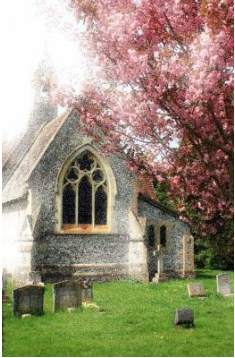


To Live is Christ

By Mary Kane



I became a Christian when I was nineteen, after my first year of college. That summer, my sister Jane and I worked at a local pizza place. We often worked the same hours and shared rides to work. On the way to work one summer day, Jane shared the Gospel with me and I accepted Christ as my Savior. I was very excited about my new found faith, but I had a lot to learn about how to live for Jesus. God, in His infinite grace, was very patient with me as He revealed His truth to me through His Word and the teachings of mature Christians. Even though I was receiving sound teaching, I still lived according to my own will; I had given my heart to Jesus, but I hadn't given Him my Life. It wasn't until years later, when I was in my thirties, that I gave my *life* to Christ.

God isn't after hearts only; He wants lives that are completely surrendered to Him, because it is to our Father's glory that we bear much fruit. It is only by living for Christ that we can experience the abundant life that His Word promises.

Take a moment to quiet yourself before your Heavenly Father and confess to Him any sin that is present in your heart. Now ask Him to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit and give you insight into His Holy Word.

Please read Colossians 2:6-10.

How did we receive Christ Jesus?

We received Christ Jesus the Lord by faith.

How should we continue our relationship with Him?

In the same manner in which we received Him; by faith through the Spirit. We will not be able to live an effective powerful life if we walk according to our own wisdom or the wisdom of the world. Neither will we please the Lord if we walk by sight. We need to walk by faith, trusting that the Father will do what He says He will do in His own perfect time. In order to walk by faith in Christ, we need to know Christ, therefore we must study the Word of God, which is the Bible.

Please list the action words from verses 6 and 7.

Our relationship with Christ is to be a living, breathing, vibrant bond. As our walk with Christ extends through the years we are to grow in Him. The day of our salvation is just the beginning; from that point on, we are to walk, root, build, be established and grow in the knowledge of Christ. Let's take a look at some of these verbs and see what we can learn from them!

Walk: "to live, to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self, to pass one's life." After we accept Christ as our Savior, we need to live our lives according to His Word. I can tell you from experience that after you start living for Jesus, you'll never want to go back to the old way of life. You'll count everything else rubbish for the surpassing knowledge of knowing Christ Jesus.

Rooted: "to strengthen with roots, to render firm, to fix to cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded." Think for a moment about what it takes for a seed to germinate and root. Seeds do not automatically begin to grow where ever they happen to be; I've never opened a package of seeds only to discover that they were already sending forth shoots. Seeds must have good soil, water, sunlight and warmth in order to grow. These same requirements for growth apply to our walk with Jesus. We need to be planted in the soil of His love, nourished by Living Water and placed in the light of His presence. Growth in Christ will only happen if we determine that it will.

Built up: "To finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid; to give constant increase in Christian knowledge and in a life conformed thereto; to build a house; to grow in wisdom and piety." We mentioned

above that in order to take root, we must supply the right conditions. Being “built up” is the next step and it will require work. In order to build we must have tools and supplies; a Bible, Bible study books, solid teaching, scripture memorization, prayer and meditation. How much you grow is up to you.

Established: to make firm, confirm, make sure, stable, fast. How you make decisions and choices and how you face trials and temptations will confirm if you have decided to be established in the faith. At this point in my life, after living completely for myself and now living as best as I know how for Jesus, even if Christianity was just a myth (and it’s not) I’d still choose the life I’m living now hands down. God has delivered me from so much!

Taught: “to impart instruction, to instill doctrine into, to explain or expound a thing, to teach one something.” We do not learn the tenets of the Christian faith naturally; God must teach us about His Word and the doctrines of the faith. In order to teach us, God uses His Word, preachers, pastors, Bible study leaders, radio programs, podcasts, and books. We need to be wise about who we allow to teach us and like the Bereans, check what we are learning against the truth of God’s Holy Word.

All of these things will happen as we walk *daily* with Jesus. Our relationship with Him is not something to do just on Sunday; it should affect every area of our lives. After our salvation experience we have to make a decision to begin to walk by faith. And as we walk by faith, with each step that we take, we will become more strongly rooted as we see that God is who He says He is. Our trust in Him will grow as we learn by experience that His Word is truth.

There will also be times when it will seem that circumstances are not working out as they are supposed to according to God’s Word. When I reach a season like this I have learned to remember the truth of God’s Word and continue to walk with Him regardless of circumstances. For example, many years ago I applied for a teaching position at an area school. I worked very hard to secure an interview. I invested in having my resume professionally printed and I bought a new suit. After reading a couple of good books on interviewing, I practiced with a neighbor.

After weeks of work, I made it through the interview process to the point where I was one of two candidates, but in the end, the other woman was offered the job. I was very disappointed. I could not figure out why this had

happened, the job seemed a perfect match for both parties. A few days later I found out why; God had my dream job waiting in the wings! Had I accepted the other teaching position I would have missed the opportunity to teach at my favorite school! I joyfully accepted my “dream job” and thanked God that I did not sign a contract with the other school. Through that experience, God taught me a valuable lesson about trust and faith. He also showed me that He truly does use all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Please read the end of verse 7 again.

What are we to abound with?

We are to abound with great thanksgiving in our relationship with Christ!

What do you have to be abundantly thankful for since coming to Christ?

We have been called, chosen redeemed, delivered, restored, born again, forgiven, gifted, elected, washed clean, seated at the right hand of Christ, adopted, accepted and united with Christ, just to name a few things!

Does your life abound with thanksgiving?

I need to do better as well.

What are we to guard against according to verse 8?

We are to be on guard against the philosophies and lies of the world and of men. The NKJV says, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and vain deceit.” The word *cheat* in the original language is *sulagogeo* which means to “carry off as a captive and slave, to lead away from the truth and

subject to one's sway." The truth of Christ promises us freedom, but the philosophies of men and of the world will enslave us.

According to verse nine, why should we follow Christ?

We should follow Jesus because He is truly God, the Creator of the Universe, the Author of all wisdom and knowledge. The "fullness of the Godhead bodily" refers to the fact that Jesus, while He was on earth in bodily form, was still fully God; in complete unison with the other members of the trinity. In referencing the "Godhead in Christ," Matthew Henry states, "Under the law, the presence of God dwelt between the cherubim, in a cloud which covered the mercy-seat; but now it dwells in the person of our Redeemer, who partakes of our nature, and is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and has more clearly declared the Father to us. It dwells in him bodily; not as the body is opposed to the spirit, but as the body is opposed to the shadow. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Christ really, and not figuratively; for he is both God and man."ⁱ

Please read verses 9 and 10 again.

A more literal translation of verse 9 is "Ye are in Him (by virtue of union with Him) filled full" of all that you need. The word for *fullness* means fullness, abundance, completeness. We are complete in Jesus; we need no other source of supposed wisdom, gospel, religion or theology. He is the way, the truth and the life Our English word for *complete* does not do justice to what *complete* means in the original Greek. *Complete* transliterates as *pleroo* which means "to fill to the full, to render perfect, to supply liberally, to cause to abound, to fill to the brim." Christ has not given us just what we need to "get by"; He has given to us in great measure, pressed down and running over. *Pleroo* is derived from the Greek word *pleres* which means "a hollow vessel, which is now filled; a surface, covered in every part; of a soul, thoroughly permeated with." Before we accepted Christ as our Savior we were empty vessels, searching to be filled. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit took up residence in your soul, finally filling the emptiness. You are complete in Him because He is complete. The reason that Jesus

completely satisfies is because He is perfect! No other god, religion or spiritual leader can make that claim. Why would we choose any other? We need no other power, no other authority.

Does this truth, that you are complete in Christ, match up to what you experience on a daily basis?

Do you have any empty spaces in your heart?

With what have you been trying to fill these empty spaces?

At different times in my life, I have tried to fill my empty places with good works; I needed a reason to get up every morning beyond chores and housework. I've also tried to fill the emptiness with a busy social calendar. Now, I'm experiencing a literal emptiness that comes from having grown children who are only home for short stints of time during vacations (my husband doesn't know this but I'm thinking of adopting a few more children!). The empty places in my life will continue to be empty places until I allow Jesus to fill my needs.

Our empty places will never be filled by people. If my satisfaction in life depends on people, who come and go, I will never be satisfied. We've all had the experience of having a friend or acquaintance who needs us too much. The relationship soon becomes an anchor that drains our energy. Perhaps we are the ones who are requiring too much from our friends and families. Please remember that your husband will never be able to completely meet your needs and your best friend will have times when she is too busy to counsel you—take your needs to Jesus first. Everything we require to be satisfied, a life of purpose, someone to love us, someone to love, approval

and acceptance, words of encouragement, and companionship must be found in Jesus. Any fulfillment we receive from others after we've been filled by Jesus will be an extra blessing.

In closing, if you've never made the decision to truly live for Jesus, He's asking you to do it now. God has made plans for your life since before He laid the foundations of the earth. Please take a moment to give your life completely to Jesus or to reaffirm your commitment to live for Him.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Philippians 1:21

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ⁱ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Colossians 2." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2011. 8 Jun 2011.
<http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1786&commInfo=5&topic=Colossians&ar=Col_2_10>