

Spiritual Exercises - Colossians 2:6-7

The text for meditation for this 10th Sunday after Pentecost is from the Epistle to the Colossians 2:6-7. Let us hear these verses: “**6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.**” Here ends the text for meditation.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Dear Christian friends:

Doctors recommend to walk an hour a day, five days a week, and keep it up for the rest of our life. The point of doctors is quite simply. They say: in order to stay healthy, a person need the exercise that a daily walk would provide. So it is very important to get into the habit of walking, for the good of our health. I personally need this walk and to keep myself in shape. Since I came to London I have gained 20 pounds, and I know that if I do not walk, do regular exercise, and balance my diet, my weight will increase, and I do not want that.

God says to you so plainly and simply in today’s Epistle, “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” Before walking with Christ we had to receive Him. And how do we receive Him? It is through Baptism. It is your baptism that sets you apart, that allows you to walk with Him. Baptism has raised you from a dead life of sin to a new life in Christ. So, let us walk in the water of your baptism! Use it as a way of avoiding and protecting against the captivity of this wilderness in which we live.

As God protected, nourished and sustained the people of Israel in the wilderness in order they could reach the Promised Land so your Baptism. Baptism not only gives you God’s rich forgiveness of your sins, but also allows to walk with Christ, producing within you good works and abiding fruit, producing many happy results both for you and for your neighbor.

So friends in Christ; “Allow no one takes you captive” Do this by continually measuring and comparing the things you hear in the world with things God has written in His Living Word. “Contribute that the hearts and minds of your family members find continual rest and peace in God’s Word. Do this, both by speaking forgiveness to them on a daily basis, and also by regularly talking with them about the Christian faith in everyday life. “Make sure that your family traditions never be allowed to interfere or replace the Word of God in your midst. Do this by keeping the Word of God;

its hearing, its communion, and its fellowship; the first priority of your family life. St. Paul says **“as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.** To a certain extent, Paul tells us this for the same reason that the doctor tells us to walk, and that is that we need the exercise for our spiritual lives that comes through our daily walk in Christ.

Daily physical exercise is good for our heart and can benefit our life in this world, but daily spiritual exercise is good for the soul and will benefit us for all eternity. And if we want to have real spiritual health, we should be walking in Christ, through all our life. When it comes to our soul's health, there is only one thing that makes a difference, and that is Jesus Christ, our Lord. Without Him, there would be no need for any spiritual exercise, for without Him we are dead in our sins.

St. Paul tells the Colossians **“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”** Christ has already done all that is necessary to give us spiritual health. His death and resurrection are the cure for sin and its evil power of death. We are now alive in Christ. We are alive because Christ has died for us and lives for us. He has come to give us spiritual health so that sin might not destroy us and so that we might live in His glorious Kingdom forever. And this life-giving power of God working in Christ has had its desired effect in our lives.

Paul says that we have been firmly rooted in Christ, that we are being built up in Him, that in Him we are established in our faith. God, through the Holy Spirit at work in His word, in our baptism, and in the sacrament of Holy Communion we receive today, open our hearts and minds to know His truth. He has brought us to know and to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. And where there is faith, there is spiritual health. We were condemned by sin, but He in His grace and mercy has forgiven us. We were dead, but He has made us alive.

Romans 6:4 says **“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”** That means, in baptism we share in Christ's death on the cross. Christ died and paid the price for our sins on the cross. In baptism we share in His death because when we join the body of Christ, we die to sin. We die to the condemnation of sin, and to the life of sin.

But to walk in this new life, we have to avoid things that break our new relationship with God. Because of Jesus Christ we do not live in the fear of God, or of His damnation. In this relationship with God, our joy is to serve God and to live as His children. He has made us spiritually healthy

people through Christ Jesus. But just as our physical health can deteriorate without exercise, so our spiritual health can be lost if we do not keep ourselves in good shape by doing some spiritual exercise. And the spiritual exercise we need comes as we walk in Christ through all our life.

To walk in Christ is to live by faith in Christ. It is to let Jesus Christ, the Lord be the centre of all that we do in our lives. All our strength, our guidance, and our motives for living are to be found in Him. When we are walking in Christ, we seek to exercise our faith by learning and studying His word. Walking in Christ means following where He leads us, seeking to do His will rather than serving the desires of our sinful flesh. Every step that we take in life, every move that we make we should seek to do those things which Christ would have us do. Walking in Christ means clinging fast to Him, believing in Him and His promises, and obeying Him as we live according to our faith.

Of course, not everyone does this. Paul told the Philippians **“Many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.”** Scripture often speaks of those who are walking in darkness, who are walking away from the truth. And their lack of good spiritual exercise is going to prove fatal. But are we who are spiritually healthy people exercising our faith, as we walk in Christ, for if we are not walking in Christ then our spiritual health is deteriorating, and we are in danger of succumbing to the spiritual disease caused by sin - disease that is totally fatal, but disease that can be avoided through proper spiritual exercise. That is why we need to walk in Christ through all of our life.

Our society has become very aware of how important exercise really is to the maintenance of a healthy body. Exercise helps reduce the likelihood of such things as hardening of the arteries which often leads to heart-attack and stroke. It makes our body work more efficiently so that it is better able to deal with simple infections such as colds and flu. And it can help make us more energetic in the day to day course of life. And so our daily spiritual exercise of walking with Christ can strengthen us in both our spiritual and our physical lives. Walking with Christ will keep our hearts from becoming hardened toward God and our fellow man.

Walking with Christ will give us the spiritual strength that enables us to cope with the countless temptations that come our way day after day and to deal with the problems and cares of this life. Walking with Christ will give us more energy and ambition to do those things that are right in the sight of God and to serve Him in all that we do.

Fitness fanatics say that a healthy body is a happy body. And when we are spiritually healthy people, we too will be happy; a happiness that our text tells us shows itself as we overflow with gratitude for all that our great and gracious God has done for us. Paul says **“The life which I now**

live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.” Friends, and to live by faith in Christ, to walk in Christ is the spiritual exercise that will keep us healthy so that we might enjoy eternal life in heaven.

No doubt, physical exercise is good for our body, but it is not an end in itself. We can get daily physical exercise, and eat properly but that does not mean that we will never become ill. We can be the most physically fit person in the world, but that does not mean that we will live forever. Even healthy people die.

But those who get the proper spiritual exercise need not worry about death, for as Jesus tells us **“He who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.”** If we believe in Christ, we will walk in Christ through all our life. And that is the spiritual exercise that does bring us eternal life. Amen

“The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keeps your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour”. Amen