

Colossians 2:6-19

“Maturing in the Faith”

July 24, 2016

The Church has a way of developing traditions and imposing them upon our faith. There is nothing wrong with our traditions because they often lead us to a more comfortable relationship with our God. For an example of a tradition, some take Communion every Sunday. Our problem comes when we impose our traditions upon those Christians of a different confession. Another problem comes when we confuse our traditions with God’s Word. I will give you an example. It is by tradition that we build our churches like we have built this church. Some would condemn us because we have an altar. Some would condemn us because we have graven images like Jesus upon the Cross. Even the Cross itself will bring the condemnation of some. Why? It is not their tradition. Likewise we could condemn them because they have a big auditorium with no altar or cross. Buildings do not make a church. Love for Jesus Christ makes a church even if it is under a highway underpass among the homeless.

Some reject large portions of God’s Word because they feel that they are written by men. Some reject God because He does not refer to Himself as a woman. Some reject God because religion is often at the center of the violence in the world. They have a bumper sticker when says coexist with the symbols of the

major religions of the world. Our text speaks about those who come at us with hollow and deceptive philosophies. Some accuse God's Church of being politically incorrect because we call a sin a sin. Some don't like the wars and rumors of war and so they say that religion is the problem when it is the corruption that comes from Adam and Eve that leads to violence among us. Likewise it is the devil that creates completion to God that leads to the violence among us. Yes, some even deny that there is a devil and a hell. I wonder where all the evil is coming from in this enlightened world if there is not devil or hell? We face many hollow and deceptive philosophies from the world.

As I studied this text, I thought about my preaching. I preach to those unsure of their faith. I want to give them some hope so that they will make it to heaven. I will continue to preach to them because I want to help them maintain their hope and not lose their faith. No one should be unsure about their hope of heaven. However in reading this text, we are also challenged to realize that the best way to be assured that we will go to heaven is to grow in the maturity of our faith. The more mature we are in our faith, the less the doubts that assail us will tempt us to not believe we will make it to heaven. Oh, we still have our doubts, but they will be countered by the truth that we have learned from the Bible, the evidence of history and the archeological evidence from the holy land. We still have our doubts

because we are still under the influence of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh, but those doubts are countered by the truth.

We grow and mature in our faith as we allow God's Word to root into our souls. We grow and mature in our faith as we are being built up in the faith by God's Word. We grow and mature in our faith as we share and teach the Word of God to those we love, our friends and neighbors and even to strangers. I remember one ninety year man telling me that the first five years of his life was spent on the farm with his grandmother. Over those years she told him about the day when Jesus would come and take her home. When he was five years old, the family decided that he was old enough to go to town. He did not want to go because he wanted to be there when Jesus took grandma home.

Jesus paid our way to heaven. The Father in heaven, Jesus at His side and the Holy Spirit then gave us God's Word to guide us along the path in this world so that we would not lose our hope in heaven. The foundation of the road we walk is that undeserved grace and mercy of our God. The walk we take on that road through life is the thank offering we give for that undeserved grace and mercy. The more we mature in the faith, the less hollow and deceptive philosophies, the doubts and trials of this life will distract us and lead us off the path to heaven and into swamp of doubts and anxieties. When we get distracted, God's undeserved grace and mercy calls us back. Amen.