

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise up on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139:8-10 (NIV)

Years ago, I had the pleasure of visiting Olympic National Park in Washington. The tree canopy above was breathtaking; yet, I couldn't overlook that I was surrounded by many trees that had toppled. The exposed root systems were massive- easily over 10 feet wide! Yet, the roots were not deep enough to withstand fierce winds because they were too shallow.

It reminded me of an analogy our pastor shared. He spoke about trees that looked impressive above the ground but were actually unstable due to shallow root systems. In contrast, he gave the example of the pine. Being that I live in "the land of the pine" this stuck with me! The longleaf pine has a central taproot that is nearly the same diameter as the trunk and averages 10 to 15 feet in depth.¹ That is a root that will hold fast! Recently, it struck me that I have never seen the root system of a pine pulled up and exposed like those trees I saw in Washington, despite having watched pines whipped back and forth in North Carolina hurricane winds!

As believers, we are called to be rooted (Colossians 6:7, Ephesians 3:17).

I was recently encouraged when I took a closer look at Colossian 2:6-7 (ESV). Paul is writing to the people of Colossae. They have turned away from false idols and have committed to Jesus but are experiencing intense cultural pressure to return to the old ways. Paul has never met them but he writes a letter of encouragement. After speaking of how he rejoices in their faithfulness he continues on...

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

The words for receiving and walking are written in the *active* voice. This implies that receiving Christ was an active choice to follow him, and now walking in him is an active choice to align our actions with our beliefs.² Frankly, this is convicting! Even as I encourage my two sons to make wise decisions, I have to confess that many of my choices do not reflect my desire to walk with Christ. It is humbling.

Yet, the Lord is kind, and there is encouragement to be found. In verse 7, the words rooted, built up, and established are all in a *passive* voice, meaning we are being acted upon.² Praise God, it isn't up to our own power to achieve all of these things! The longleaf pine tree doesn't muster up the energy to send that taproot deep into the soil. Instead God provided the sun, rain, and nutrients, and designed the tree to grow. Likewise, God provides all that we need and enables us to sink our roots deep in his Truth.

Father, thank you for your power and provision as displayed through the beauty of your Creation. Thank you for giving us free will so that we may choose to follow you. We pray our choices reflect

our walk with you and demonstrate Your love to the world around us. Thank you for enabling us to be rooted and built up in you. May we be like the pine, with our roots sinking deep in your good soil so that we can hold fast, no matter what storms may come. In Jesus name. Amen.

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References:

The Tree. The Longleaf Alliance. 2021. Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://longleafalliance.org/what-is-longleaf/the-tree/#:~:text=In%20mature%20trees%2C%20roots%20radiate,of%2010%20to%2015%20feet.>



Colossians 2: English Standard Version. Blue Letter Bible. 2024. Accessed June 2, 2024. https://www.blueletterbible.org/esv/col/2/1/s_1109001

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Southeast Christian Church

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Register: <https://www.medicalmissions.com/events/gmhc-2024>

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Join us for prayer!

Sunday, June 16, 2024 at 5:00 pm ET



The CPFI Past Presidents Committee was asked to implement a prayer ministry on behalf of CPFI. In March 2020, we started a weekly Prayer Meeting on Sunday evening at 5 p.m. ET, initially to pray about Covid-19 needs. **We are meeting monthly now on the third Sunday.** If you would like an invitation, e-mail Nena Lindrose at Office@cpfi.org. She will send a reminder e-mail with instructions on how to join and some suggested prayer concerns during the week prior to the meeting. We hope you will join us **Sunday, June 16, 2024** for our next session. By signing up you are only committing to participate when able and praying out loud is voluntary.

Fred Eckel, Director Emeritus

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