

As Yourself

Week 4 • Claimed by Christ

Sep 9, 2026 • Colossians 3:1–4 • Romans 6:3–11 • Dr. Geoffrey D. Lentz

Print reading: Chapters Five and Six, Hidden with Christ and Washed by the Water, pp. 83–115

Tonight's rhythm: Opening prayer & Scripture 5 min • Teaching 30 min • Table time 20 min • Practice & closing 5 min

Teaching Block 1 • The Hidden Roots (10 min)

A crepe myrtle can be much larger underground than it appears above the surface. Its visible canopy depends on hidden roots. We often judge ourselves by the canopy: accomplishment, usefulness, reputation, relationships, success, or failure. Colossians 3:1–4 points to a deeper life, held with Christ in God. Our worth is not manufactured by what others can see. Christ becomes the ground from which we live. (pp. 83, 87–90)

Meister Eckhart calls the soul's deepest depth its *Grund*, or ground: beneath our roles, achievements, and fears, our roots receive life from God. God is the ground of our being—the One who creates, sustains, and indwells us. We depend on God; God does not depend on us. Communion does not erase the creature. Work, family, and ministry remain good gifts, but cannot become our foundation. Letting go means releasing what we have mistaken for the ground that holds us. (pp. 90–91)

"The true self is not self-made. It is Christ-held." (p. 89)

Table Time 1 • 5 min

Choose one question. Make room for each voice; anyone may pass.

What do you tend to use as a measure of your worth: being needed, doing well, keeping everyone happy, or something else?

What difference would it make to care deeply about that part of your life without asking it to tell you who you are?

Teaching Block 2 • From Self-Sufficiency to Christ-Sufficiency (10 min)

Philippians 4:13 is not a promise that Jesus will make every undertaking successful. Read it beside verses 11–12: Paul is speaking about plenty and hunger, abundance and need. Christ gives him freedom within circumstances he cannot control. The question is not, "Can I achieve anything?" but, "Can I remain faithful when life changes?" His strength is received, not self-produced. (pp. 83–86)

Self-sufficiency can become an impossible assignment: need nothing, master everything, never ask for help. Christ-sufficiency does not abolish creaturely dependence. Paul gratefully receives the Philippians' help. Depending on Christ makes him free enough to receive without shame and to act without controlling every outcome. Grace restores our capacity to choose, serve, endure, and love. (pp. 84–86)

Psalms 131:2 pictures the quieted soul "like a weaned child with its mother." The child still needs the mother but can rest in her presence without demanding milk. As the book puts it, "The weaned child has not outgrown the mother. The child has outgrown grasping." Mature prayer still asks, laments, and seeks help; it also loves God beyond a desired outcome. This is Paul's learned contentment: dependence deepened into trust, not denial of pain or resignation to injustice. (pp. 92–95)

Table Time 2 • 5 min

Choose one question. Listen for experience as well as ideas.

What does the image of a child resting with its mother suggest about how we might pray when a situation remains unresolved?

Where might Christ-sufficiency free you this week—from controlling an outcome, hiding a need, or proving you can manage alone?

Teaching Block 3 • Named, Claimed, and Clothed (10 min)

Hurricane Michael scattered bow ties through bushes and washed away familiar markers of identity. Such losses are real; baptism does not ask us to call devastation harmless. Romans 6:3–11 places us within Christ’s death and resurrection. Baptism confronts the illusion that we can secure ourselves against every loss and gives us a life joined to Christ. Destruction does not possess the final word. (pp. 101–103, 109)

Jesus is named Beloved before his public ministry; we share in his life by adoption and grace. “Beloved” names our deepest identity, and “I am baptized(Luther)” declares whose we are now—not merely something that happened long ago. God’s promise holds when feelings, roles, and achievements change. Ancient Christians were stripped and then clothed: the self is received and clothed with Christ. Our particular names remain within God’s Name. Baptism gives us an identity to live from, not a worth to achieve. (pp. 103–109)

We are beloved, but not finished. Baptism calls us to repent, resist evil, seek justice, and walk in newness of life. These actions grow from belonging; they do not earn it. Our roles still matter, but they no longer have to prove our worth. Baptism also joins us to a people who remember God’s promise when we cannot. The church helps us live from our core identity: beloved people whom Christ has claimed and the Spirit is healing. (pp. 109–113)

Table Time 3 • 10 min

Begin with the first question, then move to the second if time allows.

What would change if you lived from belovedness rather than trying to earn it? Think of one ordinary situation.

How can belonging to Christ help us tell the truth about what needs to change, without excusing ourselves or condemning ourselves?

Practice & Closing • Remember Your Baptism

1. **Open your hands.** Rest them in your lap as a sign of receiving the life God gives. Remembering baptism means recalling God’s promise, even if you were too young to remember the event.
2. **Name what you carry.** Silently name a role, achievement, loss, or fear that has been defining you. Let your open hands remind you that you can loosen your grip.
3. **Remember whose you are.** Picture the baptismal water and hear your name spoken with love. If baptized, say: “I am baptized. I belong to Christ. Before I achieve anything, I am beloved.” If not, consider Christ’s invitation to belong.
4. **Live from belonging.** Ask: “What could I do differently this week if I did not have to prove my worth?” Choose one faithful act. (Adapted from pp. 114–115)

Closing prayer God of grace, remind us that we belong to you. Free us from the need to prove our worth. Root our lives in Christ, teach us to receive help, and clothe us in love. Give us courage to tell the truth and grace to begin again. By your Spirit, form the unfinished people you have claimed, and make us a community that remembers your promise for one another. Amen.