

Daily Devotional, November 24, 2021 Our Hearts Overflowing With Thankfulness

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 (NIV)

There is a really long history of people advocating for a belief system that I would like to call “Jesus Plus.” The argument is that you need to have Jesus plus something else in order to be a better Christian or, in some cases, to even be a Christian. They say things like, “You need Jesus plus good deeds, for instance, by serving the poor.” “You should make sure you have Jesus plus reinforcing your faith in Him by spending time in the Bible every day.” “What is best for your life is following Jesus plus supporting your church by making a large donation to the church.”

Typically, none of these things suggested are bad in themselves. The error is to suggest that anything more than Jesus is necessary for our salvation and spiritual growth. These examples are perfect examples of works righteousness which are unfortunately recommended by those who do not understand the concept of God’s grace.

The Colossians struggled with this, as well. They were told that they needed Jesus plus an assortment of other beliefs. Paul wrote to discredit this heresy. He reminded these people that Jesus alone was sufficient and that God’s work was complete at the cross, no exceptions. Then Paul reminds the Colossians of the truth in today’s passage. The same way they received Jesus for salvation, with nothing more added, is the way that they will also grow in their faith. He didn’t promote Jesus plus something else. He said that Jesus was enough for their salvation. And He is enough for their continued growth, with roots that go down deep as their faith in Him strengthens and grows each day through prayer and reflection on God’s word.

Then Paul adds one more thing: “And overflowing with thankfulness.” He did not suggest that they had to manufacture those thankful hearts or needed to remember to be thankful. He did not suggest that gratitude and thanksgiving were part of a Jesus-plus way of thinking. He simply revealed that when we receive forgiveness from Jesus for our sins and then continue to grow in Him by developing deep roots, the natural output will be an overflowing of thankfulness.

The day of Thanksgiving is a wonderful reminder for all of us to stop and give thanks to God. God is good. God is loving. God deserves our heartfelt and most devoted words of thanks and praise. In addition to an annual holiday, however, is the truth that thanksgiving should be a daily overflow in our lives. If it is not, we should pause and let our roots go down more deeply into knowing and loving Jesus. We don’t need Jesus plus something else. We simply need more of Jesus, and heartfelt thanks to Him for our eternal salvation.

Prayer: Gracious God, I want thankfulness to overflow in my life. Help me to sink my roots deeply in you, receiving each day the love and grace you have poured out to all of us. Thank you for the cross, where all of Jesus was given for all of us. May we always stop a moment throughout each day to appreciate what a great gift we have been given through Him. Amen.