studies? Do you visit religious sites? (I know there are some of you who do.) These all have a specialized term, which is ascetic practices. They are practices that we engage in in order to interact with God. The danger is when we insist and create standards and rules around them, it creates barriers to our relationship with Christ. If you insist on something before your relationship with Christ, then you have set up an idol; you have set up a barrier to the grace of God in your life.

Just as last week, Paul is concerned about the church. The question of Christ's sufficiency falls on the church in this way: are we living as rule-abiding, rule-enforcing, judges? Or are we practicing our faith, all those ascetic practices I just mentioned, knowing that we don't deserve the grace that God has given to us through Jesus Christ? This makes a difference. We see this in our world and society today, amongst many Christian groups. They are so concerned with following the law, religious law, that they are trying to make them actual laws, and in doing so have forgotten that we aren't called to Christ to enforce laws. We are called to Christ to

live a life of gratitude for what God has done through the resurrection.

A notable example of this is the use of circumcision and baptism. The argument isn't over what method is correct; the argument is that before you were baptized, you were dead to your faith. Afterwards, by no action of your own, you are made alive again in Christ. I guess if I were writing or saying this, I would say it a bit differently. I would say, "You didn't do anything to deserve God's grace, so get off people's backs for trying their best."

We are called here as a community to be known by how we show and live out grace towards others. This is not some pretty little side quest; this isn't an "aww that's nice." that we put aside on a shelf. This is the core of who we are called to be through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is not optional, not "you can apply the law and still be about Grace." This is the standard by which we are measured and called to a life of faithfulness.

In our church this means forgiving one another when they make mistakes. It means realizing while there may be rules around certain things, we are all trying our best. And our best course of action is to help one another learn. It means easing up on that which isn't required, I know I play around talking about how we dress but that means things like music selection and decoration selections. It means when a new person comes in and sits in your seat, you rejoice that someone is here and go sit somewhere else in that joy. We are called to be a community of grace and love. Let's live into that together. Amen.

***Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer
Song***

Message for Sunday, July 27, 2025

Title: Is Christ Sufficient

Scripture Colossians 2: 6-15

Benediction

Song

Goodbye