

Colossians 1:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Analysis

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister. The conditional "if ye continue" (ei ge epimenete, εἰ γε ἐπιμένετε) doesn't introduce doubt but tests authenticity. Genuine believers persevere; apparent believers who apostatize reveal they never truly belonged (1 John 2:19). Perseverance evidences salvation; it doesn't earn salvation.

"Grounded and settled" uses architectural metaphors: tethemeliōmenoi (τεθεμελιωμένοι, "founded on foundation") and hedraioi (ἑδραῖοι, "firmly seated"). Mature faith rests on solid foundation—Christ and apostolic teaching—not shifting sand of subjective experience or philosophical novelty. "Not moved away from the hope" (mē metakinoumenoi apo tēs elpidos, μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος) warns against doctrinal drift promoted by false teachers.

Paul appeals to the gospel's universality—"preached to every creature which is under heaven"—validating its authenticity through widespread acceptance. Localized heresies claiming special revelation cannot match the gospel's universal spread accomplished in one generation without modern communication. Paul's personal testimony ("whereof I Paul am made a minister") adds apostolic weight: this isn't secondhand tradition but divinely revealed truth.

Historical Context

By AD 60, the gospel had reached throughout the Roman Empire and beyond—from Spain to India according to tradition. This explosive expansion in hostile circumstances testified to divine power, not human ingenuity. Paul contrasts this universal, publicly proclaimed gospel with the heretics' secret knowledge available only to spiritual elites. Truth spreads; error requires obscurity.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What evidence exists in your life that you're continuing in faith rather than drifting from the gospel's hope?
2. On what foundation is your faith built—Scripture and apostolic teaching, or subjective experiences and contemporary innovations?
3. How do you evaluate new teachings—by popularity and appeal, or by conformity to the gospel you first received?

Interlinear Text

εἶγε	ἐπιμένετε	τὸν	πίστει	τεθεμελιωμένοι	καὶ	
If	ye continue	and which	in the faith	grounded	and	
G1489	G1961	G3588	G4102	G2311	G2532	
ἐδραῖοι	καὶ	μὴ	μετακινούμενοι	ἀπὸ	τὸν	ἐλπίδος
settled	and	be not	moved away	from	and which	the hope
G1476	G2532	G3361	G3334	G575	G3588	G1680
τὸν	εὐαγγελίου	οὗ	ἠκούσατε	τὸν	κηρυχθέντος	
and which	of the gospel	whereof	ye have heard	and which	was preached	
G3588	G2098	G3739	G191	G3588	G2784	
ἐν	πάσῃ	τὸν	κτίσει	τὸν	ὑπὸ	τὸν
to	every	and which	creature	and which	which is under	and which
G1722	G3956	G3588	G2937	G3588	G5259	G3588
οὐρανόν	οὗ	ἐγενόμην	ἐγὼ	Παῦλος	διάκονος	
heaven	whereof	am made	I	Paul	a minister	
G3772	G3739	G1096	G1473	G3972	G1249	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 3:14 (Creation): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Hebrews 3:6 (Hope): But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Hebrews 10:38 (Faith): Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Galatians 6:9 (Parallel theme): And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Ephesians 3:17 (Faith): That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Acts 14:22 (Faith): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 10:18 (Parallel theme): But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Hebrews 6:19 (Hope): Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (Faith): For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

Ephesians 1:18 (Hope): The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,