

Worship Material
What really matters
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 27th July

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, we gather to worship you,
for great is your glory
and great is the love that welcomes us.
You walk with us in our troubles
and your love lasts for ever.
So we bring you our praise and thanks.

Amen.

Colossians 2.6-15,(16-19)

Bible notes

Paul refers to shadows and substance (v.17), and this contrast helps us distinguish between what really matters in our faith and what is secondary. The congregation in Colossae is being pulled towards concerns about special food and special days, and Paul encourages members to keep their focus where it should be – on Christ.

To help them grasp this, he offers a string of comparisons highlighting the completeness of our life in Christ. We are like trees, rooted in him; we are like buildings whose foundation is in him (v.7). Our commitment to him is described as 'spiritual circumcision' (v.11), recalling God's requirement that Abraham should be circumcised as a sign that he belonged to God in covenant relationship (Genesis 17:11). Even more profoundly, baptism is compared to sharing with Christ in dying and rising (v.12), and forgiveness is likened to God's cancellation of records of debt (part of Jewish teaching: see Leviticus 25:28). Paul completes this series of images by presenting Jesus as the victor celebrating a triumph, a public procession celebrating the enemy's defeat (v.15).

Alongside this description of the heart of Christian life, Paul explains further who Jesus really is, building on the hymn of 1:15-20. In him, we encounter everything God is (v.9). Paul pushes back against any idea that the fullness of God is somehow split between Father and Son. At every moment of Jesus' life,

God is fully present in him. This is why Christians can base their life on trusting, confident allegiance to Christ. Good writing in Paul's day used the beginning and end of a passage to highlight the most important ideas in the author's thought. This section ends by focusing on Christ as head of the whole body of Christian believers (a common image in the New Testament; see Ephesians 1:22-23). At the start of the passage (v.7), Paul highlights the appropriate response – thanksgiving.

Prayer

God of all that really matters,
of all that is true and trustworthy.
We praise you for being our strength,
for calling us to follow you, for receiving our best
and for showing us what life and love mean.
We praise you for being bigger than our fears
and deeper than our worries.
We praise you for inspiring us with your living Word
to trust in Christ, to be rooted in him and
to serve him with hearts full of thankfulness.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Lord Jesus, as we leave this place,
help us to leave behind things that don't matter and won't last,
to keep you at the centre of our lives and
to give ourselves afresh to what really matters.

Amen.