

LIFE CHANGING STORIES FROM THE BIBLE

“GROWING IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE CONTINUED”

“So then , just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.” Colossians 2:6. As I mentioned in the last lecture one way to take this verse is to say that the way we received Christ, is the way we continue in him. We received Christ in the heart by the Holy Spirit as God’s gift of grace to us. We could do nothing to deserve it and the only successful way we can live the Christian life is continuing to receive God’s gift of grace.

Paul prayed a special prayer for the Christians in Ephesus and it is a prayer we all need if we are going to grow in grace in our Christian lives. The whole prayer is in Ephesians 3:14-21. But I want to pick out certain parts of it as relevant to our present lecture.

V 16) “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

We certainly need strength, His strength, in getting victory over temptation, in victory over our old sinful nature, victory over the trials and problems in life and victory in serving God.

V 17) “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” In the original Greek in which Ephesians was written the words, “Dwell in your hearts” mean “Make a permanent home in your hearts”

To understand what Paul means by, “Make a permanent home in your hearts” I want to look at another verse in the bible that has been used to win many to Christ even though it was originally written for Christians.

Revelation 3:20. Jesus is speaking to the lukewarm Christians at Laodicea, he says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.”

It is figurative language, they, as a church, had shut Jesus out of the centre of their lives. He no longer had first place, they had become lukewarm but he was knocking on the door of their inner selves, he was still there but they had to open the door and let him come in and be the most important person in their lives again.

This is what it means to be strengthened by the Spirit in your inner being, it is Christ by the Holy Spirit taking up his rightful place in your hearts and him giving you victory. This is what it means to have Christ making a permanent home in your hearts so that he can begin the great work of cleaning up our lives and making us more and more like himself.

Let's imagine our heart to be like a house with many rooms. When we ask Christ to come into our heart by the Holy Spirit he comes into the conversion room and fellowships with us. He also forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. It is a wonderful time of getting to know God. He didn't open the door he waited for us to open the door and invite him in, as he says in the verse, "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in."

But this is just the beginning, we have many other rooms in our heart house and all of them have their doors closed. Jesus will begin to knock on each one of those doors, he will not force himself into any one of the rooms. Just like the first time we must open the door and invite him in. When he comes into each room he will give us victory in that room.

Our verse at the beginning of the lecture says, "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him." We received Jesus by opening the door of our heart to him and we continue to live in him by opening the other doors in our heart to him. When we receive him at the beginning it is for salvation, forgiveness of sins and everlasting life and when we receive him into the other rooms, it for growing in grace, getting victory in all those rooms, in other words becoming more like him.

So what are these other rooms? Here are some of them. The room of friendships and relationships. Our friendships can either draw us closer to God or pull us away from God.

The room of temptation. We can all be tempted by different things. Christ in the room can give us victory.

The room of anger, resentment, bitterness, not forgiving, revenge, retaliation. Only with Christ in the room can we overcome it.

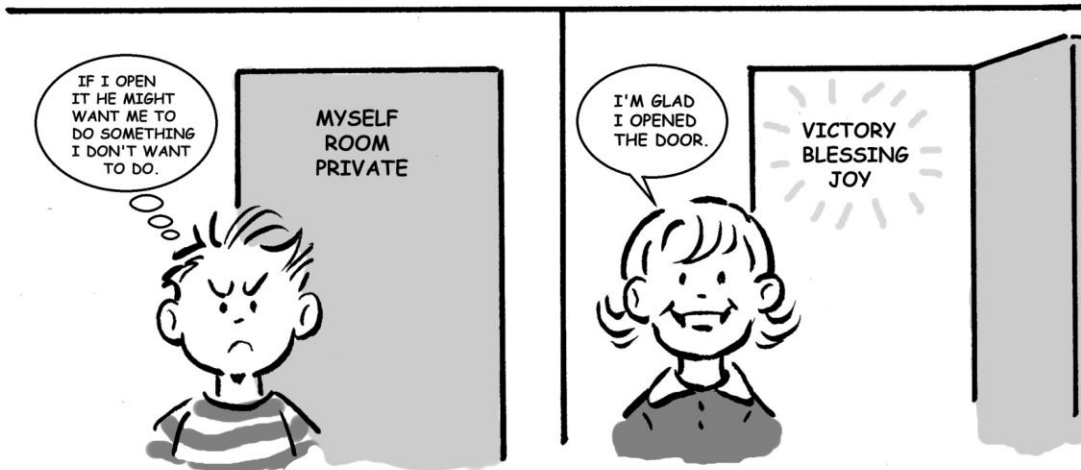
The room of trials and suffering. Together with Christ we can victory over them.

The room of ambition. With Christ in the room we can be what he wants us to be.

The room of service. With Christ we can be used in service for the glory of God.

There are many more rooms. We plan to look deeper into this subject in our next lecture.

TO GROW IN GRACE IS TO OPEN DOORS OF MORE AND MORE ROOMS IN YOUR HEART



KEEP OPENING DOORS TO JESUS