

IF WE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH

COLOSSIANS 1:19-23 • TV138A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND, 1981

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Transcribed, edited and published
NOVEMBER 7TH, 2014

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
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Colossians 1:19-23

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

I am asking you to open your Bible today to the book of **Colossians chapter 1**. I am going to be reading **verses 19 through 23**.

Now, my text and topic is found in **verse 23**. This is the title of the message and this is the text: **“IF WE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH.”**

Now, my friends; do not despise the word “if” in regard to spiritual matters, in regard to spiritual blessings, and in regard to your relationship with the Lord God. Do not despise the word “if;” it occurs in the Scriptures too many times.

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We are taught “*to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith.*” Every time we come to take of the Lord’s Table we are taught to examine ourselves. “*Let a man examine himself and so let him eat.*”

Peter urged us “*to give diligence to make our calling and election sure.*” Someone once said: “God has hedged us about on one side with promises lest we despair. On the other side, God hath hedged us about with warnings lest we presume.”

Now, the Bible is full of promises to those who believe; promises of mercy, promises of forgiveness, promises of God’s grace, love, and eternal life that we might be encouraged to seek the Lord and to call upon his name. He is merciful. “*He delights to show mercy. He is plenteous in mercy.*”

But, my friend, the Bible is full of warnings. It has many warnings to those who become indifferent, to those who become careless, and to those who depart from the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, no man can claim any promise in the Scripture; (now get this), no man can claim any promise in the Scriptures unless he, to some degree, fits the description or the character described in that promise.

What I am saying is this: you cannot lay claim to any promise in the Word of God unless you, to some degree, fit the character described in that promise. For example:

Our Lord said: “*All things are possible to them that believe.*” If you can believe, then all things are possible (to them that believe).

Listen to this: “*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.*” A man is a new creature if he is in Christ and no man is a new creature who is not in Christ. Do you see what I am saying?

“*If we love one another, God dwells in us.*” If we don’t love one another, then God doesn’t dwell in us. “*He that loveth not knoweth not God.*” That is perfectly clear; do you see what I am saying?

We lay hold on the promises of God, lay claim to the promises of God and say that they are ours, the promises of God. But no, no, they are not ours unless we, to some extent or degree, fit the character described in that promise.

Listen to this: “*If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” A man who does not take his place before God as a sinner, who does not humble himself before God as a sinner in repentance, a man who does not acknowledge that he is a sinner can find no forgiveness, “*if we confess our sins.*”

Listen to this in **Hebrews 3**: “*We are partakers of Christ.*” Now, we would like to have that blessing wouldn’t we, a partaker of Christ, a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus, “*if we hold fast our confidence steadfast and firm to the end.*”

Listen to this Scripture; Paul describes the Gospel in **1 Corinthians 15**; he says: “*I declare unto you the gospel which you believed, which you received, by which you are saved, if; (there’s that word if,) if you keep in mind (or if you hold fast) to that which I preached unto you.*”

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Then, John describing the people who had left the church and departed from the believers, he said: *“if they had been of us, they no doubt, would have continued with us.”* So, I exhort you and I warn you and caution you; don’t despise the word “if” in regards to spiritual matters and blessings in our relationship with the Lord God.

Now, the Scriptures teach preservation. You know what preservation means; we are talking about the security of His sheep. We are talking about the security of those who are in Christ Jesus; God will keep His own.

He said: *“I will never leave you; I will never forsake you. Lo, I am with you even to the end of the earth.”* The Bible teaches preservation. It teaches the security of God’s elect or God’s sheep.

My friend; the Bible teaches perseverance too. It teaches us that we will not depart from Him. He will not depart from us and we will not depart from Him. The apostle Paul says: *“I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.”*

Every believer is not only preserved by God’s power and secure in the hand of Christ Jesus, but that believer will, he will persevere. If he does not persevere in the faith, if he does not finish his course in Christ Jesus, if he does not continue to walk in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will perish.

The Scripture teaches that; he will perish. **1 Peter 1:5** says: *“We are kept, (there is preservation); we are kept by the power of God.”* That is the one who does the keeping, the power of God.

But now, don’t stop there; there is no period there: *“we are kept by the power of God through faith, (not without faith), but through faith.”*

The Old Testament believers were described this way in the Book of Hebrews: *“they died in faith.”* They began in faith, they walked in faith, and they died in faith.

When they started the believer’s journey or their spiritual life, they walked in faith, they walked with God but they continued in the faith. They held fast to their confidence and they died in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, my friend, I say unto you between here and heaven, according to the Word of God, there is a Gospel to be believed: *“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Between here and heaven there is a Gospel to be believed. Between here and heaven there is a race to be run. We are told in the Scriptures that we are to *“run this race with patience, the race which is set before us.”* Paul talks about “the man who is crowned is the man who completes the whole course, the man who crosses the finish line.”

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Between here and heaven there is a fight to be fought; there is warfare. The apostle Paul tells us to *“fight the good fight of faith.”*

There is no discharge in this war. A man does not get his discharge and go sit on the sidelines while the other soldiers of Christ engage the enemy. There's no discharge.

Between here and heaven there is a faith to be kept. We keep the faith. Between here and heaven there is a course to finish and there is a death to die and there is a judgment to face. That death must be died in faith and that judgment faced in the confidence of the Lord Jesus Christ who is our one Mediator.

Now, there may be churches and preachers who will give hope and confidence to those who profess faith in Christ, who make a decision, who walk down an aisle, who join the church and who are baptized, and then leave the Gospel and become indifferent to the things of Christ and leave the church and leave the fellowship of believers.

But, the Word of God holds out no hope for such a man. Judas departed and stayed gone. Demus departed and he goes on naming others. Simon Magus, Peter said: *“Your heart's not right with God. You are in the gall of bitterness.”*

There may be churches and preachers that will hold out hope to men who have put their names on the line and who for a while taught Sunday school or had an active part in the church, but who have left the worship of the Lord and left the Gospel of Jesus Christ and left the fellowship of the saints.

The Bible holds out no hope for such a person. In **Hebrews chapter 10:38**; now listen to it: *“Now the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back, God says: my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”*

You lay the banner down. You draw back. You return like the dog to his vomit or the sow to its wallowing in the mire, and God says: *“I have no pleasure in you. He that putteth his hand to the plow, and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.”*

Paul says in **Hebrews 10**: *“We are not of them who draw back unto perdition.”* I looked that word, *“perdition”* up in Strong's concordance and that word is damnation, that word is destruction, and that word is death. We are not of them who draw back unto damnation but we are of them that believe, and continue to believe to the salvation of our souls.

What am I saying? I am saying this: *“We are of the household of Christ, if we continue in the faith.”* We are children of God if we continue in the faith. We have a hope of eternal life and we have an *“inheritance undefiled, reserved in heaven, that fadeth not away,”* if we continue in the faith.” That is what the Scripture teaches.

I know that we are hedged about with promises lest we despair. Without the promises of God, we would despair. If we didn't have them we would find no hope.

My friend, don't presume on the mercies of God. We are hedged about on the other side with warnings and our Lord warns us: *"take heed brethren lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief."*

The word says: "Those people that left Egypt and journeyed across that wilderness for 40 years, of that entire bunch, only one person besides Joshua, who was over 20 years of age when they came out of Egypt, entered the Promised Land."

Why didn't they enter in? He says: *"They could not enter in because of unbelief."* They started the race and they ran for a while but they ceased to believe. They laid down the banner. They turned their backs and walked away.

Listen to the text again in **Colossians 1:19**: *"For it pleased the father that in Jesus Christ should all fullness dwell: And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, to reconcile all things unto himself: By him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven:*

"And you that were sometimes, (or at one time), alienated and enemies, enemies of God in your mind, by your wicked works, yet hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, that he might present you holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable, in his sight."

Isn't that beautiful? Doesn't that sound good? It is good, it is beautiful. What a pleasure, what a blessing. The sentence is not over. There's a comma there, *"if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled; (now watch it), and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."*

My friend; I preach what this Book says, what God's Word declares and God's Word declares that there is no hope, no salvation, and we are not to cry *"peace, peace, when there is no peace,"* to those who turn their backs on the Gospel of Christ, no matter how zealous or enthusiastically they follow it at one time, if they turn their backs on Christ John said: *"They never were of us, not truly; they never were of us"* because, who can turn back to eat with the hogs when he is eating with the king? Who can turn back to a life of shame and unhappiness when he walked with Christ in the life of holiness, beauty, and truth?

A man who has really seen the face of Christ, how can he be content to look upon ugliness and evil? A man who has walked with God can never be content to walk with any less than God. So, *"If they had been of us, (John said, really truly of us, with a regenerated heart, and a new mind and spirit), they would have continued."*

All right; here are five tremendous truths that I want to present to you from this text. If you would like to, I wish you would open the Bible to **Colossians the 1st chapter** and let's look at these verses, just almost line after line. That's the way we are to preach it, *"line upon line, precept upon precept."*

First of all: It says in **verse 19 of Colossians 1**: *"It pleased the Father that in him, (that in Christ), should all fullness dwell"*

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Now, my friend, what is “*all fullness?*” It says: “*In him dwelleth all the fullness, of the Godhead bodily.*” What is “*all fullness?*”

Well, it’s all things pertaining to God for me. It is everything I need pertaining to God. It’s everything I need pertaining to a relationship with God; it’s found in Christ.

None of it is found in me. None of it is found in the church. None of it is found in the water. None of it is found in the elements, everything I need, all fullness, all fullness, is found in Christ.

That fullness is all blessings; “*we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ.*” It’s all truth; Christ said: “*I am the truth.*” It’s all love: God loves us in Christ. It’s all righteousness: “*The righteousness of God is in Christ.*”

It’s all mercy: “*You are complete in him.*” It’s all sanctification and holiness, all grace and all life. That is “*all fullness: It pleased God that all fullness should dwell in Christ.*”

Where is this fullness? It is in Christ. He’s the only one who can contain fullness. No other creature can contain “*all fullness,*” no angel, no man, not all of them; only Christ can contain “*all fullness.*” It’s all found in Him.

He’s infinite, everlasting, and incomprehensible and He’s the only one who can retain Him, “*all fullness.*” He’s the only one with the wisdom to distribute it. Yes, “*all fullness is in Christ.*”

Why is it in Christ, all this fullness, this blessing and truth and love and righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and mercy? Why is it all in Christ? It tells us here, it says: “*it pleased the Father.*”

You know, they said to David: “*where is your God?*” These heathens; they knew where their gods were. Their gods were all fixed up, you know, and sitting there in their shrines, and temples, and places of worship.

They never moved. Having no eyes they couldn’t see and no ears they couldn’t hear and no legs they couldn’t walk. They are safely where they put them, where they left them.

They said: “*David; where’s your God?*” He said: “*Our God is in the heavens.*” They said: “*Tell us about him.*” David said: “*He hath done whatsoever he pleased; that did he in heaven, earth, and the seas, and all deep places.*”

It pleased God to make you his people. It pleased God to bruise Christ on the cross. That’s what the Scripture says. Paul said, “*It pleased God, to reveal his Son in me. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe and it pleased God that all fullness should dwell in Christ.*”

Everything I need is in Jesus Christ, “*all fullness.*” When? Well, it dwells there. “*It pleased the father that in him should all fullness dwell.*” It always has been there. It is now and always will be, never exhausted, never diminished. “*All fullness dwells;*” that’s where you will find it, “*dwells in Christ Jesus.*”

Secondly: **1 Colossians 20**: *“Having made peace through the blood of his cross”*

Now, we are talking about peace with God here. **Romans 5:1** says: *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

We hear so much preaching today about the love of God that we tend to forget, my friend, that God is angry with the wicked: *“the wrath of God abideth upon the ungodly.”* That is what the Scripture says.

God’s justice and God’s righteousness and God’s holiness cry out, cries out for death: *“the wages of sin is death.”* God’s justice and holiness cry out for death. There’s a war between heaven and earth.

But, it says: *“Through Christ and through the blood of his cross we have peace with God. Therefore, being justified by faith, I have peace with God.”*

The war is over, I have surrendered. God Almighty has given peace through Christ Jesus. Through the blood of His cross, justice was satisfied and peace was bought with an awful price.

Thirdly: We are not only talking about peace with God but we are talking about peace with ourselves, peace of heart and conscience: *“Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee (Christ).”*

If I believe on Him and trust in Him; if I know that in Him *“dwelleth all fullness”* and everything that God requires of me, that God’s righteousness demands and God’s justice requires, if I know that it is in Christ, safely dwelling in Christ, and God’s demands are met in Christ, then my heart can dwell at peace.

If I am always thinking that maybe I’m not saved, that maybe I haven’t done enough, maybe haven’t worked enough, maybe I haven’t given enough, maybe I have sinned too much, maybe this and maybe that, I could have no peace, in Christ I can have peace.

Now, the unbeliever cannot know anything about peace, he’s at war with heaven. He can cry: *“peace, peace; God says, when there is no peace.”* But, peace is in Christ. There is peace with God and peace of conscience and heart and peace with one another. It’s found in the Redeemer.

Fourthly: Read the next line; he says: *“We have peace with God and all fullness is in Christ”*

Watch this: *“And you, (of all people, you Gentiles, heathens, pagans), that were alienated, strangers, foreigners, from the commonwealth of Israel, you who were enemies of God, by your wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled to us.”* God is reconciled.

Now, reconciliation takes two directions. If there is enmity and warfare, reconciliation takes two directions.

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First of all: *“God was in Christ reconciling us to himself.”* God looks upon us through Christ with favor and mercy and love and grace. You see, He has reconciled. He’s not angry anymore because Christ has fulfilled all that the law requires and all that justice demands and God’s at peace with us.

The apostle Paul, when he was Saul of Tarsus, he was one of God’s chosen. He was one of God’s own. He was one of God’s sheep. Even when he was in rebellion, even when he was denying the Gospel and fighting against heaven and fighting against Christ, and fighting against the Gospel, God was reconciled to Him by the death of His Son.

But, you see, Saul wasn’t reconciled toward God. So, the Holy Spirit comes and conquers that sinner. Here’s the other direction that reconciliation takes: God was in Christ. God came down here in the person of His Son and reconciled us to Himself and peace was made, was bought, and was purchased by the death of His Son and the blood of His cross.

But, you see, we still have that enmity in our hearts. We still have that hatred. We still have that self-will, self-righteousness and that ego, pride, and haughtiness, and arrogance; it is still there. We are still at war with heaven.

We may have our own idea of God, you know, and worship it. We may have our own idea about what the Bible says: “well, my Bible says this; my God wouldn’t do that.” You’ve heard that trash everywhere, you know.

But, there is still warfare with God and the Holy Spirit comes and conquers that sinner. He smites him, he unhorses him. He knocks him in the dust. He humbles him; the Holy Spirit of God does a work of grace in our hearts and reconciles God to us. Do you see that, it reconciles God to us?

The Holy Spirit gives us a new nature that loves God and loves his Word. I don’t know everything that the Book says but if it is God’s Word, I believe it. I don’t know everything that God declares but if He declares it I believe it. I don’t know everything that God commands but if He commands it; I believe it.

I’m not at war with God. Let God be God. I am happy. Let Christ be the only Saviour; that suits me. Let God save whom He will; that’s all right with me. Let God be sovereign; that’s ok with me, is it all right with you?

Many of you say, “No!” Well, you haven’t been conquered yet. You are still at war with heaven. When you look at the Bible and say, “well, I don’t believe that even if the Bible does say that,” you are at war with heaven.

“Well, I will be saved but I’m not going to be baptized.” You are at war with heaven. “Well, I will be saved but if you think that I am going to come to church on Sunday and give up my golf game or give up this, that, or the other; you have another thing coming.”

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You are at war with heaven, oh boy; you haven't been conquered yet. When God conquers you, you will fall into the dust just like Saul of Tarsus and you will say: *"Lord; what will you have me do?"*

"I'm winning, I'm in the receptive mood, I'm in the submissive mood; I'm willing to do anything that you say Lord. Just speak to your servant and I heareth." You see; that's reconciliation from the other direction. That is called regeneration. That is called the new birth.

There are a lot of folks who think they know God but they don't know Him at all. They have a god of their own imagination and they are in subjection to their own god. But, when the God of the Bible speaks, His people bow; they submit.

All right, notice the next verse, **verse 22**: *"He will present you holy, unblameable and unreprouvable, in his sight."* You just chew on those words a little while. You just think about those three words in reference to us, in reference to you and me.

Now, you listen to what I am saying here: I don't claim in myself any holiness and you better not claim any either. *"All have sinned and come short of God's glory. All we like sheep have gone astray."*

The holy, sovereign, eye of God sees sin in you. *"If any man say that he hath not sin; he is a liar and the truths not in him. If any man say he hath not sin, he makes God a liar."*

Now, we are not holy in ourselves. *"In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God."* But, in Christ, He will present you holy. Our holiness is Christ. Our righteousness is Christ.

"With his spotless garments on I am as holy as His Son." In Christ I am holy. Do you see what I am trying to say? In Christ I'm holy. In Christ God sees no sin. He sees no ungodliness. He sees no evil in Christ, clothed with His beauty, His garments.

We are unblamable; think about that, where *"unblamable in God's sight."* It's not in the sight of men. I can find a lot wrong with me and you can too; I'm sure you can. But, you ought to give me equal time. I expect there are some things wrong with you too.

But, God says: *"We are unblamable in his sight. He is going to present you holy, unblamable, unreprouvable: Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect,"* un-accused, the great Word says, un-reprouvable is un-accused.

You know, when our Lord talked to those Pharisees who brought Him the woman who was found in adultery; they wanted to stone her. He got up and said: *"one without sin, just go ahead and throw the first stone."*

They all left and he looked down at her and said: *"Woman; where are your accusers, where are your accusers? Has no man accused you? Are you un-accused?"* She said: *"No man, Lord."* He said: *"neither do I, go and sin no more."*

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My friend; I'm un-accused by the law of God, by the holiness of God, by the righteousness of God, by the moral precepts of God, "*unreprovable in his sight.*" Now, watch this: "*And he will present you, you; (think about it), holy, unblamable, unreprovable. He will present you.*"

You don't present yourself. You don't take yourself down to church and have them present you or the priest to present you or the preacher to present you. He's going to do it. If you are His own, if you are in Christ, "*he will present you holy, unblamable, unreprovable, in his sight through the body of his death.*" That's how he did it.

Now watch, as we close: "*If we continue in the faith, if we be not moved away from the gospel.*" These promises are to those who believe and who keep on believing.

Lord; lead me to seek thee and seeking thee to find thee, and finding thee to love thee, and loving thee to walk all the days of my life in thy grace.