

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 1 of 13

---

## **An Honest Look at Today's Church**

As we have been studying Colossians chapter two, we have seen that there are three main threats to the true church of Jesus Christ, and they are the same threats in all times and in all places. Satan's triple threat to the church. Satan seeks to undermine individual Christians, and entire churches, by introducing worldly philosophies, legalism, and man-made doctrines. Satan's demonic legions are constantly at work to sow the seeds of error in these three areas.

And so the Apostle Paul tells believers that we need to maintain a solid battle front against these threats. Maintain "good order and steadfastness," he says. He uses military language, the language of warfare. Take your battle positions. Man your posts. Stay in your ranks. Maintain a solid battle front against the enemy. That is the thrust of what he is saying.

Now, in our study we have also taken time to honestly observe the situation in the Evangelical church as we find it today. We looked at the evidence all around us. And as we do that, we have to be honest and realistic about what we see. In our day it is not simply a matter of *maintaining* a united battle front, as it was for the church at Colosse. In our day, we face the challenge of *restoring* that battle front, because in many places it has disintegrated. Many individual Christians, and many churches, are in confusion and disarray. The enemy is well inside the gates, and worldly philosophy, legalism, and man-made doctrines are sweeping across the church.

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 2 of 13

---

## **The Answer: Four Imperatives**

And so the question we have been considering is this: How are we to restore the solid battle front against Satan's triple threats of worldly philosophy, legalism, and man-made doctrines? In Colossians chapter two, verses six to ten, the Apostle Paul tells us that there are four things we need to do, and indeed, we *must* do in order to restore that solid battle front. And so I want to read that passage for you once again as we begin. Colossians chapter two, beginning at verse six. The Apostle Paul says this:

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

In this passage, the Apostle Paul states four imperatives, four things we must do, in order to restore a solid battle front against Satan's threefold attack:

First, we must walk an enlightened walk – verse 6: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." We covered this point in a previous message.

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 3 of 13

---

Second, we must grow upon a firm foundation – verse 7: “rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” We began focusing on this point in our last message, and we continue today. And then there are two more points we are going to take up, the Lord willing, in future messages.

Third, we must trust in a complete Savior – verse 9: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

And fourth, we must rest in a complete salvation – verse 10: “and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

And so we are focusing today on this second imperative that we find in Colossians chapter two and verse seven. In order to restore a solid battle front against the enemy, we must be "rooted and built up in [Christ] and established in the faith, as you have been taught," Paul says, “abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

### **Two Word Pictures: Trees and Buildings**

Now as we began examining this verse in our last message, we saw that there are six things that are true about a Christian, and about a church, that grows upon a firm foundation, the foundation of Christ alone.

We looked at the first of them in our last message. The believer who is growing on a firm foundation puts down strong roots in sound doctrine, the doctrine of

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 4 of 13

---

Christ, in order that the believer may grow upward in the faith. We saw that Paul uses two metaphors in this verse, two word-pictures: that of a tree putting down strong roots, and that of a building being erected upon a firm foundation.

These two things picture for us the only proper position of the believer in Christ – “rooted and built up” in Christ and His Word. We saw that Paul uses these two word-pictures because they have one thing in common: Both a tree and a building have to be firmly rooted and anchored downward, in order to rise upward. And so it is for the believer in Christ, and so it is for the body of believers who constitute the Church of Jesus Christ. We must be firmly rooted and anchored downward, in Christ, in order to rise upward, established in the faith.

### **Stability in the Truth**

And so today, we come to a second point concerning this matter of resting upon a firm foundation, in order that we may be able to put up a strong battle front against Satan’s triple threat of worldly philosophy, legalism, and man-made doctrines. Point number two is this: The believer who is growing on a firm foundation possesses stability in the truth. Stability in the truth.

The Apostle Paul has already spoken of this in chapter one, verse twenty-three. He says that it is imperative to “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast,” and not to be “moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard.”

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 5 of 13

---

But as we have seen, the problem today is that so many people and so many churches are not continuing in the true faith. They are not grounded and steadfast. They are being moved away from the true Gospel. People are going after all kinds of false teachings.

Now, we know that this has been true in many periods of the church. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that this would happen even in the early church. In Second Timothy chapter four he said, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

### **Why Is Today's Church Unstable?**

Now that was happening even in the early church. But at no time in the history of the church has the problem been as great as it is today. There are two main reasons for this. One is the influence of postmodern thinking on the church – the idea that there really is no single standard of truth, and so therefore we need to be tolerant of everybody, and everything, and every spiritually deadly idea that comes along. But beyond this, in our time, is the global influence of television, radio, and the Internet. In our time, once a heretical idea comes on the scene, it

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 6 of 13

---

can spread literally around the world and literally at the speed of light, in no time at all. Today, heresy spreads like wildfire.

And so what do we see? We see cults on the increase in many parts of the world – Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, and others are capturing people who are not rooted and grounded in Christ, and carrying them away into all kinds of strange doctrines, all kinds of deadly error.

### **A Special Problem of Our Time: The Camping Cult**

And dear friends, because we are at a particular point in the calendar I want to mention one particular cult that may at this moment be doing more damage than any other. That is the Harold Camping cult, the Family Radio cult, the false religion that this man has invented and so many people are following.

Harold Camping has predicted that the world will end in October 2011, and hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of people are believing him, even though he has already proved himself to be a false prophet. You may remember that Mr. Camping also predicted the end of the world in 1994, and it did not happen. And yet people believe him and follow him.

But this is not the only problem with this particular cult. Harold Camping uses a method of interpreting the Bible that is completely opposed to the way that God in Scripture says that the Bible is to be interpreted. Camping rejects grammatical-

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 7 of 13

---

historical interpretation. And by using an unsound method of interpretation, he has hatched all kinds of heresies.

Harold Camping teaches heresy about the person, and the work, and even the deity of Jesus Christ. Harold Camping teaches heresy about the church. Harold Camping teaches heresy about the way of salvation. Harold Camping teaches heresy about the destiny of the unsaved. Harold Camping teaches that he is receiving new revelations from God that add to Scripture and even change the meaning of Scripture.

Dear friends, Harold Camping is a dangerous man, and his religion is not true Biblical Christianity. It is a cult. I urge and I plead with you, stay away from it. Don't listen to his radio stations. Don't listen to Family Radio. The problem isn't only when Harold Camping is on the air. His network is teaching these evil doctrines 24 hours a day. But many people who are not rooted and grounded in Christ and built up in the faith are following after this man, and his cult.

Dear friend, don't be one of them. And God forbid that you should send a single dime to support such a ministry. Now I know these are strong words, but this is the time for strong words. Hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of people around the world, are being led astray, and this must be exposed for what it is.

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 8 of 13

---

## **Strong Words Condemning Instability**

The Apostle Peter used strong words in condemning such things. Here is what he says in Second Peter chapter two:

... there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber... They are presumptuous, self-willed.... these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime.

They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery [that is, spiritual adultery] and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.

They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but



Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 9 of 13

---

he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:1-22)

This is how Scripture speaks of false teachers, and of those who follow after them. This is how God the Holy Spirit speaks of those who bring worldly philosophies, or legalism, or man-man doctrines into the church – and those who

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 10 of 13

---

permit it, and those who follow after these things. God pulls no punches. God doesn't make suggestions about what you might want to do if you feel like it.

No! God gives commands. God gives stern warnings. Do not be involved with such people. Do not be carried away with them. Guard your own soul. Guard the souls of your children. Guard the souls of your fellow saints. Mark the people who bring in these false teachings and avoid them, Paul says in Romans chapter sixteen. You need to be "rooted and built up in [Christ] and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

### **Being Rooted in Christ: The Believer's Only Stability**

The believer who is growing on a firm foundation possesses stability in the truth. And the contrary is also true: If you are not growing on the one firm foundation, you will not possess stability in the truth. You will be susceptible to any false teaching that comes along. You will be easy prey for the enemy of your soul.

Don't be like that, Paul says to the Colossian believers. I am engaged in a great spiritual conflict because I want you to be free from these things. This is how you are to be, Paul says.

Remember what you once were without Christ, and what you now are in Christ. Never forget, Paul says. Colossians 1:21: "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 11 of 13

---

His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard..." (Colossians 1:21-23)

In Ephesians chapter four, Paul says that "we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, [we should] grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ" (Ephesians 4:14-15).

Dear friend, you need to be rooted and grounded in Christ and established in the faith so that when Satan's attacks come, you will be ready to stand the test. You'll recognize when worldly philosophies are being slipped into the church. You'll recognize when legalism is being brought in. You'll recognize when man-made doctrines are being brought in. And the reason you will be able to recognize these things is because you will know the truth as it is found only in Jesus Christ and in His written Word.

The Apostle Paul uses such a very fitting word picture when he speaks of putting your roots deep down into Christ and His Word, feeding on Christ and His Word, being nourished by Christ and His Word. That is the way you will have healthy roots, spiritually speaking. That is the way that you will maintain your stability when any preacher, or book, or video, or television program tries to take

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 12 of 13

---

you away from Christ, away from the truth. Your roots will hold firm. You will not be moved.

Think also about this: The time you can tell the real quality and health of the roots of a tree is when the winds blow and the rains beat down. Several trees may grow up side by side for many years. But then some of the trees develop problems with their roots. It may be a disease that destroys the roots. It may be some devouring worm or insect that eats away at the roots.

And then one day a storm comes up, and the strong winds blow, and one tree remains firm and upright. But another tree right alongside that healthy tree begins to lean precariously. And another tree next to that one not only begins to lean over, but comes crashing to the ground. And as you examine the base of the tree that is leaning, you see that the roots have been partially destroyed. And as you examine the base of the tree that came crashing down, you see that the roots had been mostly or completely destroyed.

And so it is with people who are not rooted and grounded in Christ. When the winds of error come, they don't stand firm. Spiritually speaking they move away from their steadfastness, and often they topple to the ground. They are pulled away from the truth.

Dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of Christ as it is found in His written Word, are the only place of stability in this horribly unstable world. The only stability that will keep you from being swept away when Satan attacks.

---

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "The One Place of Stability" (Colossians 2:7)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/20/2011

Page 13 of 13

---

Put your roots down in Him. Let them grown deep and strong and healthy. Take up the health-giving nourishment that is only to be found in the Word of God. And thus you will be able to say with the psalmist David, "I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand. I shall not be moved." (Psalm 16:7-8)

#### **About the Broadcast**

*The Scripture-Driven Church* airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to preach the Gospel to the lost, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to this ministry. Thank you for praying for us.

The broadcast is supported entirely by the gifts of God's people. If the Lord leads you to help us, you can do so in any of these ways:

- Call us toll-free at 888-804-9655 to give a gift using your credit card
- Give a gift by credit card at our secure website, [www.teachingtheword.org](http://www.teachingtheword.org)
- Mail your contribution to TTW, Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158

**TeachingtheWord Ministries** is recognized as a tax-exempt religious organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. Your gifts are fully tax deductible.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study  
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**