

Connected with God and Each Other Միացած՝ Աստուծոյ եւ Իրարու

Colossians 2:6-7

Today is Rally Sunday. I looked in the dictionary for the definition of rally:

1. to come together again to renew an effort
2. to join in a common cause ¹

Today we come together to renew our commitment to worship and serve God. We cannot do this if we don't have a common cause and purpose.

What is PACC's goal and mission?

"As a Christ-centered Armenian Evangelical Church, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church exists to proclaim the Good News (gospel) of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through worship, evangelism, service, spiritual nourishment, and fellowship – with a special focus on the spiritual and physical needs of our people. We also focus on the preservation of our Armenian heritage."

Brothers and Sisters, PACC was established in 1901. For 117 years we have existed. I was not there in the beginning, but I believe our forefathers and mothers had similar Sundays like Rally Sunday. They came together to encourage each other and remind each other their purpose and goal. Most likely they would say: "God has granted us another year. Let us rededicate our time, money, and talents to God."

Last year I challenged you with the concept of getting out of the boat. Find your identity and your gift in God and use it for His glory. This year our main theme is: **Connected with God and Each Other**. How? How can be connected continually with God, so that as a result we learn to be connected to each other.

Here is Colossians 2:6-7.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (Colossians 2:6-7NIV)

Walking In Him

Paul is reminding the Colossians that **they have received the most important news** that **Jesus Christ is LORD**. The member of the early church kept a secret sign to tell each other that they were Christians: the sign of the fish, *Ichthys* in Greek ². (This is an acronym that stands for **Jesus Christ God's Son Savior**).

The early church reminded each other of their creed in one word. They believed that Jesus (the humanity of Jesus) Christ (the divinity of Jesus), is Son of God and Savior. This is the only way we can worship God when we accept Jesus Christ (receive), the Anointed One, as Lord and Savior. We do not use the word Lord these days. So think about Jesus as the big boss. How to you accept the big boss? Reverence, love, respect, adoration, obedience, surrender.

Paul says: **“continue to live in him”** (NIV), or in another translation **“walk in Him.”**(ESV). The original Greek word means: **“to make one's way, progress; to make due use of opportunities”**³. Or in other words **“continue walking around him to grow.”**

Paul is practical; he illustrates his thought with imagery:

Walking is a great metaphor. Everyone walks, we walk to our car, we walk to the airport, we walk towards our work, we walk and walk.... Every culture walks, we used to walk more than before. Now we drive more...

The Bible tells us that in the early times there was a man called Enoch. **Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.** (Gen 5:24 NIV), In another translation: **Enoch was walking in close fellowship with God.** (New Living Translation)

Then Paul draws a picture of **growth. Growth happens when we are connected. Growth happens when the plant is rooted and connected to the roots.**

Connected: Grow downward

Connected: Grow upward

Connected: Grow inward

Connected: Grow outward

1. Connected: Grow downward by being “rooted”

“rooted...”

It means: “to cause to strike root, to strengthen with roots, to render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded.”⁴

It is a metaphor used in agriculture in the past and today. Whenever we collected unwanted weed from the ground, my dad used to tell me I should pick them up from their roots, otherwise, they would grow again. Once the plant is rooted, nothing can stop that thing from growing. I like the imagery “**thoroughly grounded.**”

The tense of the Greek word means, “**once and for all having been rooted.**” Those who have received Christ are rooted in Him. A tree puts down deep roots in order to find nutrition and to provide stability. Likewise, we must go deep with Christ in order to find the fuel we need to flourish, and in order to withstand the storms of life.

Jeremiah describes the man who is trusting God;

**He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”** (Jeremiah 17:8, ESV)

Once we are rooted, we will grow downward.

2. Connected: Grow upward by being “built up”

“rooted and built up in him.”

We like to build up buildings. Our building, the church building is beautiful. Build up happens upwards, when we put stones on top of each other. Jesus loved this

metaphor, yet he asked us to be the building, not made of stone, but each of us as a stone and Christ as the cornerstone.

Paul also challenges the Corinthian church telling them how should they build:

“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” (1 Corinthians 3:12-13)

How does PACC grow upward? It is by edifying the body of Christ. At PACC, we build each other up when we get out of the comfort zone and learn to open up to each other, care for each other, love each other... know each other, and talk to each other... **learn to build community.**

This is one of the reasons I am asking you to be part of one of the Bible study groups. Without small groups you cannot grow upward. Edify the body.

Once we are built up, we will grow upward.

3. Connected: Grow inward “strengthened in the faith”

“strengthened (established) in the faith as you were taught.”

What do you think strengthens your faith?

Discipline of prayer, discipline of spending time in His Word, discipline of giving, going on missions, inviting people to church, trusting God in difficult life circumstances, being around other believers, giving testimony what God has done in your life....

Living in faith will strengthen our faith.

Are you a **student of Christ**? A student is a constant learner.

We need to learn, study, go deeper, have solid food and not just milk. I will keep saying, “*Plug in.*” I know you will be tired of hearing this, but you see I am your pastor and I am responsible for your spiritual health.

So grow inward strengthening your faith by becoming a student who will never graduate on this earth.

4. Connected: Grow outward as you “overflow with thankfulness”

A Luxurious Banquet (in Armenian *Jokh seghan* Ճոխ Սեղան) or River

“overflowing (abounding) with thankfulness.”

Walking in Christ brought us here, having thankful hearts, an **inner contentment** that only God can give us. That **Joy** will be burst out of us, **overflow** from us like living water. We will **grow outward**. Yes, having a grateful heart will reach out and touch someone.

I said once to you about word *Shnoragal yem*, in Armenian; it means: **“I have received Grace.”** The more we understand grace, the more gratitude we will have and grace will overflow from us.

Kent Hughes writes, **“A thankless spirit betrays a life which is no longer focusing on the greatness of Christ.”** If you don’t feel very thankful today, it’s probably because you’ve taken your eyes off of Jesus and put them on your problems.

Connected: Grow downward by being “rooted”

Connected: Grow upward by being “built up”

Connected: Grow inward in faith “strengthened in the faith”

Connected: Grow outward as you “overflow with thankfulness”⁵

Let us approach to the table

1 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rally>

2. Iēsous (Ἰησοῦς) Jesus, Christos (Χριστός) anointed, Theou (Θεοῦ) God’s, (h)ygios (Υἱός) Son , sōtēr (Σωτήρ) Savior.

3. Greek lexicon

4. ibid

5 Deepening Your Roots, Sermon shared by Brian Bill, SermonsCentral.com