

“Rooted and Built Up” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Friendship Sunday August 30, 2026

- I. **Colossians 2:6-7** – ⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- II. **In Christ we grow up... we are rooted, built up, and firm in the faith.**
 - a. I know this might be a surprise to some of you, but Jesus is the reason we are here today.
 - i. Sure, we are friends, and we also call this Friendship Sunday because we are always connecting as a church, but also always inviting friends to join us as we live in Christ.
 - ii. Yet, the draw, the real reason we are here is because Jesus Christ is still living and active!
 1. He lives and is active through His people as we have faith and trust in Him but also, through His grace that is found here.
 - iii. We often say that “Jesus is the reason for the season!” in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day... but Jesus is the reason for the life we have that gives us purpose... and connection... and grace.
 - b. I love the way our reading is describing the work of God in our lives, not the other way around.
 - i. You see, it doesn’t say, “Plant and root yourself... build yourself up...establish yourself...”
 - ii. No, it says *be* rooted... *be* built up... *be* established in the faith.
 - iii. Jesus Christ is at the center and the one who made these things possible, as the Bible says, “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,” Ephesians 2:10 – He is working in us so we might be rooted, built up, and established in the faith.
 - c. I constantly remind people how important it is to have Christ at the center of our relationships and lives, because our connections can last that way.
 - i. In the terrible earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010, some estimate that 300,000 people died... but why?
 - ii. As international helpers began to dig through the rubble and help with rescues, it was apparent that the people of Haiti used too much sand in their mortar mix... and too little steel.
 1. The building materials that made proper mortar and steel were expensive, and Haitians had little choice but to make their homes and businesses without firm foundations.
 - iii. In Christ, we have a foundation that is far more supportive than mortar and steel... we have the very God of the universe... just as verses 9-10 say... “For in Him [Jesus Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him.”

1. Do you get that? As we believe in Jesus Christ, our faith includes being filled in Christ.
 2. That also means that our relationships are more Christ-like, and we love with an unconditional love... the kind that lasts.
 - d. And, with Christ at the center, we don't need all kinds of empty philosophy and teaching because we have everything we could ever need in the relationship we have with Jesus.
- III. **Certainly, the world** around us has many empty philosophies and teachings.
- a. One of the interesting teachings that I hear from Christians regularly is that we don't have to be religious to be a Christian.
 - i. I'm not sure I know exactly what that means, but I suppose that person isn't too keen on going to church and participating in worship.
 - ii. Now, it seems reasonable to say that Sunday worship isn't the entirety of the Christian life, but what is religion anyway?
 1. Many people believe the word religion is based on a Latin word that means "to bind" – or we are connected together.
 - iii. Without God calling us into this place and our faith which seeks out His good gifts, there would be no reason for us to show up here.
 - iv. But just like our reading, God does the work as we are rooted... built up... and established or made firm... and in this very place we are blessed by God with His wonderful gifts of grace.
 - v. I understand that it might seem like a lot of manmade stuff that we do in church... but when you really look at our services, they are mostly made up of the Bible!
 1. Over and over we read the Psalms, we quote Scripture, we read Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel readings... we use the words of greeting from the Bible, the instructions Jesus wants us to follow, and the prayers that He gave us.
 2. So sometimes when we say we don't particularly like worship, it is worth asking ourselves what we mean by that, because so much of what happens here is simply God speaking His Word.
 - b. Another empty philosophy that's out there is that you can somehow please God... or get on God's good side by doing the right things.
 - i. In other words, coming to church, reading your Bible, and doing good for others somehow offsets the bad we do.
 - ii. Don't get me wrong, God loves when we live for Him... but we usually get everything mixed up... because He first loves us... and then we love and live for Him.
 - iii. Hear what 1 John 4 says, "9 God showed how much He loved us by sending His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. 10 This is real love-- not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our

sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other,” (1 John 4:9-11 NLT).

- iv. Again, it all starts with God... as He loves us, chooses us, and brings us to faith through the Word and our Baptisms... and then with that gift of faith, He brings us into this place to receive His gift of grace over and over again.
- c. Remember, this place is where God’s gifts are especially shared among us as we come together in community... in communion.
 - i. We can never earn God’s love by doing good... and we are drawn together in worship because this is the place that God wants to give us His gifts!

IV. **Rooted and built up in Christ and established in our faith.**

- a. All of these things are the gifts that God provides through His Son... through His love for each of us.
- b. Think about the roots of trees and how important they are, not only providing water and nutrients, but also anchoring the tree during the winds and trials to come.
 - i. And oftentimes, the roots of other trees intermingle, which gives the trees strength in numbers.
- c. Or, how about being built up?
 - i. Thinking about the mortar with too much sand, or the foundations and walls without enough steel... we are based on the strongest of foundations in Christ.
- d. And being established... or firm in our faith... comes from Christ’s work of revealing Himself through His Word.
 - i. All of this is to say that growing in Christ and being firm in our faith all starts and ends with God.
- e. We are all bound together by the perfect love and work of Christ.
 - i. Our Savior became the only sacrifice that could pay for our sins and rejection of God... our desire to go our own way outside of His love...
 - ii. That sacrifice, by the way, is the only one that counted – nothing we can offer even comes close.
 - iii. As Jesus went to Calvary, He was nailed to a cross... and died a horrible death.
 - 1. If you think of a debt that we could never imagine paying off...let’s say trillions of dollars... and it is written on a note... now imagine that paper being nailed to a cross.
 - 2. That’s our Jesus, as He canceled our unpayable debt... by being nailed to the cross Himself.
 - 3. His death ransomed us – paid for our freedom so that we might live and love for Him.
- f. So, as we gather on this Friendship Sunday, and any day for that matter... remember that it is always centered on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- i. We have this wonderful God who brings us together so that He can provide more gifts to us each time... as we receive forgiveness, life, and salvation... along with a connection to others that celebrates our freedom in Christ.
- ii. I am so glad you are here today as we come together in unity to worship the true God and Savior of us all... and the one who fills us with His very presence... yes, it truly is all about Jesus. Amen.