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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **Rooted Together in Christ**

### **Colossians 2:1-7**

As we come to this section of Colossians, we come to our theme verse: “Rooted in Christ”

***Colossians 2:6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

Here Paul acts as our missionary mentor, training us in a ministry that will plant churches truly rooted in Christ... made up of individual Christians themselves rooted in Christ

Ordinarily, we don't spend much time thinking about roots

Some of the most amazing things that God ever created are completely hidden from the eye. As a matter of fact, as we walk through a majestic forest of oaks, maples, elm, loblolly pine trees, we may never stop to contemplate the wonder which lies beneath our feet: the elaborate root systems of those majestic trees.

A tree is made up solely of living cells, the basic units of life. Each of these cells has physical needs: needs for nutrients, water, chemicals, oxygen... these needs are supplied by a most remarkable pump system... the roots which suck water and nutrients from the soil at an amazing rate.

An elm tree in England was found to have a root system which burrowed to a depth of 360 feet... a 36-storey building below the surface of the earth! The root system of such a tree is incredibly complex, for there may be as much as 14 million separate roots which may have a total of 14 billion tiny roots hairs. The roots grow every day, pushing soil and splitting boulders in the constant search for water. A single birch may give off through its 200,000 leaves as much as 900 gallons of water on a hot summer day. Each drop of water lost through evaporation must be replenished from the roots... the water passed from cell to cell like a bucket in a fireman's bucket brigade; water originating in the subterranean water table and pumped up naturally to a leaf 100 feet above the ground.

The tiny root hairs are ingeniously designed by God to filter out nutrients in a perfect balance, never too much of one thing or too little of something else... all of this guarantees the life and fruitfulness of the tree.

You may not think much of a tree's root system... that is until one of them fails in a hurricane and crashes into your living room. In the day of testing, the root system is everything.

Jesus said some people who listen to the word and immediately respond with joy are like seeds sown in rocky soil; no possibility of a good root system, and when the sun comes up the plants get scorched because they have no root... when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

My question for you this morning: how is your root system?

How is the root system of the churches you are planting and over which you are laboring?

Paul is going to give us a pure pattern for ministry... eight glorious facets of a healthy ministry

Then he's going to describe a healthy church... how he prays for the Colossians

From this we will arrive at a healthy root system... both for us personally and for our church corporately

## I. Struggling in Prayer

### A. Paul's Loving Struggle

***Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.***

1. Paul has never met them personally, yet he loves them
2. Love is an essential quality of a healthy ministry in Christ, and an essential aspect of the Christian life generally

***1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.***

### B. Why the Struggle?

1. The word "struggle" implies an opponent, an adversary
2. The Adversary of the church is Satan

***Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.***

***Revelation 12:7-9 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.***

3. He fights gospel advance every step of the way
4. Struggle pictured in the Book of Daniel
  - a. Angelic messenger comes down from heaven to answer Daniel's prayer
  - b. He is depicted in terrifying vividness

***Daniel 10:6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.***

- c. Daniel is overwhelmed before him and falls down speechless on the ground
- d. But yet this mighty angel was weaker than the spiritual adversary who hindered his journey

***Daniel 10:12-13 "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. <sup>13</sup> But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.***

5. What an awesome adversary this must be if it takes TWO mighty angels to overcome him!!
6. No wonder Martin Luther wrote in "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

"Did we in our own strength confide our striving would be losing."

7. Paul struggles against Satan in order to establish the Colossian church and all the other churches in his field of ministry

### C. The Weaponry of Paul's Struggle

On October 30, 1961, the most powerful weapon ever constructed by mankind was exploded over the island of Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic Sea. The device was code-named "Ivan," and it was a multi-stage hydrogen bomb which was built in only fifteen weeks by engineers in the USSR, using off-the-shelf nuclear weapon components.

It was intended as a display of Soviet superiority during a period of grave tension between the USSR and the United States. The Russians had erected the Berlin wall only

two months earlier, and they had just ended a shaky, three-year moratorium on atmospheric nuclear weapons testing. Before *Ivan*, the largest explosion the world had seen was an incredible 15 megatons, an event which caused a mushroom cloud over three miles across. *Ivan's* explosion was over three times more powerful, despite the fact that the device was deliberately prevented from operating to its full potential.

Despite the cloudy weather, the flash of light was visible as far as 600 miles away, though the sound of the blast would not reach that far for forty-nine minutes, in the form of an indistinct, heavy blow. The giant fireball reached from ground-level to about 34,000 feet into the air, violently releasing 3800 times more explosive energy than the Hiroshima bomb—equivalent to fifty million metric tons of TNT. This is equivalent to all of the explosives used in World War II multiplied by 10. Sixty miles from ground zero the heat would have inflicted third degree burns.

Such is the destructive power of the most powerful weapon ever developed by the human race

BUT:

***2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.***

Paul's two great weapons in his battle to establish the Colossian church are prayer and the ministry of the word

### 1. Prayer

- a. Paul's struggle for the Colossians directly is primarily in his prayer life for them... uses the word "agon" as in "agony"... a burden in prayer

***Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you***

- b. Prayer is a struggle because Satan opposes it so vigorously
- c. Daniel was in prayer when the answer was dispatched through the angelic messenger
- d. Satan opposed this angel in his attempts to get the answer back to Daniel
- e. Satan also opposes prayer itself... fighting with temptations, fleshly drives, discouragement and all manner of flaming arrows to get the servant of God off his knees

### 2. The Ministry of the Word

- a. Colossians 1: “We proclaim Him...
- b. Struggle, energy, power, LABOR in the WORD

***Acts 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.***

3. What is Paul Laboring For?

- a. Already answered in first sermon on Colossians: SPIRITUAL MATURITY and ABUNDANT FRUITFULNESS
- b. Paul’s prayers there describe his overall purpose in ministry

***Colossians 1:9-12 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup> And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.***

In other words: Paul’s prayer there was for the Colossians to be spiritually mature: doctrinally stable, obedient, bearing fruit, and persevering in Christian joy

- c. So also at the end of Colossians 1

***Colossians 1:28-29 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. <sup>29</sup> To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.***

In other words, Paul is struggling for a church he’s never met... doing so out of love for the glory of Christ

His desire is a healthy root system for that church... ROOTED IN CHRIST

Why? So that it can survive and thrive in a hostile pagan and Jewish environment and bear fruit for the glory of God

Parable of the Seed and the Soils: the rocky soil plant withered because it had no root

Paul wanted all these local churches to have a healthy root system

## II. Describing a Healthy Church’s Root System

### A. Encouragement in Heart

***Vs. 2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart***

1. Paul's first prayer is that they will be "encouraged in heart"
2. Greek = "parakaleo" like the word translated "Comforter", the ministry of the Holy Spirit
3. Satan's primary weapon against the work of God is DISCOURAGEMENT
  - a. He knows the power of our offensive weaponry: it is the gospel, a mighty force for the salvation of everyone who believes, and he cannot stop it
  - b. Satan also knows the power of our defensive weaponry, the full armor of God described in Ephesians 6
  - c. If God's people, fully arrayed in God's armor, take the field covered in prayer, preaching God's mighty gospel, HE WILL LOSE
  - d. So all he can do is hit us with discouragement, so we stay off the battlefield, down, dejected, defeated, discouraged
4. Just about every great servant of God faced immense battles with discouragement
  - a. Paul

***2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair***

- b. Martin Luther: battled discouragement in his pastoral ministry at Wittenberg, so dejected about the poor progress of the Gospel there that he gave up preaching for fifteen months, 1529-1530

"The time will come when you who now have an abundance of preaching . . . will long for a single sermon. But your impudence is so great that you have no appreciation for preaching . . . I am unwilling to preach (to you) anymore . . . I would rather preach to raving dogs because there's no use doing it with you and it is offensive to me. So I shall leave preaching to the pastor and his assistants. I will stick to my lecturing."

In letters, he mentioned their ingratitude, lack of any self-discipline, firing of guns under his window, hardheadedness, shameless dress, adultery, profiteering, and thievery. And the ones who didn't do those things just laughed at the ones who did! Worst of all was their drunkenness, which he called the great vice of "us Germans."

- c. Adoniram Judson, 18<sup>th</sup> century, missionary to Burma, at the funeral of his beloved wife Ann, said of her "There lies, enclosed in a coffin, the form of her I so much loved—the wife of my youth, the source and centre of my domestic happiness"

Judson entered into a deep depression. He avoided his colleagues and drowned himself in work. He built a hut out in the jungle and behind it dug his own grave, spending hours staring into it, contemplating his own demise. He wrote, "God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in Him, but I find Him not" (Tucker p. 137). He declined an honorary doctorate from Brown University, destroyed many of his letters, and gave the Mission his savings. Over time, he recovered, and entered into a new depth of spirituality that intensified his ministry.

d. Charles Spurgeon: battled depression; called it the "minister's fainting fits"

"As it is recorded that David, in the heat of battle, waxed faint, so may it be written of all the servants of the Lord. Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy."

- David Brainerd, missionary to native Americans: "I live in the most lonely melancholy desert....My soul was weary of life. I longed for death, beyond measure."
- A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: I fell "into the slough of despond so deep that...work was impossible...I wandered about deeply depressed. All things in life looked dark and withered."
- Mary Morrison, wife of Robert Morrison (China), who wrote, "My poor afflicted Mary...She walks in darkness and has no light."

5. Therefore, one of the most important ministries we can have is that of ENCOURAGING the brothers and sisters, to not give up, not be in despair

Illus. General Washington, winter of 1776

Six months after the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolution was all but lost. A powerful British force had routed the Americans at New York, occupied three colonies, and advanced within sight of Philadelphia. George Washington had lost 90% of his army and was driven across the Delaware River. Panic and despair was spreading through the states. But George Washington, and many other patriots, refused to let the American Revolution die. Washington knew that an army fights on its morale even more than on its full stomach... soldiers will bear almost any suffering and privation if they are convinced they will win; so on Christmas night, as a howling nor-easter struck the Delaware Valley, he led his men daringly across the Delaware River, defeated a force of Hessians at Trenton, capturing nearly a thousand men. Within days a second battle of Trenton followed in which the Americans held off Lord Cornwallis's best troops. After almost being trapped, Washington's men stole away under cover of darkness, snuck behind the British and defeated them again at Princeton. The result was astonishing... the morale in the army on throughout the states soared, and the fortunes of the Revolution were permanently altered

ALL FOR MORALE... encouragement!!

Christ is our captain... He has led us to victory after victory... Satan is a liar who wants to sell us the poison of despair

## B. Unity in Love

### ***Vs. 2 united in love***

1. Paul's second prayer is for the Colossians to be united... Greek word means "knit together"
2. Again, Satan's second great attack on the church is through disunity
3. Here Paul wants them to be bound together as one man, contending as one for the cause of the gospel
4. This is a consistent issue in Paul's ministry, as also seen in Jesus' High Priestly prayer

***John 17:22-23 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

When the church grows in SURPRISING UNITY... unity that cannot be explained by anything but the work of Christ, then many people become Christians: when Palestinians Christians and Messianic Jews both come to Christ and worship together in one building, the world sits up and takes notice;

When Serbs and Croats both come to Christ and worship in the same building, the world watches in amazement and the gospel advances

When Hutus and Tutsis from Rwandan both come to Christ and worship in the same building, loving each other, forgiving each other, the world watches, notices, some come to Christ

This is parallel to Jesus' earlier statement about loving service to each other after the footwashing:

***John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."***

Francis Shaeffler's comments:



“In John 13 the point was that, if an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he is not a Christian. In John 17:21, Jesus is stating something else which is much more cutting, much more profound: We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.” Now that is frightening. Should we not feel some emotion at this point?”

Only as the church is brought to complete unity will the watching world be able to see the power of the gospel

### C. Complete Understanding

***Colossians 2:2-3 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

1. Paul returns to the doctrinal basis of all truly healthy Christian life
2. For the rest of Colossians 2, he’s going to be fighting the false doctrine of the Colossian false teachers
3. But as usual he begins POSITIVELY... with CHRIST
4. The “full riches of complete understanding” of the mystery of God, namely Christ
5. Christ is EVERYTHING YOU NEED... in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
6. The Colossian heresy involved specialized knowledge, specialized insight, by which the Colossians could work out there own salvation
7. No... Christ is all the wisdom God has to offer

### D. Protection from False Doctrine

***Colossians 2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.***

1. Paul must fight the battle against deception, false doctrine
2. Satan masquerades as an angel of light, seeking to deceive us now as he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden
3. “Fine-sounding arguments” are the enticing words of their false philosophy which Paul will refute vigorously for the rest of this chapter

4. Paul wants the Colossians so mature in their doctrine, so filled with the richness of Christ in whom is all the fullness of God's wisdom that they will be protected from all false doctrine

Illus. A person who has just finished a rich, healthy feast—Thanksgiving, turkey with all the trimmings, four different vegetables, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, everything the heart could desire... HEALTHY FOOD, will have no interest in junk food

So Paul prays for the Colossians to be so filled with the true wisdom of God, Christ, that the fine-sounding arguments of the heresy will be exposed as the lies they are

#### E. Orderliness in Faith

***Colossians 2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.***

1. Paul is here speaking of his concern for them in prayer
2. He is with them in spirit, caring deeply about how healthy they are as a church
3. And he encourages them concerning their ORDERLINESS and the STABILITY of their faith in Christ
4. Roots produce physical stability for the plant; the loblolly pines on the night of the ice storm FAILED to give the needed stability, and the trees toppled
5. Orderliness and stability are both military terms: picture the invincible Roman army, arranged in row upon row, with its battalion and regimental standards flying, arrayed awesomely for battle... so is a healthy church... orderly under the elders and deacons, stable in their faith in Christ
  - a. In Corinthians, he addressed the proper use of the gifts of tongues and prophecy

***1 Corinthians 14:40 But all things should be done decently and in order.***

- b. So also in all aspects of the church there must be order
6. God is a very ORDERLY being, upholding scientific laws He ordained from the start of creation; matter is made up of row upon row of atoms in astonishing order; in heaven, the angels all take their proper place around the throne as God ordained

Illus. Wedding; asked to read scripture; went up and read it at the proper time; when it was over, I sat back down in my seat; Bridegroom and groomsmen wore their tuxes with certain color arrangement, so also bridesmaids wore their dresses, all identical, all in the same color scheme; everyone stood in prearranged places; not free flowing but orderly; order produced beauty!

Illus: Queen of Sheba: sat at the banquet table and observed the practical fruit of Solomon's wisdom: the perfect orderliness and beauty of his banquet hall:

***1 Kings 10:4-7 When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, <sup>5</sup> the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed. <sup>6</sup> She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. <sup>7</sup> But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard.***

7. Sin produces disorder... healthy doctrine and obedience produces good order

***James 3:16-17 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.***

- a. Disorder caused by selfish ambition
- b. People yearning for positions and roles that God has not willed for them
- c. The resulting chaos destroys churches

A healthy church is a stable and orderly church, like a well-disciplined army, ready to do battle for Christ; like a well-rooted tree, able to face any storm and not be toppled

#### F. Daily Walk Under Christ's Lordship

***Colossians 2:6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.***

Paul exhorts the Colossians to WALK in Christ as they also BEGAN in Him... the way the Christian life begins is ALSO the way it progresses

***Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?***

The way we start is the way we must progress

The Christian life begins with this: REPENTANCE and FAITH

Repentance is turning away from sin, away from rebellion and turning to King Jesus

Faith is trusting in Christ to save you from sin

This is how the Christian life begins, this is how it must make its progress

The LORDSHIP of Christ is essential to salvation...

***Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

As we BEGIN the Christian lie by bowing the knee to Christ as King, so we must continue in submission to Him...

“As you received Christ Jesus as Lord, CONTINUE TO WALK IN HIM..”

This is the daily Christian life... Paul describes it with four participles

Rooted in Christ...Built up in Christ...Strengthened in the faith...Overflowing with Thankfulness

### 1. Rooted in Christ

- a. The root system is there to give stability and nourishment to the entire tree
- b. So also Christ is our source of stability and our daily nourishment
- c. Christ is the nourishing soil for the health of our souls... His love, His blood, His forgiveness, His mind, His wisdom, His passion, His power, His humility...
- d. Every aspect of a healthy Christian life comes from being rooted in Christ

***John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

### 2. Built up in Christ

- a. “Built up” is more of an architectural image than that of a growing tree
- b. BUT it’s the same... making progress in the Christian life... taking on harder and harder sin patterns and defeating them by the Spirit, becoming more and more conformed to Christ’s perfect, holy character
  - i) Built up like a fortress to withstand any assault
  - ii) Built up like a palace, a royal dwelling place adorned for the King
  - iii) Built up like a cathedral, a majestic temple in which God delights to be served and worship
- c. Every doctrinal concept that you take in becomes like Vitamin D for a newborn, strengthening his little bones as they grow

3. Strengthened in the faith AS YOU WERE TAUGHT
  - a. Strong and growing stronger... IN THE FAITH
  - b. “The faith” is always right doctrine... the truths of Christianity
    - i) Note he specifically mentions “as you were taught”
    - ii) The ongoing strength of the church is in its teaching ministry
  - c. The more we accept and trust these spiritual principles, the stronger we will be
  - d. Greek word means “to confirm”... it means to prove that your faith is genuine
  - e. Prove it by an ongoing life of obedience to King Jesus
4. Overflowing with Thankfulness
  - a. Once again, Paul comes to the issue of thankfulness
  - b. From a healthy, well-rooted Christian heart comes a river of thankfulness and praise for God
  - c. Thankful for who God is
  - d. Thankful for what He’s done in Christ
  - e. Thankful for every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms
  - f. Thankful for complete forgiveness of all sins
  - g. Thankful for our future in the New Heavens and the New Earth

Here we have described some elements of a fully ROOTED church

This is what Paul was laboring for in his day

This is what we should be laboring for at FBC

### III. Application

#### A. How is your root system?

1. Start with **prayer**: James says that people who ask for wisdom but don't really expect to get it are like double-minded men, blown and tossed by the wind; are you STABLE in your prayer life, faith-filled, expecting to receive what you ask for? Do you expect prayer to be a struggle... a battle with the world, the flesh and the devil? Are you prepared to overcome in that struggle and pray for the church as Paul did? John Piper's book *When I Don't Desire God...* a practical way to fight the battle for joy, and to overcome deadness in your prayer life
2. **Discouragement**: Are you discouraged today? Has Satan launched the fiery darts of discouragement, and have they found some crack in your armor? Do you feel like giving up in your battle against sin? Do you feel like you have no ministry for Christ, and you don't even want to try to get one? If you have a ministry, are you tempted to feel that it is worthless and why keep going?
  - a. BATTLE discouragement!
  - b. Ask friends to pray for you
  - c. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Preach to yourself
  - d. Renew your minds in the promises of God
  - e. Remind yourself that Christ is undefeated, the conqueror of all, and that He lives within you
  - f. Focus on the resurrection of the body, the finish line of this great race of redemption. Can any power in heaven or on earth stop Christ from raising up His children from the grave?

*1 Corinthians 15:54-58 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

3. **Unity** in love: do you labor for the unity of this church? Are you aware of anything that anyone may have against you? Do you seek and give forgiveness readily? Larger issues: do you see FBC as part of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, with members from every race, every tribe, every language, every nation. Are you willing to oppose racism? Do you yearn as I

do to see this church a multicultural display of what it will actually look like around the throne of Jesus Christ?

*John 17:23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

4. **Doctrinal life:** “full riches of complete understanding” “no one deceives you with fine-sounding arguments”... do you pray faithfully for the doctrinal purity of the church? Are you faithfully studying the word of God for yourself? Do you support the teaching ministries of this church—Bible for Life, sermons, Home Fellowships, ACTS; teachers: are you warning your people against false doctrines as well as teaching the true ones?
5. **Orderliness in the faith:** selfish ambition is the most disorderly force in a local church; fight against it in your own heart; be willing to take a lower place if God chooses someone else to do a ministry; also realize that our personal sin affects the whole body; FIGHT THE CHAOS of sin
6. Grow in **obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord:** INFINITE JOURNEY... every step made the same way as the first... repentance and faith in Christ Jesus as Lord