

Rooted and Grounded (Col. li. 6, 7)

by Seth Rees

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a deep and hidden life in Christ, which is the foundation of our outward, visible life, and encourages listeners to seek an experience of God's presence.

Scripture: Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:8, Matthew 7:24, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faith Foundation"

Description

Seth Rees preaches on the importance of being rooted in Christ, emphasizing the connection between the hidden, secret life of a Christian and their outward, visible life. He highlights the necessity of having a strong foundation in faith, being established in God's grace, and abounding in thanksgiving. Rees urges believers to grow deep in their relationship with God, withstand storms of life, and be firmly rooted like trees with taproots reaching the Rock of Ages. He calls for a revival of apostolic conviction and conversions, emphasizing the need for Christians to have a genuine, inward life that reflects in their outward actions.

Transcript

As ye have therefore received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving"(Colossians 2: 6-7).

Out of this passage the following will be used as text: "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." I recognize four thoughts in this text: First. The Christian's secret, invisible, hidden life. Second. Stablished therein, as ye have been taught. Third. The Christian's manifest, visible, outward life. Fourth. Abounding therein with thanksgiving.

The manifest life is dependent upon secret forces. Look at the oak, towering into the clouds, loaded with fruit and with foliage. You say, There is although everybody knows that the real life of that tree is out of sight. The real life of that tree is beneath the soil, down where the roots are taking hold of the rocks and springs below. What appears is dependent on something that is hidden. The Holy Ghost has recognized this fact in Christian experience, and made note of it in our text, viz., the whole, manifest, outward Christian life is absolutely dependent upon the hidden life, the secret life, the correct life, hid with Christ in God.

If we have only what appears, it is worthless. Our outward life may appear ever so well, but if it does not have roots, it is of no value. There is a great deal that we see in these days that is like the fruit on a

Christmas tree -- tied with a cotton string. It never grew there, has no roots, is not supported by a secret, invisible life. God clearly teaches us in His Word that it is exceedingly important that we shall have the correct, inward, secret life.

There are a great many people who are willing to grow tall, who are willing to grow broad; but very few submit to the conditions of growing deep. But it is not safe to grow tall unless you grow deep. It means destruction for us to spread a sail at sea unless we have ballast. The tendency of the age is to expand at the top, and most of people have gone to seed. My text begins with "Rooted." We have top enough, we have show enough, we have display enough. What we need is grounding and rooting. We need to take hold of the rocks and springs below, so we can stand the storms.

If we returned to apostolic preaching, we would have apostolic conviction, followed by apostolic conversions. Our converts would be planted instead of "stuck in." They would be rooted in the house of God, rather than simply attached or joined to the church. It is one thing to add people to the church, and it is another thing to add them to the Lord. There are a great many people who have been added to the church, and their names are counted every year, who have never been added to the Lord.

All that may appear well in outward life is only valuable when it is an index to the correct, inward life; and whatever we may appear to be, whatever we may profess in our lives, if it is not the legitimate product of a life that is hid with Christ in God, with roots that take hold of the Rock of Ages, it is valueless, and worse than nothing. If people get well rooted, they can stand a good deal to begin with. Young converts, that are made after the New Testament standard, can stand lots of persecution; they can stand quite a storm. And that is not all -- if they are properly rooted, storms help rather than hinder them; storms strengthen their fibers and make their leaves a richer green than before.

I was once in the timber business in the West. I used to handle some very heavy timber, and I have interested myself in counting the growth of a tree, finding a tree sometimes that had stood fifty or a hundred years when Columbus discovered America -- through the cyclones of five hundred summers, and through the withering frosts and bleak north winds of five hundred winters. But that tree had a taproot that went away down to the water. That was a tree, the roots of which ran away down and took hold of the rocks and springs below, so that when the storm came, it only grasped the rocks a little more firmly. When I wanted a stick of wagon material, as I sometimes did, where did I go to find it? In ever went to the heart of the forest -- I never took a tree that had the sympathy and protection of every other tree. I went to the edge of the woods, or better still I selected a tree that had grown in the open field, where it had had to take care of itself. There I found the toughest stick that grew. And you would be surprised that that tree could stand at all, if you were to see it as I have seen it, sway and bow until the branches almost touched the ground, and then swing back to a perpendicular, and again lock in with the tempest and again sway and bow; but after the cyclone was over, it straightened back with a stronger fiber and a richer green than it had before the storm.

I have watched a good man, properly rooted. I have seen the tempest strike him. I have seen him sway and bend, and I have heard critics say, "he will go down." I have seen people make ready to say, "I told you so." But he recovers, and again locks in with the tempest, and again bows and sways, and people say, "he's gone." But after the storm is over, that man straightens back to a perpendicular, with a stronger Christian fiber and a richer green and a sweeter faith than he ever had before. If you are properly rooted, storms will not hurt you -- they are good for you; and a storm of good, old-fashioned, healthy persecution would compel our people to find out where they are. Some of you would be able to locate yourselves

geographically if you could have a good storm of wholesome persecution.

Oh, for people that are rooted! In these days of swell heads; in these days when the schools are stuffing the head and starving the heart; in these days when a man is measured by his smartness; in these days when rhetoric and eloquence are called for, and when a man must have well rounded sentences, and gold and silver on his tongue, or he can not get a hearing, -- what we need is a thorough, basal foundation in the things of God.

Daniel took root. He submitted to the conditions, and grew downward, so that he could stand the storms of hell. He could resist the shocks of hell's artillery; he could stand, and not only resist the force of evil, but turn back the tides of iniquity, and God has always had a few such men. May He multiply the number! Beloved, if you get rooted, you will not "curl up" like a dry leaf every time some one points a finger at you, you will not wilt every time some one criticizes you; instead you will shout and sing a little louder than ever. The Lord God bring us to the place where trials will only do us good!

The next thing I notice in the text is the establishing grace, "stablished therein." Now, Greek scholars tell me -- I am not a Greek scholar, the "language of Canaan" is the only language I ever mastered -- but Greek scholars tell me that word "stablish" means the same as "sanctify." I do not know about that; but I will tell you what I do know: I know that "sanctify" means "stablish." Sanctification is the stablishing grace; it is the grace that settles people. It is a blessing that takes the wobble out of folks; it takes the quirk out of the heart; it takes the iniquity (which means inequality) out of people.

To get established is to get a blessing that will answer your questions, so that you will not run around and ask questions of the evangelists. The Holy Ghost will answer your questions. He will tell you a whole lot of things that you are trying to get folks to tell you, and when He tells you anything you will somehow feel that it is true.

We must be established. A ship at sea, turns out for the imbedded rock; and if you do not get established in Divine grace, when you meet stronger heads filled with error you will turn out for them. There is an experience that will give us the right of the way, and make all men and devils turn out for us.

When you get this blessing you will go straight ahead; you will keep in the middle of the King's highway. Though you may have to cut your way through a whole regiment of devils, you will go through. What is a regiment of devils anyway when you have God with you? O, I wish we knew that we had a God! I wish we knew that God is not dead. I wish we would throw away these vest pocket idols; these ecclesiastical gods to which we are bowing down. We ought to have a living God, we ought to have the only true God; we ought to know that He is just as much alive now as in the days of Christ or Paul.

O, thank God, He is alive! They killed His Son, but the grave could not hold Him. He knocked the bottom out of the tomb; so that there is a south side, there is a warm side, there is a genial side to even death: and you people that are sitting around on the north side of religion, with your teeth chattering, you ought to move around in the sun. We must have something that will settle us. Unless we have convictions born of certainty, unless we have unbounded confidence in the Captain of our salvation in these awful times, we will ingloriously surrender. Thank God, there is an experience where we can get new strength all the time, and never know defeat; when failure is beyond the range of possibility. Our young people need this blessing. A young lady missionary of more than ordinary intelligence and average piety was doing missionary work and distributing tracts among the poor, when she visited a Catholic family. Happening to meet a priest there one day, she said, "I am not here preaching my doctrine." The priest smiled and said,

"Tell me, pray, what might be your doctrine;" but she did not seem to know what her doctrines were; she had not been settled, and the consequence was, that in a few weeks the priest took her into the Catholic Church. I want to say to you that if our young people do not get stablished, they will be blown here and there, not knowing the truth. The devil, by the winds of doctrine that are blowing in these days, will sweep them off the deck of the good ship Zion.

We need to know more; we need to have a religion that we know something about, so that we can look the infidel straight in his two eyes, and tell him what we know. There is no good in mere dogmas; there is no good in learned treatises on religion; but to tell a skeptical man what you know, is to attack him with a weapon he does not know what to do with. He can meet your arguments; he has as much logic as you have; but he can not answer your experience. When you have got an experience that you know about, that shuts his month and spikes the enemy's guns.

O, to know that God is with us every minute, and that success is sure! We never have to make any trial trips, never go anywhere to see if we can have a revival. For two and a half years I have never gone to any place unless I had a revival. "God is God, and there is none beside Him." We know we are on the Lord's side; and we have got the victory before we join the battle.

The battle of Winchester, in our Civil War, was stoutly contested. The Union forces were composed of brave men, but after hours of hard fighting they gave way. Their general, who was not expecting a battle, was twenty miles away. The roar of cannon told him of the conflict, and he put spurs to his horse and soon came upon his retreating troops. Shouting to them to follow, he pushed on. The men rallied, and a decisive victory was won. He brought no reinforcements with him; the same men did the victorious fighting that fought before, but their confidence in their general turned their defeat into victory. When we have confidence in our General, when we know that our God is for us, we do not retreat, but cut our way through, no matter what comes.

One man with God on his side is worth a thousand without Him. God bless you, one man who with sword in hand has thrown away his scabbard is worth a thousand cowards. And this blessing that we are talking about will make you a man of that kind. It will make you know that the Captain of our salvation is always present, and is always victorious. He has conquered in the wilderness; He has conquered in Gethsemane; He has conquered at Calvary, and He has gone up to the skies in spite of the protest of all the devils in hell, and He is to reign for ever and ever. Glory to God for a resurrected Christ, living with His own people today, and making victors of all who will let Him.

When you get this blessing, you will feel like a conqueror, and "with a conqueror's tread you will push ahead." You will set your feet down so hard the demons in hell will feel the shock. You will have a salvation that will not only astonish angels and baffle devils, but the old archfiend himself will turn pale while you sweep on to glorious victory. He will sit down in the ashes of hell and do his best to contrive some new way to come at you. When you get this blessing, you can begin to talk about the Christian's outward, visible life. People everywhere are trying to build up Christian character without roots, without a good start; but the outward life of a Christian is as easy as whistling, when you get the inward life all right. You can not get bad fruit off a good tree. People talk about building up Christian character as if Christianity was something you could build up as you build a house; but the Christian life I am talking about is built as the tree is built -- from within. Most of people are trying to get things together to make themselves a house, forgetting that they have the materials within themselves. God wants to plant us in the soil of heaven so we will grow, and produce a Christianity which is the product of a clean and holy life. It will be easy to

serve God when you get an experience like that.

There are people working and laboring in the Church who, when they fear the cause is not going to succeed, organize another society, supposing that that will bring success. What we need is the fire of God within the wheels to make them go. Fifty thousand of our best people assembled in Boston to hold a convention, and even the saloons put up placards, "Welcome, Christian Endeavorers." Fifty thousand of these people staid in Boston a week and never had a convert! Put fifty thousand fire-baptized Christians in Boston, and they would revolutionize it. We have gone too much to rules, and forms, and ceremonies. What we need is to get our faces toward God.

It is an awful thing that we have drifted so far away that we can not get people under conviction. Oh, for a ministry that will "put a hook in people's jaws"! God bless you, I do not want to make you feel good; I would rather preach so that a lot of you people would feel so bad you could neither eat nor sleep, until you went into an upper room, locked the door, and staid until "Pentecost was fully come." Then you would have a life that is rooted. God give it to us all.

Again, in my text I notice that there is not only the "inward, hidden, secret life," and the "manifest outward life," but there is "abounding therein with thanksgiving." There is a life that runs over. There is a life that overreaches and overtops everything else; it is "the abounding life." What does "abound" mean? It means to have all you want, and some to give away. It means to have a whole lot you do not know what to do with; that is what some of us have, and this is the reason we can not behave ourselves. The time was when I could stand in one place and preach for forty minutes, and not move or make a gesture; but I have gotten over that. This abounding life must have vent, and when you get it you will not be surprised at us; you will give us credit then for behaving admirably, when you feel the current of holy power in your own soul.

Did you pass by that country school house about four o'clock in the afternoon, just as the teacher turned the scholars out? Did you see those boys going out of the door, throwing their hats in the air, and tumbling over each other, and shouting? What did that mean? It meant that they had this "abounding life" physically. They had been shut up for three hours, and they had more life than they wanted.

God's people should be stall fed; they should be so well fed that when they are "turned out" they will act like stall fed calves. God, give us this life! You can have this life, and wear a shoulder shawl over your shoulders, and have a soap stone to your feet, and sit in the corner and nurse your hands; you can have people wait on you and feed you with a silver spoon, and have two pastors looking after you; many who have life are doing this. But it is one thing to have life, and another thing to have "abundant life."

O, this abounding life! It makes men of us instead of babies; it makes giants instead of pigmies; soldiers instead of cowards. And that is what God wants in these days -- soldiers of the cross -- men that are ready for a forced march through the wilderness; men who are willing to make a bridge of their dead bodies, over which their comrades may march to victory. What God wants in these days is men who will throttle the devil; who will enter his ranks, and capture his subjects, and bring them over into the ranks of God. God save us from this babyhood that is in the churches!

I am a member of the Church in good and regular standing, and I am going to stay until they put me out. I am not talking against churches; but I am trying to get people out of babyhood, and away from their bottles, get them in a place where they can chew beefsteak, and stand for God. Look at that mother! She is on the sidewalk, with her darling babe in the carriage. It is a beautiful sight. A baby is a blessing to any

home -- always a blessing. You look at the babe and smile. The babe smiles, and the mother smiles, and every one is happy. But if you come back ten years later, and if that babe is still in the carriage, nobody smiles; there is nothing to smile about. What has happened? The doctor says it is a case of "arrested development." What does God see when He looks down into His nursery? What does God see in our steeple houses and synagogues in these days? He sees a whole lot of ten, twenty, and fifty year old babies sitting around, having to be carried and waited upon. How it must grieve His heart; there is nothing to smile about.

We are talking about our weakness when we should be talking about God's strength. It is all awful thing that we are sitting around and nursing our hands, with a warm soapstone at our feet, and two or three people waiting on us, when we ought to be out taking care of someone else, blessing someone else. When we go into a family, and see a girl of sixteen just as much care to her mother as the ten-year-old, we know there is something wrong; and I want to say to you that when I go into a church, and see fourteen-year-old babies sitting around, who have to be handled with gloves lest they get offended and leave the church, there is something evidently wrong. Those fourteen-year-old babies ought to be able to take care of new converts.

An Eastern merchant and a Western farmer were traveling West together. They were standing on the rear platform of the last car of the train, and, looking back over the track, the merchant said to the farmer: "Can you tell me why that track over there is so moist and so green, and this track over which we are traveling is so dusty and barren?" And the other said: "Our farmers in the West produce so much grain that the elevators will not hold it, and when the cars are loaded for Eastern markets, the men are not careful about overloading. As the cars go East over that track, they scatter the grain which sprouts in the roadbed; but the empty cars come back over this track, and so this track is dry and dusty." What was the matter with those cars? They had the "second blessing," they had the "abounding" fullness, and every time you shook them a little, they scattered the grain. You can be so saved that whenever any one touches you, you will run over. They can not any more than speak to you but you will say, "Hallelujah!" and scatter the grain. An empty car makes about as much noise as a full one, but it leaves things dry and dusty. I have had people come into my home and wonderfully bless it; and after they have gone I have felt as if an angel had been there. My children were blessed, my whole home was benefited by the presence of those saints. Then I have had other people come into my home; I was glad when they were gone. You can be a full car, making things green and fresh everywhere you go; or you can be an empty car, leaving everything dry and barren. God help us to have this overflow blessing! Paul had it. He knew what I am talking about. Paul, give us a bit of your experience. "Well, I went down to Damascus, and the Jews were in wait to kill me; and I went up to Antioch, and the chief men of the city cast me out of their coasts; and I went down to Lystra, and when they saw the miracles, they said I was a god, and I could scarce restrain them from worshipping me; but when I preached the truth, they took up stones and stoned me, until I was left for dead; and I went to Thessalonica, and I was assaulted, and sent away by night; and I went to Corinth, that center of learning, and there I was whipped in the judgment hall; and I went down to Ephesus, and there a whole city was thrown into confusion on my account. "Yet Paul says, "Thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph." Why, Paul, do you mean that you were always victorious, even when they drove you out of the city? Yes, Paul could see victory in all these things. Paul was a man that suffered no defeat. He knew God, and he walked with God; and if he had to preach with irons on, he could do it with ease.

God give us this run over blessing! You can have it this hour if you will. Shall we not seek it? Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

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