

## ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN CHRIST

Today marks the beginning of a very important journey that will last the whole year. A journey that will lead us to show practically where we belong in matters of faith: & where we are built! Today marks the beginning of a turning point of asking ourselves to say now that we are spiritually empowered, how do we deepen ourselves in the Faith of Christ! This theme of the year comes with a challenge: Now that we are aware of the one who empowers us spiritually, we have been planted by him, & we now need to take roots and be established in him. In matters of faith, something that comes to stay must take roots! Because if it does not take roots, then two things might happen to it:

1. It will be overtaken by a well grafted lie: Someone has said that lies have long legs! They spread faster than the truth! They can jump from 0 to 150 kms! The problem with this is that a well grafted lie may still look like the truth but it will be very difficult to distinguish it from error!
2. It will be as St Paul said in **Eph.4:14** *“tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching, and by the cunning of men”* In fact this is a condition of a dead body, when someone has drowned in the lake, the waves literally toss them to and fro!

A little bit of what the Church in Colossae was going through will help us understand what we are dealing with this year. In early Church, there came about a false teaching that spiritual things and material things are opposed to each other. It became the order of the day to such an extent that some Xtns concluded that the body (material) was evil, while the Spirit was good! People who subscribed to this, started to believe that in fact the body has to be subjected to some form of suffering. That all the way from creation up to now, there are good spiritual things and bad material things! People believed that there were two gods, the spiritual god who is the source of good things; and an evil god who created material things including human bodies! With this view some of them went about punishing their bodies, for instance many Christians went in swamps where their bodies would be subjected to mosquito bites, some gave themselves to immorality, and some to die as martyrs coz the thought that would take them to heaven; this is the reason why St Paul in **1 Cor. 13: 3** says *“and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”*

The Greek philosophers from this understanding confused many Xtns in Colossae and elsewhere, saying that there is no room for God who is one and Almighty, and that it is from him where both good and evil come from. In this case therefore cannot be good!

All these things corrupted Xtianity. The Church in Colossae was living in accordance with man-made philosophies aiming at uprooting the Christian faith! Let me tell you, if you want a confused saved life, you start mixing the word of God, and the worldly values; You start reasoning and bring it into scripture; start making the bible what you want it to say! Today believers have joined the secular world in doing this!

This is the problem of the 21st century; that for instance, some deceptive pastors have resorted to misunderstand prophecy! They have appealed to some form of Prophecy which they claim to be what they have called original revelation, straight from God!! This kind of prophecy has come to stay and to replace the word of God, the bible. For example they tell spouses who are already married that God has revealed to them that the man they have now (that is if they get it right that the person is married) does not belong to them and God is saying that it is the pastor who should have married them!! And people believe this! Since the end of the Second World War, in the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations, many states including Uganda have adopted treaties, protocols & declarations referring to them as human rights. The question is, have these rooted us in Jesus, or uprooted us from him? St Paul in that text of **Col 2:8** says, *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”* But before that He reminds them that *“just as you received Jesus, so you are to continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in him...”*

**6** aspects will help us understand the whole idea of being rooted in Christ and its implication in our time:

- 1. When the root is deep, there is no need to Fear the wind:** Fear takes away confidence! In the biblical times many believers suffered from fear. Today many people are living in fear! Fear in my own understanding stands for *“Frequent, Endless, Anxiety and Regrets.....* Fear destroys faith, it destroys hope, fear destroys belief! In fact fear can rule, where there is no faith! Most people are consumed by fear, It wakes up with them, goes out with them to work, and comes back with them to spend a night with them! In fact some of you stopped going to your villages during Xmas becoz you are fearing that a witchdoctor will bewitch you! (That’s not a solution, they can still follow you and kill you here) Today suffering and calamity have become so rampant in our society. There are a lot of winds and hardships that we are going through; there are so many troubles! Eg. Famine, sicknesses; natural disasters of earthquakes & mudslides are all around us! With God’s full permission, the devil and a host of other powerful spirits, are everywhere tempting and

tormenting men, even to the extent of taking their wealth and health as they did with Job, an upright man! You have gone through challenges, trying times! Keep the faith, because even roots go through rocks! This year some of you will face rejection, denial and oppression. Man's rejection can sometimes be God's direction. God sometimes uses the rejection of hateful people to move us to a new place or assignment--where we wouldn't have thought of going on our own. He must slam the door in our face through rejection to get us to look in another direction. Then when we get to that new place, we thank God for the rejection rather than being bitter about it.

## **2. We are rooted by Hearing and Doing the word of God:**

In **Matt.7 24**: the bible says *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock”* It is in evidence that there are so many voices out there that are hindering us from hearing the word of God! In order to hear the voice of God, you must first turn down the volume of the world! The worldly volume is too loud! According to Hebrew thought the word of God is understood to be God’s activity and His revelation through which we not only receive the truth about God, but actually meet God face to face! It is here where we discover his mind! The word of God therefore is God himself because you cannot separate what He has said from whom He is! You know we always associate people with their own voices, then we know they are coming, and if they are feared, we run and hide, even if they have not yet appeared! When we hear the word of God we know the authority behind those words! They have the power to dig our foundation, they have the power to command things from a distance! Let me tell you, the authority of someone is clearly seen when he speaks and what happens when he speaks! When you see the impact of what he has said, that is when you know the authority of that particular person and what he is able to do! This is why in **Matt.8:9**, the centurion told Jesus, *“ speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed: For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me, and when I say to one, “Go” he goes and come, he comes”!*

Doing the word of God will indeed root us in the faith! If it is forgiveness, do it, because everyone needs a grave yard where he can bury the failures of other people! If it is love do it because God first took the initiative to love you! In the days of Ezekiel the prophet the people came to the house of God and heard the word of God. They enjoyed the music and the worship yet was not willing to follow through with obedience. It should be easy for us to understand the error of this. This religious atmosphere was is still there today. The Lord told Ezekiel that the people were in error

because they would not do what had been commanded of them. It is also important for each of us to be careful to obey God because it is not enough to hear, we must follow through and do the Word. You are professing But Not possessing. When you do the word, you possess the word in your heart and in your actions! The ministry of Jesus Christ was focused on hearing and doing the word. In **Luke 11:39-54** And the Lord said unto him, *You Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.*

### **3. Being rooted implies total Trust in Christ**

The word Fiancé means trust or confidence! It is a term of jurisprudence. It comes from the Latin word “Fiducia” which meant an act whereby a person transferred property to another but without securing a written receipt from him, presuming that the other person can be “trusted” and will give back the property even without being bound with any written commitment! This is the level at which the early Xtns were called to trust and Christ! Being rooted in Christ means understanding that the journey of life, needs someone who knows the way, and Jesus knows the way coz he said, “I am the way!”

### **4. To be rooted in Christ means crucifying our Sinful nature:** When you are rooted in Christ, the sinful nature should no longer occupy your mind. Believers instead of being rooted are now rotten with sin! The sin which is most destructive right now in your life, which you are most defensive about, needs to be crucified. To be rooted in Christ implies a change of priorities! The same mouth that lied, now speaks the truth; the same hand that hit others, can now hug. The eyes that lusted over women or other people’s husbands, now begin to look for ministry opportunities: A rooted Xtn should desire to be free from sin, and not to sin freely as we are seeing today!

The reason why many marriages are breaking and spouses are reportedly snatched, is because sin is the daily bread for that family! For me I don’t believe in the concept of husband snatching! That... *“they will snatch my husband”* No! It’s him who is not rooted in Jesus, If he was, there would be no need to say that, because an old man as he is, why does he accept to be snatched?? If you are rooted in Christ, there’ll be consequences! For every sin there are consequences, and you have to pay one day, however sweet the sin is. You see, Sin is like going to nice hotel, eat and drink whatever you like, and you are enjoying..., but when you finish, the waiter with a smile on her face, brings a bill folder (folded properly as if she is coming in peace) and yet it contains the “consequences” of your fun, and you have to pay! Being rooted in Christ keeps you stable and restrains you from craving for sin anyhow, (*A story is told*

*of a little girl who got saved and applied for church membership. They asked her "Were you a sinner?" "Yes", "Are you still a sinner?" she said "Yes" Then what real changes have taken place in your life? She answered, "The best way I can explain it, is that I used to be a sinner running after sin, but now am a sinner running away from sin"!)*

The vain philosophies have crept in the church, right at your doorstep! In the recent years, homosexual advocates have argued that the Bible, which is rightly interpreted, does not forbid homosexual relationships. For example, they have argued that God's judgment on Sodom on Gomorrah (**Gen. 19:29**) was merely because of the inhospitality of those cities, and not for the sin of homosexuality, and yet they forget that in the Epistle of **Jude 1:7** it clearly states that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah "indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire" (i.e. homosexuality) In fact it says: "*going after strange flesh*" & in the Book of Common Worship (under prayers for the human condition, pg.835) there is a prayer of the sexually confused!! A believer who is not rooted will not see this as a problem! We complain of corruption in our country today; we say '*this country/ government is corrupt*' but is it not us? In international law, one of the qualifications a state should have to qualify being a state, is a permanent population! That's what makes a country! So the sin of corruption is in this population of Xtns is as a result of those who are not rooted in Christ! The reason why you are an expert in crushing people's emotions like you are making juice from fruits; why your words at home only destroy and do not build; why you are a commander of verbal artillery, is coz you are not rooted in Christ!!

5. **We are rooted and built, to last!** In **Matt.7:24, 25**: "*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: "The rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall because its foundation was on the rock"* We are built with carefully selected materials from heaven that make us sustainable! Such materials are: Faith, Holiness, Patience, forgiveness, prayer and Trust. This is why in **Jer. 17:7-8** the bible says- "*But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit"* Let me tell you, our being rooted is permanent only when we stop mixing our building materials which are from heaven with those that are in the world. The world is also busy building people! But the question is how strong is the world building those who subscribe to its values? The world will build you but with fake materials, that is why marriages which are not built on Christ are falling today! Those that know Christ can only hit potholes but

afterwards they get back on track., while those that are rooted on something which was said by a witchdoctor, they are being swept by El-nino rains, never to be seen again! If you are built on Christ the rock, not being tossed to and fro, you are confident becoz of the building materials he uses! Most of them are experiential in nature, and are as hard as flint, but they are meant to build you to last! This is why Paul in **2 Cor.4:8**, says "*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed..struck down but not destroyed*" because we are built to last!

**6. We are planted, rooted and Positioned for a destiny:**

The Word of God warns us that we are living in evil days, and that our enemy, the devil, is doing his best to divide and fragment the thinking of God's people. He tries to get people confused as to who they are and why they are here. He gets them preoccupied with other things. He wants them to be independent, to think like the world thinks, to think like the natural man thinks in the futility of his mind. This was the major problem in Church of Colossae! The devil keeps people away from serious involvement with the Word of God in order to keep their relationship to God's Word superficial and secondary. But believers need to realize that they are planted, rooted and then positioned for a destiny!

In **Ps.1:3** the bible says that "*A righteous man shall be like a tree planted by the running streams of waters*" When a tree is planted, it is a specific act, in a specific location, by a specific person. This is not a wild tree that grows on its own. It's a tree planted and chosen deliberately, cultivated and secured from the terrible uprooting which will happen on the final day! This year the Lord is saying that He, as the gardener, has planted us into a specific location, that is, our destiny so that we are established to avoid tragedy! Let me tell you, the greatest tragedy is not death, but life without purpose; a destiny!! There are people who are just there! *How are you? They say, "am there, there"*! We are positioned to achieve our destiny and call on God where we are planted, or else you will be uprooted! This is why Jesus said in **Matt.15:13** said "*every tree my Father has not planted will be uprooted!*" According to **Ps.1**, the Lord has not just planted you anywhere! You are planted by the rivers of water; the reason is that even if one river should fail, you will have another to supply all that is necessary for you to be well rooted and established! The rivers of pardon, of grace, the rivers of promises and the rivers of communion with Christ. According to what Christ taught us in **Matt.4:1-11** it is very clear that rooted believers don't live on the basis of assumptions; they live in accordance with what is written! (Jesus was quoting scriptures) This year as rooted believers, every time the devil whispers anything outside the domain of what Christ has said, you will ask him, "*Where is that*

*written?*” Life is a journey, which needs someone who knows the way! That someone is Jesus becoz he said “I am the way”!

In conclusion, If our roots in Christ are strong and healthy our outward lives will automatically show the life and nature of Christ to those around us by bearing fruit in God’s kingdom.