

True Believers Continue to Believe

Sunday, February 4th, 1990

Colossians 1:21-23

“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.”

Let's open our Bible today, the Book of Colossians. I'm going to be speaking in a little while on this subject: “True Believers Continue to Believe.” This is interesting. I believe that I will hold your attention. I think you will be interested in what I have to say; “True Believers Continue to Believe.”

Here, in Colossians 1, look down at verse 21 through 23. Paul says, *“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.”*

My friends, I often get letters or talk to people who say something like this, “Well, so and so made a profession of faith and a profession of Christ years ago, but now they have no interest. They have no interest in spiritual things at all. They never worship God and have no interest in the gospel. Do you think that person is still saved?”

I may hear someone say something like this, “Well, he accepted Jesus. He walked down the aisle and accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour.” Mothers tell me this that their sons and their daughters have made a profession like this. But, now they are back out into the world completely. They have no interest but they are still saved aren't they? Are they?

Nearly every church, even the church of which you are a member, has a roll full of members. They have members on the roll, members who rarely attend and some who never attend. Some have no interest in the Word of God. They have members who are dishonest and worldly. They have a filthy mouth and are profane in word and deed. They have lots of members.

I was a pastor of a Baptist church many years ago (in the year 1951). There were 1,243 members on the roll. There were 800 of them that never attended and 800 of them were

never seen or attended the services. Some of them hadn't been there in ten years. But, they made a profession of religion. They joined the church; they were baptized and use to attend. Nearly every church has members like that.

Churches today have a constant turnover with pastors and people. Most pastors are not there over two or three years and they are gone and the people are gone. Where are all the people who made their professions? Where are all of those people who walked down the aisle and shook the preacher's hand? Where in the world are they? Have you ever stopped to think about that? They come and go, but every one of them claims to be a Christian. Every blessed one of them claims to be saved and every one of them claim to be Christians. Are they Christians? Are they believers and are they saved?

Let's look at the scripture one more time, in Colossians 1:21-23; *"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 unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." You who were lost, are now found. You who were at war are now reconciled. You who were separated from God are now holy, unblameable, *"if you continue in the faith,"* not if you quit or fall out of the way or if you go back into the world. The scripture says, *"If you continue in the faith."* You have no right to the promise without the condition. You are to be *"Grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel."*

Let me read you some scriptures. If you don't want to take time to look these up, just write them down and read them later. This is what God says. Turn to Hebrews 3:6, this is right along this same line. I am saying that true believers continue to believe. True believers do not quit. True believers do not leave the gospel. True believers don't drift away. I beg your pardon; true believers continue to believe.

In Hebrews 3:6 it says, *"Christ is the Son over His own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence in rejoicing firm unto the end, the end of this life."* In Hebrews 3:14 it says, *"We are partakers in Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end."* Look at Hebrews 10:38, Paul says, *"The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."* The writer continues in verse 39, *"We are not of them draw back unto perdition, but we are of them that believe to the saving of the soul."* Matthew 10:22 says, *"He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved."*

In First John 2:19, John is talking about some folks that had left the gospel and had left the Church and left the body of Christ. John says, *“They went out from us, but they were never of us. For if they had been of us, if they had been true believers and members of the body of Christ, they would no doubt have continued with us. But, they went out that it might be made clear that they never were of us.”* They quit.

I will tell you this; the word of God is clear and plain. The next time someone comes to you and says so and so made a profession many years ago and now they have no interest in the gospel, they have quit, gone out and they have departed, then read that verse of scripture to them. You tell them that you don't have an opinion, but God has a strong opinion. In God's Word it says, *“They went out from us but they were never of us, for had they been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us. They went out that it might be made clear, manifest, that they were not all of us.”*

You see; these scriptures are plain. They really don't need any comment from me. They are very plain and they are very clear. True believers continue to believe. Those in the faith continue in the faith. They live by faith; *“The just shall live by faith.”* We begin living by faith. We continue to live by faith. Like the prophets of old, we die in faith.

I'll tell you this; true preachers are really concerned for the glory of God. I wonder how many preachers today are more concerned about their homes, their salaries, popularity, fame and all of these other things, rather than the glory of God Almighty. If we are concerned for the glory of God, if we are concerned for the truth of God's Word, if we are concerned for our own soul, for our own spiritual well-being and for the well-being of our hearers, we are going to quit crying, *“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”*

You can't speak peace where God Almighty does not speak peace. You can't tell a man that he is saved. You can't see a human heart. Only God knows who knows Him. I will tell you this, if we'll deal honestly with the Word of God and have the glory of God in our hearts, and the well-being of our hearers; we will preach this, repentance, conversion, faith and coming to Christ are not, I repeat, are not, a once- for -all decision.

Repentance and faith, conversion and coming to Christ are not a once-for-all decision or an emotional experience. Faith, repentance and conversion are a state of heart and a state of mind that continues to repent. A man, who truly repents, keeps on repenting. A man, who truly believes, keeps on believing. A man, who is truly converted and comes to Christ, keeps on coming to Christ.

This is not a once-for-all thing that you get fixed up. It is not like having your tonsils taken out. To repent means to never stop. To repent is to keep on repenting. To believe

is to keep on believing. To come to Christ is to keep on coming to Christ. Let me tell you something, to cease to have a need for Christ, to cease to have an interest in the mercy of God is to reveal that we never had an interest in the mercy of God.

One day, our Lord's disciples were about Him and the entire multitude was out there. He had fed them, preached to them and made them angry. They all left and departed. They all went away. After the 5,000 went away, He turned to His disciples and said; *"Will you also go away?"* Peter answered and said, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal life and we believe and we are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* They found all they needed in Him. They found all they wanted in Him. They found all that God requires in Him. Now, they said; *"Where shall we go, we have nowhere to go?"*

That is what I am saying. I am saying that very thing. I am saying, that the Word of God says that when a person truly comes to Christ, repents and believes, he is in a new state and he has a new heart, a new nature, and he is a new creature in Christ. He continues to believe and he continues to repent. He continues to come to Christ.

My friends, I want you to listen to me. I wish preachers would sound this note. They don't and they won't and they are not going to. The Word of God reveals that salvation is a union with Christ. It is not just a decision; it is not just an acceptance of doctrine and facts. It is not just changing a lifestyle; it is a living, vital, personal growing, and lifetime union with the Son of God in Christ. The scripture says, *"I in them and Thou in Me; it is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

"When Christ, who is my life shall appear," is what the scripture says. Christ is not the most important thing in my life; He is my life! Paul wrote, *"I'm dead to the world; I am crucified to the world. I am dead and buried; nevertheless I live. Yet, not I but Christ lives in me."*

Christ is not a fire escape that I have adopted. He is not an insurance policy that I have taken out. He is not someone that I am going to grab a hold of before I slide out of this world. Christ is my life! Salvation is not an acceptance of religion or lifestyle, it is a union with a person and it is a new life. Those who are saved have been saved, they are being saved and *"Their salvation is nearer now than when they believed."*

You see; that is what the Bible says. It uses the three tenses in reference to this thing of "being saved." In Ephesians 2:8 and 9, the actual translation is; *"For by grace have you been saved."* In First Corinthians 1:18, it reads like this; *"To those who are being saved,*

Christ is the wisdom and the power of God.” In Romans 13:11, says this; *“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”*

The Word of God teaches this thing of redemption, salvation and eternal life is not a decision, a once-for-all emotional experience and just accepting some facts or changing your lifestyle. The answer is not investing in a church and staking your claim to a plot of land somewhere in the sweet bye and bye. This redemption and salvation is a new birth, a new creation, a new life and a union with Christ Jesus. It is Christ in you and you in Christ.

There is no way to go back. There is nothing to go back to. The old man is crucified with Christ. The old life is dead. The old creature is gone. We are dead and that is what baptism says, “I was alive, now I’m dead. I’m buried and I’m risen in Christ to walk with newness of life.” There is no going back. There is nothing to go back to.

Four times in scripture it says, *“The just shall live by faith.”* It declares, *“We are kept by the power of God through faith.”* This is what is being said; a dead sinner, a lost man, woman or child is quickened by the power of God to acknowledge his sin and his need of the Redeemer, and his need of the Mediator. He comes to see that he is lost. He is convinced of sin. That individual looks to Christ. God reveals that Christ is his righteousness, Christ is his sin offering and through Christ he has forgiveness and eternal life through His life and death before God. He looks to Christ and believes Christ. By faith he is justified. By faith he is redeemed and by faith he is accepted in the Beloved.

That person receives a new heart and a new nature. He is a new creature. He now loves the things of God and he hates the things of the world. He now loves the things of God and he finds his rest, peace and joy in the Lord. That’s right! This is not just talk; it is experience. He will continue in that faith and not only continue in that faith and relationship, but *“He will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

It is not a matter of going back; it is actually a matter of growing. Actually, it is not a matter of leaving Christ but loving Christ more. There is no question at all about turning back. The question now is, how much of the Word do I discern and lay hold of and understand that I may grow more like Christ?

When life is over, that person whom God awakened, whom God quickened, whom God called and justified, who are saved by grace through faith, dies in that faith. He loves it more, he believes it more strongly, and looks to Christ with a firmer gaze. He is still coming to Christ. True believers continue to believe.

I want to show you this before I close; the apostle Peter wrote in First Peter Chapter 2, *“As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, if so be that you have tasted or experienced that the Lord is gracious.”* Have you? *“To whom coming,”* this generation says, *“To whom I came.”* This is not what Peter says. He says, *“To whom coming.”* You might say, *“Oh I repented.”* Do you mean that you are not repenting now? No, you never did. You might say, *“Oh, I once believed.”* Do you not now still believe? You if not you never did. *“As newborn babes.”* New born?

Yes, we are born of God. That is what salvation is; it is a new birth. We are sons of God and we are born into the family of God. We are born by the Spirit and the grace of God. This is not a decision it is a birth; you are born of God. *“As new born babes,* that is children of God. We are not masters understanding all things. I am not a master. I’m no graduate. Paul said, *“I haven’t apprehended yet. I haven’t laid hold upon that for which I have been laid hold of by Christ.”* I’m not perfect and I haven’t arrived. I’m just a baby and just a child. Children need to grow. Children are always growing, maturing and learning. They are being taught. *“As newborn babes,”* children desire.

The average church member has to be roped and hog tied to get him to read his daily Bible reading, let alone to desire to hear a message. If they can think of any excuse not to come and hear the Word of God, they will stay away. *“These newborn babes desire the milk of the Word”* like an infant desires a mother’s breast.

Have you ever seen a hungry two-week-old infant? That little mouth works all the time. He just wants nourishment; he wants milk; he wants food. That is the way God’s children are. The children’s food, the children’s bread is the Word of God. That is how we grow as a newborn babe. *“A newborn babe desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, if so be that you have tasted it.”*

If you have never had a taste of it, you won’t desire it. You have never tasted that the Lord is gracious, and never tasted of His grace. All that you have done is feed on the briars of your good works. If you have never tasted the clover of His grace, then you are satisfied with the goat’s tin cans. But, if you have ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, you will never, never, never be satisfied until you wake in His likeness. You will never get enough.

You will never get enough of the gospel. You will never get enough of the Word of God. You’ll never get enough of the children’s bread *“If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”* As newborn babes desire a mother’s breast, you desire the milk of the Word that you may grow thereby. That is if you have tasted and experienced that the Lord is

gracious. Have you ever tasted that milk? Have you ever drunk from that well? Have you ever experienced that mercy? You will never get enough.

Listen to this, *“To whom coming.”* You might say, “But yes preacher, I came to Christ.” No, those who come to Christ are still coming to Christ. They are still coming, each and every day. The scripture says, *“To whom coming.”* That is a person that I am talking about. It is not to what you are coming to. It is not coming to a mourner’s bench. The scripture says, *“To whom.”* It is not to a position, doctrine or to a law. That is not living; it is coming to a person. *“To whom coming,”* is not to a ceremony or not a church building, but *“to whom.”* To what do you come? No, *“To whom coming.”* What is coming? It means that you are always believing, always trusting, always looking, always obeying, and always coming. Come to whom? *“Coming as to a living stone.”*

Often our Lord is referred to as a *“Rock or a stone,”* but not as a position. *“He is a living stone.”* He is a foundation but He is not a position that a person comes to and establishes a legal position. He is a living stone. This is a living union; this is a living Lord to whom we come. *“He is disallowed indeed, of men.”* He is rejected of men and he is hated of men.

Listen to this next verse, *“He is chosen of God and He’s precious.”* Who is precious? Christ is precious. His promises are precious, His Word is precious and the faith that He gives is precious. Watch this, *“You also, are living stones built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ, to whom coming, to a living stone.”* But we are not just guests or onlookers; we are built up by God a spiritual house in which Christ dwells.

That building down there that you call a church is not where God dwells. God dwells in living temples in His people. They are *“living stones.”* Back in the Old Testament there was a tabernacle, there was a priest and there was an atonement. In that tabernacle God met men. The hand of that priest offered the sacrifice. The atonement was made. Jesus Christ came and tabernacled among us. He is our great High Priest. He offered His blood, the only sacrifice for sin and redeemed us. Now, it says here; you are a temple. Believers are a holy and spiritual house. That’s right, made of *“living stones.”* Our Lord has laid these stones in His spiritual house and we too, are priests. *“He hath made us kings and priests to our God.”*

We have a sacrifice to offer and it is acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. What is that sacrifice? I’m talking about the sacrifice of praise, worship and faith. Do you mean to tell me, that those folks, who never praise Him, never worship Him and never offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, that they are in this temple in which my Lord dwells?

I'm going to give you an old Alabama expression, "You are full of bologna!" True believers continue to believe. I'll base that on this word right here, "*They are living stones in a spiritual house. They are a holy priesthood that offers sacrifices to God, acceptable by Jesus Christ.*"

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?"