

NBC Devotional
November 1, 2023
“Staying Home”

As the weather turns cooler, and at my age, I am reminded of the necessity to stay active. Health professionals insist that “movement” is good for our health. The same is true for our spiritual health. God intends for every believer to grow and see “movement” or “progress” in his or her spiritual life. It is what we believe from the teachings of John Wesley and the “order of salvation.” I believe this is something of what Paul is indicating in Colossians 1:20-22, when he says that the reconciliation offered to us through Jesus is “to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.” He does not leave us where we are, but saves us in order to produce His holiness in our lives.



In the faith

I did not, however, expect the condition for this to happen. In verse 23, Paul says that this takes place “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel you heard.” It is a surprising twist or reversal, which is so often the case with the gospel. If you want to move forward, grow, or “progress,” the way to do that is actually to stay in place. The Greek word for “remain,” epimeno, suggests the idea of staying (abiding) in a place. This is modified or explained further by two words. “Grounded” is related to having a “foundation,” and “steadfast” is derived from the word for “chair.” It all sounds like things related to a home. Perhaps one way to summarize what Paul is saying is to “stay home” in the faith. If you really want to grow and move forward in seeing His holiness in your life, “stay home” in the faith and in the gospel which you heard.

This is likely the opposite of what the believers in the Colossian church were hearing from some of the new teachers that were coming their way. These new voices had some new ideas about what the Christian life looked like. “If you really want to move ahead or ‘progress,’ you must embrace these new things we are saying.” These new voices must have been loud and influential to prompt Paul to write these things. It is why he adds one more modifier to this “remain” idea: “not moved away.” The Greek word metakinoo can suggest the idea of being moved “with.” It is the picture of the herd mentality, where the group can be pulled in a certain direction because of the influence and pressure, not wanting to stand out. We know how this can be so in our day as well. The new voices can be loud and influential, and it can seem like an easier path to just follow the herd.

But the response called for by Paul is simple. If we want to see His holiness produced in our lives, STAY HOME in the faith. Note that it is “the faith” in which we are to remain. We are not called to stay in something, but in Someone. Standing firm in something might possibly lead to us being defensive or “stuck” in our ways. But “faith” is something dynamic and relational with the Lord Jesus, as Paul explains in Colossians 2:6-7. It is walking “in Him” that leads to being established in the faith. It is being unwavering in our seeking after Jesus Himself in His Word, and an openness to completely and unconditionally respond to Him no matter what. That is what it means to “stay home,” and it is what has

always led to revival and God's people moving ahead. Whenever God's people get back to Jesus and His Word, "the gospel which you heard," God moves in us and produces His holiness in us. And THAT is the progress that our world needs for such a time as this.

Do we desire His moving in us? Do we desire genuine growth, change, and moving forward in our spiritual lives? Do we desire for Him to produce more of His holiness in and through our lives? If so, are we willing to just "stay home" in the faith in a day of so many voices? Will we seek Jesus in His Word and respond to Him no matter what? The really good news is that He is the One drawing us home by His grace today. Will we abide in Him there?

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