

ROOTED IN GRATITUDE

PART 3 | JORDAN BIEL | 11.28.21

So this month, we're in a series I've called ROOTED.

It's an expository sermon series where we're reading the book of Colossians all the way through. Today, we'll bring it a close reading chapter 4.

But before we do I want to remind you of the premise of this series.

The heart of this month is to establish you - to ensure that every Christian who calls Rock of Grace home - our family your church family - would become ROOTED in GOD.

Why? So that when the trials of life come - and they will - that your faith will not be shaken and your joy will not be stolen.

When you are rooted in God and the trials of life come, your faith will not be shaken and your joy will not be stolen. You will be strong and bear fruit in every season.

Let's review what we've said so far...

When we are rooted in GRACE, we see people the way God sees us - we love them and treat them as God does for we realize that we were given grace and mercy. **When we're rooted in grace, we begin to believe the best of people; we don't assume the worst. We see the potential in each person because both the Samaritan woman at the well AND the religious leader Nicodemus needed the grace of Jesus. The reprobate and the religious need God's grace. The prodigal son AND the older brother need God's grace.** You AND your coworker, You AND your difficult relative that drove everybody crazy at Thanksgiving - yes even HIM - everyone is in need of God's grace =) YOU can be expression of that.

You can bear the fruit of grace!

Secondly we said that we must be rooted in God's promises.

Last week, we were reminded that ... **We are give the same promise given to Abraham. Jesus makes it's possible for us as non-Jewish Gentiles, to be given the same promise of blessing and God's protection. We're promised a life flowing with milk and honey - supernatural blessing from God. We are given the same instructions - we are blessed by God so that we can be a blessing to others!**

We said that when difficult times come, and they will, that it's God's promises that keep us strong. We think back to those moments in our prayer time when God spoke to our heart. We open up our prayer journal and we remember what God promised us.

One thing I mean to say last week and I think I forgot - was just a suggestion to start writing down your promises and what you're praying for.

I have a document called Journal with Jesus. I definitely don't write in it daily. Maybe once a month or lately it's every couple weeks. When God speaks something to me that is just very personal and meaningful and I know that He is answering a prayer - He's making a promise to me as His child and when I write it down and say "YES" to it. When I believe it in my heart - THAT is part of our faith journey.

THAT is allowing my roots to grow deep with the Lord.

You see when I see how faithful He's been by writing down His promises and watching Him fulfill them, it builds my trust in Him to do it again. That trust is like roots - going deeper and deeper into the soil of my heart.

When I expose the dirt, admit my need for Him, ask Him for help, He comes through. He gives forgiveness and wisdom for me to learn what's best, how to treat people the way He does and in that moment, my roots of faith are going a little deeper.

When you open your Bible every day and talk with Jesus, when you occasionally write in a journal your prayer and God's promises, when you meet with other believers to discuss what God's teaching you in a Life Group or in one on one discipleship, you're letting your roots get intertwined with others - just like those California redwoods, your roots go far and wide and you become a STRONG Christian, ROOTED in God, able to withstand any storm of life.

So we've said **When we read the Word daily and let Him transform our minds, we become rooted in God's Grace, rooted in God's Promises & today, we're learning about being rooted in Gratitude.**

We're reading through the book of Colossians this month. In Colossians 1, we found out that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God! That JESUS is supreme over all human philosophies and ideas.

What Paul wrote at that time was not only relevant then but 2,000 years later, it still incredibly relevant.

Relative Truth / My Truth / Supremacy of Christ

In today's world of "my truth" and universalism where everyone can have their own god and their own way, we have a lot of confusion. We have a lot of people searching for real hope and actual truth - truth that doesn't change with the political narrative of the day - truth that doesn't change when our job is on the line - truth that doesn't change depending on race, location of where you live, we're talking about REAL truth. You see the TRUTH of JESUS CHRIST is true in Uganda and in America.

Colossians 1 tells us that God's truth seen in the person of Christ Jesus is supreme at all time and in all places throughout the world. It's unchanging and the very thing your soul craves.

The truth of Jesus Christ being God's child who came to die in your place and give you true life - that truth is TRUE in Zimbabwe and in Queens, New York.

It's true in the heat of the Sudan and true in the cold of Kinsman, OH.

It's simply TRUTH.

That's what Paul is trying to convey here and he does a masterful job at doing just that.

Chapter 2 and 3, we learn that rules and regulations need to be added to the Gospel of Grace. There's no customs of culture or laws of man that can turn someone into a good person. Only Jesus transforms a life and brings true joy and civil peace.

There are no customs that your family does that everyone else now has to do in order to be righteous. In fact, he warns that when we do that, we create factions - groups - divisions - all of which are easily prevented by focusing on the simplicity of the Gospel and it's beautiful mystery - that a holy God became man - to die in man's place to give

us what Jesus has - perfect peace with God - the same eternal place in heaven and the joy of sonship - BEING a child of God.

We left off at Vs 14 of Chapter 3. Let's pick up there.

Colossians 3:15-25

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Rules for Christian Households

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

So I gotta be honest, when I chose to go through the book of Colossians I didn't see this ending about thanksgiving landing on Thanksgiving weekend. => It just turned out like that which I think is pretty cool.

Look at this

Let the PEACE of Christ rule in your heart. Be thankful. Let the WORD of Christ dwell in you richly teaching one another in wisdom and with thankfulness in your hearts toward God. Do everything giving thanks to God the Father.

Today on Stand Sunday we are taking a stand for orphans around the world and namely right here in our county. **I believe what we can all be most thankful for is that Father God adopted us into HIS family.** He looked past our pain and problems and He saw the promise within. He knew that WE were included in the promise He made to Abraham. He knew that you and me and every baby, toddler and teenager that will come into care in Rock of Grace families will feel the love and promises KEPT by a loving Heavenly Father!

Now this next part, vs 18 through 25, the Father is teaching us about doing the right thing no matter WHAT our circumstance is.

Praise God that we don't have slavery in today's culture - at least here in America. But I do find it interesting that even to the slave, God was saying "do the right thing" In chapter 4 in a moment, we'll read that God tells the owner or master to treat his

servants fairly knowing that they too have a MASTER in Heaven - the indication here is clearly that we will give an account for how we treat people.

The way we show our love for God - our obedience to the Great Commandment - is seen in how we treat one another - our boss, our employee, our manager, our team, our staff. If we truly are thankful for them - even if some of them are difficult - you may have a difficult boss - God's word in Colossians to you is the same - honor them - for in doing so, you are honoring God.

Now vs 18 has got some pastors in trouble and rightly so. There have been and there will always be pastors who are definitely not the majority but they are out there - who insist that this phrase "submit to your husbands" means that you are to live a subservient life - a life of constant serving and the husband is king of the home, never lifting a finger.

The only problem is that isn't congruent with Scripture. When you look at 1 Peter where P David actually preached out of this month in Cortland, you'll see what you see in 1 Corinthians - a call to serve one another - a submission to one another.

Yes, God has set the husband as the head of the house and yes the wife is to submit to his decision if there is a disagreement but in all things, they are to be considerate of one another.

Here's 3 ways. One I got from P Dave's message and it's something I always do as well. **1. Schedule. 2. Spending. 3 Cleaning.**

1. Schedule By saying "let me check with my wife" you're not saying She's the boss and you're the slave. You're saying I honor my commitment to keep her first. I've made a promise to check with her before I commit to something. You may have exceptions of course. But 90% of the time it's honoring and the right thing to say "let me check with my spouse"
2. Spending. By not spending money on a big purchase you BOTH agree on, you're choosing to take the humble route. You're agreeing that your wife or husband may have wisdom that you need in that moment. Danielle and I have this agreement. If it's a big purchase or investment, we don't do it unless we both like the decision. If one of us is not liking it, we don't shut it down, we truly pray about it...
3. Cleaning. This is super easy. Guys, help your wife clean the house. That's all I'm gonna say. This isn't rocket science. Help cook, help clean or both but don't expect your spouse to be your servant. Take Jesus' example and serve.

Let's go on to Chapter 4

Colossians 4

Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison — ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. ⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.” ¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Let's look at Vs 5

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

I wonder how many more people in cities across the US would be reached with the Gospel if Christians acted a little wiser toward outsiders.

“Making the best use of the time.”

That line convicts me. I don't know about you but that convicts me.

If we have a game with the kids - how do I make the best use of that time sitting next to other parents in the school?

If we have a practice, how do I make the best use of that time? Scroll on my phone during halftime and each quarter - OR - engage in conversation - asking about their child, befriending them and one day inviting them over for dinner - maybe even inviting them to church.

I wonder when you and I talk over a meal and outsiders are listening (outsiders - non-christians) what do they hear? Do they hear gracious, seasoned with salt words? OR do they hear condescension or simply negative things?

Maybe be a little more careful with our speech - so that it's like salt

SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

Paul makes a similar argument at the end of Colossians that he makes in Galatians 3 and also in Romans 4 and 5 about our salvation and right standing before God being completely built on faith in Jesus and His work on the cross. We "stand" in this grace. We are rooted in this grace - not in our work, but in God's.

This accurate understanding of the Gospel and of grace produces a gratitude that roots us - it defines our perspective on all things.

I'm thankful for my job for I know it's a sign of God's grace therefore I work hard.

I'm thankful for my spouse for I know he/she is a sign of God's grace therefore I cherish them and honor them and serve them.

I'm thankful for my home therefore I make a place of refuge for people to come in and find friendship and good food. My home becomes simply an avenue for hospitality - for grace. Why? I'm rooted in gratitude.

Reading God's Word reminds me of God's goodness towards me.

Coming to church reminds me of God's goodness towards me.

Going to Life Group /Bible Study reminds me of God's goodness and God's promise and every single time I'm reminded, my roots go deeper!

Making me stronger and listen - able to bring shade to others - refuge to others - fruit to others.

Jesus gives a series of parables in one sermon in Mathew 13.

In them He's describing the power of God's Kingdom and the childlike humility that's required to enter it.

Notice the word picture he used here in chapter 13, vs 31

Mt 13:31-32

³¹ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Jesus was making it clear that even though your faith in God seems small - you feel so weak and maybe worn out - that God is honored by that little bit of faith. He's saying if you'll nurture it, if you'll let God take that seed of the kingdom and let it go into the dirt of your life - it will gradually, slowly build and become something beautiful - something

that's a blessing to others! Did you notice Jesus said "When it's grown large and becomes a tree, the birds of the air come and make nests in it's branches."

What are nests - homes. A place of refuge.

Your life can become a place of refuge for other people.

You say "Are you kidding me? My life is a wreck! Were you at our Thanksgiving Dinner!?" "I can't make a disciple for Jesus." "I can be a refuge for others" my faith is too small..."

Jesus is saying "listen, let me nurture it! In TIME it will grow to be something truly amazing."

Do you know how big a mustard tree grows? Probably not. I didn't. So I looked it up. First of all Jesus is making a point simply by using the word "tree" because they don't really become trees. They become a large bush - on average only 6' tall. On occasion they'll reach 9 or 10' tall. But that 9' bush now considered a TREE once started out a tiny little mustard seed.

It was planted, watered, nurtured and it's roots began to grow.

In time, it grew and offered not only mustard but a home for birds and shade for people.

MESSAGE IN A MINUTE STARTS

Jesus uses the word TREE instead of BUSH to make a point - **GOD CAN DO MORE WITH YOUR LIFE THAN YOU EVER IMAGINED!**

It'd be like me holding a tiny piece of wood and instead of saying "one day, when this is assembled correctly with other wood, it will turn into a beautiful boat" You would already get the picture if I said that - you'd learn "Oh, right... I get it. With a little diligence and time and strategy from a master craftsman, this little piece of wood finds a much larger, grander purpose - a part of a boat"

But to do what Jesus did, it'd be like me saying "This tiny piece of wood, in time and in the hands of a master craftsman, will be apart of a 70' Yaht!"

It's grander - bigger - almost hard to wrap your mind around at first.

That's what GOD WANTS TO DO IN YOU!

He wants to take the tiny bit of faith you have in Him - the faith that is just plain hard on tough days - and He wants to nurture it. He wants to plant it deep into the soil of your heart and let it produce character, wisdom, patience, Christ-likeness, hope and that builds as you spend time with other Christians, hearing their story, learning from their life, praying for them, asking them to pray for you, having people over, befriending them letting your roots intertwine.

- remember that verse from last week "until Christ is formed in you"
- CHRIST JESUS is the 70 foot YAHT. In that metaphor.
- CHRIST JESUS is the 10 foot mustard tree with plenty of branches for birds to build homes and find refuge.

It's so neat. I was writing out my thoughts on this parable - I had just written the words "God can do more with your life than you ever imagined!" And I thought of the verse from Ephesians that says "God can do more than you can ever ask or think" and so I looked it up. Look at this little treasure right before that promise.

Eph 3:14-20

¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you *with inner strength through his Spirit*. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in *your hearts* as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Notice it says "Your roots will go down into God's love and keep you strong."

So many Christians are fickle these days. Why? They've places their roots in their works - maybe in just good habits, maybe in certain philosophies - maybe they read more of Oprah than they do of the Word - **But your roots must go deep into GOD'S LOVE for you to develop true strength. His SPIRIT does this work in your inner man.**

This isn't something you can get at the gym or from reading a great book.

Young men I know - you like to work out - you to want to be strong and fit and honestly that's great. Much better than 4 hours of videos games - BUT I want to tell you - what Paul is describing here - it doesn't take place in the gym.

You can't build this on the outside.

This is something GOD builds on the INSIDE.

ROOTS going deep into ... GOD'S LOVE.

What then is the opposite of gratitude? If God's Word teaches us to be first thankful for being adopted by God into His family, what could be the #1 antagonist? Envy.

Envy is like Ivy, it spreads until it covers the tree and if not cut off and pulled out, it will kill the tree.

Prov 24 and 14 tell us that envy rots the heart, it rots us to the bones. We're told "don't envy the wicked man even if it seems he prospers. If lately you've thought "I want what the stuff that they have - then I'll be happy." Then my friend, you need to let God cut that envy ivy off of your tree. You need to let your roots go deep into His love and remember ALL that He has done for you. He forgave of your sin before you ever asked. He adopted you as His own before you even knew you needed unconditional love. He gave you the wisdom to be sitting in church or He gave you the spouse that drug you

here. GOD has given you more than you can ever understand and the greatest gift of all, is His precious son Jesus Christ. His grace gives you ALL you need for right living and ALL you need to have true joy and true peace. Of all people, we are to be truly grateful.

END THE MESSAGE IN A MINUTE

In Romans 4 & 5 Paul makes a similar argument for what brings about righteousness.

In Romans 4, Paul shares about the promise of God given to Abraham - purely out of the grace of God. But Abraham obtained the promise because he believed God's promise - because he had FAITH.

This same faith is what we must demonstrate - we too have the opportunity to believe that God really does have a promised future for us full of milk and honey - of peace and blessing and we simply must believe in JESUS CHRIST the one who purifies us from all our sin and gives us peace with God.

Let's pick up at **Romans 5:1-5**

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

God's love allows our roots to go deeper and deeper.

We live in such a shallow world - a culture that praises celebrity above humility and charisma above character.

But God's Kingdom is an upside down kingdom. It's a culture that teaches us to follow Christ' example and let HIS love fill us - fill us to the point of changing who we are. When we allow this transformation, we start to bear the fruit of His love and grace to others.

But we FIRST have to expose the dirt and let our roots of faith get planted in God.

We have to let Him plant us beside streams of living water.

We have to let Him bless us - we have to be open to what HE wants for our lives.

When we do this, our sufferings and trials, and they will come, will produce the character of Jesus in us.

A tree that stands among the other trees but sways and bends and breaks when the wind comes, is a tree that doesn't have peace. It's a tree that doesn't have its roots going deep and far and wide. It's a tree whose roots are not intertwined with other trees' roots.

Faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, faith in Jesus Christ, will cause you to be rooted - rooted in God's love, God's grace, God's promises and that forms gratitude.

Through Christ, we are ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY of Abraham and God's promise to HIM and God's promise to US!

Paul speaking of this made it clear that God's promise to Abraham is passed on to every single person who believes in Jesus, God's Son. Turn to Acts 3

Acts 3:25-26

²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Romans 8:29 "For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

Have you let God adopt you as His very own child?

Have you let Christ Jesus become your brother?

Are you letting Christ's love be formed in you?

Are you letting your roots of faith go deep?