

(Through the Bible) Colossians 2-4

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying rooted in Christ and avoiding heresies and false teachings, while highlighting the significance of baptism as a symbol of new life in Christ.

Duration: 1:23:01

Scripture: Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Prayer And Wisdom", "Evangelism And Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of prayer and the need to give thanks and praise to God. He encourages believers to pray for their leaders and for open doors to share the gospel. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of walking in wisdom and making the most of every opportunity to serve God. He concludes by urging believers to let their speech be gracious and to always be ready to give a reason for their hope in Christ. The sermon is based on the book of Colossians and highlights the themes of prayer, wisdom, and evangelism.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Colossians chapter 2. Paul had never visited Colossae. He had heard of the church from Epaphras, who was the minister there, who had told Paul of the love that these people had for Jesus Christ and of the faith. But he also told him of certain heresies that were trying to infiltrate the church.

And so Paul is writing to warn them against these heresies. And so in verse 1 of chapter 2 he said, I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you and for them of Laodicea and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. Paul is talking about this inner conflict that he had for them.

A love that he had for them, the desire that he had to actually meet them and to see them. And though having not seen them, yet he is greatly concerned for them. He's concerned because of these heresies that were spreading like a plague through the church.

And I don't know why it is, but it seems that lies or heresies fly on the wings of eagle and the truth goes on the back of a turtle. Heresies can spread so rapidly around the world. And it seems like people have a penchant towards heresy and so reluctant to follow the truth.

And as it was in Paul's day, so it is today. We find how that these heresies that sweep across our country actually sweep across the world and people get caught up in them all over the world. And this caused all tremendous inner conflict, a great concern, a great burden.

Paul's prayer or desire for those who had never actually met face to face was that their hearts might be comforted, that they might be knit together in love. And unto all of the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ. Now, one of the heresies that was being promulgated there in Colossae was the Gnostic heresy.

The people took their name to signify their pretended superior knowledge. Quite often you can tell a lot about a group by just the name that they choose. And whenever they choose some weird name for their fellowship, you know that there is something weird about the fellowship.

And certain names do just sort of give you the hint to characteristics of the fellowship itself. Now, the word Gnostic means to know. The Gnostics pretended that they had higher knowledge of mysterious things.

And the Gnostics used to love to talk of the mysteries. And you had to really be initiated into their little, you know, club to be able to understand these mysteries. And they were always prating on this term, the mysteries.

And so Paul picks up their term. And his desire is that they might come to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and the Father and of Christ, which he told us in the previous chapter was Christ in you, the hope of glory. Now, their hearts might be comforted.

Secondly, that they might be knit together in love. What a wonderful thing when a church is just tied together in the love of Jesus Christ. And then that they might experience the riches of full assurance.

It's sad, really, that a lot of people struggle most of their Christian life with a lack of a real assurance of their salvation. For years, I wasn't really sure if I was saved or not. And I was going down to the altar every Sunday night to sort of confirm my salvation.

But that's a tough way to live. What a blessing it is to have the full assurance. That's the purpose for which John wrote his little epistle.

These things write I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life. And what a blessing when you have that full assurance, as we sing blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. And this full assurance is what Paul was wanting them to experience.

Now, how can I have full assurance? Only as I come by faith, trusting in the grace and the mercy of God through Christ. If I am depending upon my efforts and my works to make me righteous, I can never have full assurance. So, anybody who has this legal relationship with God or work relationship with God does by its very nature lack the full assurance of his salvation.

It is not until you really have come to that understanding of the grace of God and our position in Christ that you can really enjoy the full assurance. Paul's desire is that they might have this full assurance. And the understanding and the acknowledgement of the real mystery is not some effort that I might put out to be righteous, but the real mystery is that it is Christ in me.

That's my hope of glory. That work of Jesus Christ in me. And then, of course, because they were talking always about this superior wisdom and understanding and knowledge, Paul declares, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

It's all tied up in Jesus Christ. And this I say, Paul said, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

So, Paul said, I'm not really there physically, but I'm there spiritually. We've got too many people that attend church that way. They're in the spirit, but not in the flesh, not in the body.

Oh, I was with you in my spirit, brother. Oh, great. You know, the whole church was like that.

We'd have nobody here. We'd have to close our doors. You know, there'd be no sense of existing.

But Paul said, I am beholding your order, the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. Now, here to me is an interesting thing. Usually people are pointed back to their roots.

As you've received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. Most of those who have some false doctrine or heresy to promote, do not seek to promote it upon the unevangelized, but they seek to promote it upon the church. Very few heresies are evangelistic.

They don't pray on the sinners. They pray on the saints. They don't go to the beach to proclaim their ideas.

They go to the church and they try to infiltrate within the church and then give, well, you know, I received this new revelation or have you heard, you know, this new prophet of God and some new understanding or new revelation. And that is why they are usually pointed back to their roots because those who are evangelical, those who are really out bringing the loss to Jesus Christ are usually prompted by the truth of the gospel. And the gospel has always as its natural effect evangelism, reaching the lost.

But not so those who are carriers of heresy. They want to be parasites. They want to live off the church.

They want to bring to the church some new revelation. Our ministry is not really to the lost. Our ministry is to the church.

You know, our truth that we have to share, it's for the church. And so he points them back to the beginning as you've received Christ Jesus, so walk ye in him. Don't get carried off with some of these new revelations that God has just unveiled in these last days.

Actually, we don't need any new revelations of truth. What we do need is new experiences in the established truth. God has given to us all that we need for the life of godliness in his word.

It's all there. We don't need any new revelations, but what we do need is fresh experiences in the old truths of God's word. So beware, lest any man would beguile you with enticing words.

For as you have received Christ, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him. Christ is the base, the foundation, but he is also the one on whom we build our lives are to be centered in Jesus Christ.

Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith as ye have been taught and abounding therein with thanksgiving. So again, back to your roots. Your roots were in Christ Jesus.

You were taught to believe and trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, for the forgiveness of your sins. Now don't try to improve by your works upon that righteousness which God has imparted to you through your faith. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

And so the twofold warning, those that would beguile you with their enticing words away from the roots in Christ Jesus and then those who through philosophy, the vain deceit, which are after the traditions of men. For Christ is the center of our experience and in him dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He's everything.

He is all and in him dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Now, one of the things, of course, the Gnostics were denying was the deity of Jesus Christ or the incarnation that God came in a human form. But Paul is affirming that truth and ye are complete in him.

Oh God, help us to realize that you are complete in him. Your righteousness is complete. Your salvation is complete.

You cannot add to it. You are complete in him. How many times in my endeavors to please God would I promise God that I was going to be better.

I would make so many promises to God. Lord, I'm going to pray more. Lord, I'm going to read the Bible more.

Lord, I'm going to improve upon that righteousness. I'm going to be better. I'm going to be more righteous this week.

And I was endeavoring by my efforts, by my works to be accepted by God and to be righteous before God. And that was a struggle. Oh, would to God that I had someone teaching me in those days that I was complete in Jesus Christ to just trust in him and rely upon him that I am complete.

There's nothing that I can add. If you're complete, you can't add to that. You're complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Now, the head there is used in the same sense that it is used in first Corinthians seven as authority. So Jesus has authority over all the principalities and powers. And we have told you before that principalities and powers are rankings of spirits.

Now, in the beginning, when God created the universe and then God first created angelic beings, millions of them, hundreds of millions of angelic beings, these angelic beings that God had created were in different ranks and orders. There were the cherubim. There were the seraphim.

There were the principalities and powers and authorities and dominions, the various rankings of spirit beings. And when Satan, who was one of the highest rankings of spirit beings in God's creation, when he rebelled against God, there is an indication in the book of Revelation that a third of the angels joined in his rebellion, which means that God created them as free moral beings, even as he created us as free moral agents making our own choices. And so those that chose to go with Satan were probably equally out of

each of the various ranks.

So principalities and powers can refer to the fallen angels, or it can refer to those that are still in obedience unto God. Regardless, Jesus has authority over them all. Naturally, those that are still obedient to God in that ranking, he rules over them.

But also, those that have rebelled against him are still under his authority. Now, I don't like to be misunderstood, and this is a difficult concept sometimes for people to grasp. But in the overall picture, Satan is performing the will of God.

That is, he is doing a service that God intended for him to do. You see, God uses him for the purpose of testing our devotion and commitment to God. If it were not for Satan, God would really not know, except that he has all knowledge, but you really would not know that you love God.

And thus, as God said, I proved you, it was really not that he might understand, but that we might understand ourselves. And so the purpose of the testings and the provings is for our benefit that we might know exactly where we stand. You test materials in order to know their strengths and their weaknesses.

And as God tests us, we come to the understanding of those places of weakness. And Satan is being used by God, fulfilling a purpose of God in the world today. It's tragic and sad that he has that lot, but such it is.

Now, he chose that, even as men today choose to rebel against God. So he cannot really blame God. Like Judas, he was sort of in a tight place.

The Bible predicted that Jesus was to be betrayed by one of his friends. Jesus said of Judas, it had been good if that man had never been born, because he was destined to betray Jesus Christ. Now, in the same token, though that was a part of the predestined plan, yet Judas consented to it and chose to betray the Lord.

Hard concepts really to grasp, and I'm not sure that we do fully grasp them. Satan was destined to be the instrument by which man might be tested, and yet he chose to rebel against God. But even in his rebellion, he is performing that which God has purposed, and he remains subject unto God.

God sets the limits and the bounds to which he can go. When he was appearing before God, in the case of Job, and complaining that God had it, you know, you've got a hedge around him, I can't get to him. Take away the hedge, let me at that guy.

He'll curse you too. God, first of all, had the hedge around Job. When God removed the hedge, he still set the limitations.

Alright, you may go so far, but don't do this. And so, Satan still had to be subject unto the authority of God, and remains. God sets the boundaries in which he can work.

God sets the boundaries in which he's allowed to harass you. He can go so far, no further. God sets the boundaries, and thus he has to be in authority unto God.

It is always wrong to think of Satan as opposite of God, not even close. You can make no comparison between Satan and God as far as opposites, or even alike. For God, again, is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, and Satan is a created being.

And so, if you want to look for an opposite of Satan, you should look at Michael, or at Gabriel. Those angels which remain true to God, who have a high ranking, or the highest ranking among angels. But never think of Satan as an opposite of God, because you're accrediting him with far more power than he actually has.

Far more authority than he actually has. He moves within restricted boundaries. God sets the limits of his work.

So, all of the principalities and powers are under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is the head, or the authority, over all principality and power. In whom also, ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

Now, there were those, and he's dealing now in this area, he's moved from Gnostics to the Judaizers, those who were teaching that in order to be righteous, faith in Christ was not sufficient. That's good, it's important, it's necessary, but it's not enough. In order for you to be saved, you must also adhere to the law.

So, you've got to be circumcised, and you've got to also keep the law. Faith in Jesus is not enough. That's why Paul said, you are complete in Him.

It is enough. And you have been circumcised, but not the physical circumcision that the law required. But your circumcision is a true circumcision.

Through Jesus Christ you've renounced the life of the flesh. And here was a tragic error of the Jews, that they were counting, really, on the physical experience, and not upon the spiritual. So, though they had physically been circumcised, they were still walking after the flesh.

And Paul said that totally negates the physical ritual. The idea is to cut off the life of the flesh, not to live after the flesh. So, Paul said, if the Gentiles have turned away from the life of the flesh and are living after the Spirit, even though they may not have had the physical right of circumcision, it is accounted as circumcision, because God is looking at the heart of man.

And so, Paul here affirms the same truth. The true circumcision is that of the Spirit within my heart. When I turn away from the life of the flesh to live after the Spirit, through the faith and power of Jesus Christ, I have been circumcised in God's eyes.

That is, I have been set apart to live after the Spirit before God. And that's what God counts. The tragic thing about rituals, physical rituals, is that too often people begin to substitute the ritual for the reality.

In the ritual of baptism, how many people today are falsely trusting in the ritual of baptism for the reality? The ritual of baptism, as Paul is going to point out here, actually is death to the old life of the flesh, that I might be in the risen Christ, living after the Spirit. And that's what it means. Now, if I have been sprinkled when I was a child, or I've been dumped as an adult, and I'm still living in the old life, I'm still living after the things of the old life, then the physical ritual means nothing.

But, if I, by the Spirit, am living and walking after the Spirit, the new life in Christ, it may be that I was converted on the Sara desert and there wasn't enough water to duck me, but that doesn't negate my salvation or the new life that I am living in Jesus Christ. Because it's of the Spirit. As Peter said, now doth baptism save, but not the putting off of the filth of the flesh.

It isn't the ritual, but it is a heart, a conscience, towards God of living and walking really after the Spirit. So, you were buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Now, Paul ties together these two rituals that both symbolize much the same thing. To the Jew, the ritual was circumcision, which was to be the symbol that I'm going to live after the Spirit and not after the flesh. To the Christian, baptism signifies the same thing.

The new life after the Spirit, the old life after the flesh, dominated by the flesh, is dead, it's buried, and now I'm going to live a new life after the Spirit. And both of the rituals symbolize the same thing. To the Jew, it was circumcision, to the Christian, it was baptism.

Thus, the truth applies to both. It is not the physical rite that does it, it is what has happened in my heart and in reality in my life. So, being dead in your sins, the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

In Ephesians chapter 2, there's a correlating verse here, and you hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins, for in times past you walked according to the course of this world. So, the thing I love there though, having forgiven you all trespasses, your whole past has been blotted out through your faith in Jesus Christ. Every trespass, every sin, has been blotted out as a result of your faith in Him.

Not only that, the law which these people were trying to push upon the Colossians, the ordinances of the law, the observances of the Sabbath days, the dietary laws, the types of meat that you can eat, and you know, the various traditions of the Jews as far as the dietary laws. He said that Jesus blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. So, Christ is the end of the law to those that believe.

The law could never make you righteous. The law could only condemn you. It was contrary to you.

It was condemning you. Now, Jesus has blotted out these handwriting of ordinances which were against us. Thus, I am not under law.

I am not under a righteousness that is affected by rules and regulations. My righteousness has nothing to do with my actions. My righteousness has to do with my faith.

Now, my faith will produce actions. And if I say I have faith, and yet my works are not in correspondence with it, then I am making a false boast of faith. But, the works always must follow and be the result of faith.

And that means that I do not depend upon my works as a righteous basis in my standing before God. I don't say, well, I'm righteous because I pray so many times a day. I'm more righteous than you because I read my Bible and you don't.

No, I'm not righteous because of what I have done. I am righteous because God has imputed righteousness to my account because I am believing and trusting in Jesus Christ completely. Now, because I am believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, I do want to know Him.

And so, I do read the Word because I do trust in Him and love Him. I do communicate with Him and want to keep in constant communication and in constant fellowship with Him. But, that doesn't make me

righteous.

That is only the result of the fact that I am righteous through my faith in Jesus. It's important that we distinguish that. Vitally important that we distinguish that.

So, because it is so easy for us to relate our righteousness to our activities and to our works. Now, when I do that, then I am always putting myself in the position of judging others who aren't doing as much as I am doing. You see, and that makes me a little better.

That makes me a little more righteous. And, it also puts me in the position of sort of judging, well, you know, they just really don't have it. You know, so it's a dangerous place to be.

God doesn't want me to be there. But, when my righteousness is just through my faith in Christ, I can't boast in my righteousness. Nor can I boast in the works that I am doing.

And, if you come across someone who is boasting in their efforts, boasting in their sacrifices, boasting in their works, you have a classic example of what I am dealing with. You see, because God has made righteousness something that He imputes to me through my faith, it totally eliminates boasting, except in Jesus. So, when you get people who are just always talking about how good Jesus is and how wonderful Jesus is, and, oh, I don't know what I'd do without the Lord.

The Lord is so good. He so blessed me and all. Then, you know, that person has really come to a real understanding of what it is to have the righteousness through the faith in Jesus Christ.

Because he's not telling about himself, but he's boasting in the Lord and what the Lord has done. So, Jesus brought an end to the rule that the law had over man, nailed it to his cross. That's the end of the law.

It was a schoolmaster until the time of Christ. When Christ came, law was no more valid. It was up to that point, but He was the end of the law to those who believed.

So that no man can be made righteous by keeping the law. You can only be righteous through believing in Jesus Christ. And having spoiled the principalities and the powers.

Now, we read that He had authority over these principalities and powers, and now we are told that He spoiled them or He defeated them. And He made an open show of His victory over them through the cross, triumphing in it or in the cross. So, the cross of Jesus Christ is the place where victory over Satan was complete.

Now, Satan so often has the tables turned on him. He's not omniscient. He doesn't know all things.

And he falls into the trap so many times. God just turns the tables on him. As with Joseph and his brothers, who conspired to sell him as a slave to Egypt.

You know, to send him down to Egypt and being sold as a slave. And later, when Joseph came to the Pharaoh and interpreted the dream and was placed by the Pharaoh as the head over Egypt. And then his brothers came down to buy grain and all.

And when they finally realized that it was their brother who they betrayed, who they were dealing with. They had great fear and they said, oh man, now we have it, you know, this guy is going to get us. He said, now look, don't be afraid that I'm going to try to take vengeance on you guys.

I know that you meant it for evil, but God intended it for good. And so often God will take those evil intents of Satan and turn them around for good. Satan's always getting the tables turned on him.

You'd think he'd get discouraged after a while, you know. He follows this plot along and thinks, aha, I've got it all set up. And then flip, God turns the tables and instead of, you know, coming out on top, he comes out on the bottom.

Haman determined he was going to destroy the Jews, going to get rid of them once and for all. And after this mortifying experience where the very man who prompted all of his anger against the Jews, he was forced by the king to give him a position of honor. Had to go through the streets in front of the chariot and say, this is the man that the king wants to honor.

Oh, how the Lord turned the tables on Haman. And so he built the gallows 90 feet high so that the whole city could see Mordecai hanging. I mean, going to kill all the Jews, but got a special spot for this Mordecai.

Now let him swing from a 90 foot gallow, everybody will see it. And he got hung on his own gallows. So often happens that way.

Satan bringing Jesus to the cross, raising up the people against him. But it was at the cross where Jesus defeated him. For the law had a claim on us because we had violated the law and thus we had to die.

Satan had a claim on us because we had served Satan and the wages of serving Satan is death. But Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law. He redeemed us from the power of Satan.

He purchased us. Where? At the cross. There he paid the price because he died in our place.

And so he spoiled the principalities and powers. He triumphed over them there in the cross. The cross is the open display of the victory of Jesus.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a holy day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days. Now these were all things under the law. They weren't to eat certain kind of meats.

They were to prepare the meats in special ways that they did eat. They had certain holy days. They had the Sabbath of the new moons and then they had the Sabbath days.

And Paul is saying, don't let anybody judge you in these things. They no longer apply to me in my relationship with God. My relationship with God is not enhanced by my keeping a particular diet.

I can't by diet make myself more righteous. Oh, you eat pork. Oh, shame on you.

You know, I would never eat pork. And as though that would make me more righteous, you see. So today we find people that are judging us in meat or in drink or in respect to a holy day or Sabbath days.

Now, these holy days, these Sabbath days, these offerings that were made were all a shadow of things to come. They weren't reality. They were only a shadow.

They were foreshadowing things to come. The real substance is Jesus. The body, the substance is of Christ.

These things only foreshadowed. So the Sabbath day was only a foreshadowing of the rest that we have in Jesus Christ. He is our Sabbath.

He is our rest. So it really makes no difference if we gather on Sunday, the first day of the week to worship him, or we would gather on a Saturday to worship him. Immaterial.

The idea of the Sabbath day was to show God's rest for his people. But that was only the foreshadowing of the real rest that we have in and through Jesus Christ. So all of these things within the law only foreshadowed what was accomplished by Jesus.

And the law is important for us to study only to understand completely what Jesus has done for us in his sacrifice for our sins. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility in the worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. Now, there are those who would say, well, now, you know, you don't want to bother God with all your little things.

Or, you know, God may not be interested in listening to you. So it might be wise. There is this particular saint who lived in this area.

And it might be wiser if you would pray to him to intercede for you. Because surely God loves him. He was such a holy man.

And God loves him. And he'll listen to him. So you pray to the saint and have the saint intercede because you really shouldn't come to God with that yourself.

You know, you're sort of on the outs. And so get someone who's on the in and let him intercede for you, you know. Let no man beguile you of a reward in voluntary humility.

The worshipping of angels or the worshipping of the saints as they intrude into those things which they have not seen. It's all just a part of the vanity of a puffed up mind. And not holding the head from which all the body by the joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God.

We can each of us hold on to Jesus Christ and receive our strength and our nourishment directly from him. There is only one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And Mary cannot mediate for you.

Nor can any of the saints mediate for you. Nor can any of the angels mediate for you. One God, one mediator and Jesus Christ is that mediator.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. And no man can come to the father but by me. You can't come to the father through the saints.

Now, of course, you take it one more step, go to Mary to talk to her son, to talk to her father, you know. But no, you can come directly to the father through Jesus Christ, who is our mediator. Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy in the time of need.

I don't have to go through a chain of command. Jesus has opened the door directly to God's throne for you and for me. We become the children of God.

And one thing about children, they have access always to the father. Interesting, you know, because of our schedule, it's just not easy to see everybody. And a lot of times people come in and we're so piled high with work that it's hard to take time to see them.

But, you know, there's a little kids around here that come and knock on the door and say, Grandpa. And immediately the door is open. Then there's always, it seems, time.

They have access because of relationship. And that's the neat thing about God, your relationship, there's always access. The door is always open.

You can come boldly. So this is a false humility. Don't let anybody beguile you as to, you know, the advantages of it.

There are no advantages to it. Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why is though living in the world, are you subject then to the ordinances of touch not and taste not and handle not. Which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and the doctrines of men.

Now, this life of asceticism, which the Gnostics lived as though it made them more spiritual. You know, if you want to really be spiritual, then you better go find a little eight by eight cubicle and lock yourself in and lock the world out and just sit there and read your Bible all day long and sing hymns unto God and live within that cubicle. Oh, then you'll be very holy and very righteous.

No, these things may, you know, fast all the time. Don't eat this. Don't eat that.

Don't touch this. Don't touch that. These may show some wisdom in discipline of the body and in humility as you are disciplining or neglecting the body, but in reality, they do not honor God, but they only glorify the flesh or satisfy the flesh.

In other words, my flesh might be very satisfied in a 30 day fast that, you know, now I've really proved that I have mastered over my body and all. But really, then I am glorying in what I have done and it doesn't really honor God. You know, maybe some wisdom in the discipline, but it only brings satisfaction to the flesh.

It doesn't honor God. So then if you are risen with Christ, going back to buried with Christ in baptism, now risen with him, if then you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. You're not really bound to these things of the world, the rudiments of the world.

You're not under the laws. Touch not, handle not, taste not. You're you've risen with Christ.

You're living in a new dimension of life, the spiritual dimension of life. And you should be seeking those things which are above where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things on the earth.

For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Now, again, my life is the reflection of what I am and what I believe. And it doesn't mean that Paul is giving these people a license to live after the flesh.

It doesn't mean that he's saying it doesn't matter how you live. What he is saying that these aren't the things that make you righteous and you shouldn't be living in a negative relationship with God under the law. You should be living a positive relationship with God, seeking the things which are spiritual, seeking and pursuing those things that are above.

Setting your affections on things above, not on these things on the earth. For really, you are dead to them. And that's the principle that he is teaching.

I have been crucified with Christ, thus I am dead to the flesh and to the things of the flesh and to the life of the flesh. I should not be living after the flesh. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.

That's where I'm now living. In Christ. In God.

And when Christ, who is our life. Now, you see, this is the key to it right here. Can you see that Christ is my life? As Paul said, for me to live is Christ.

And I love this powerful thing. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory. Jesus is going to come again, as he said, with the clouds of heaven and great glory.

Behold, he cometh. Every eye shall see him. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing here into heaven? This same Jesus is going to come again.

And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory. Oh, but how important that we are able to say Christ, who is my life, that my life be so completely bound up and centered in Christ, that he is my life. Christ, who is my life.

I love it. Mortify or put to death, therefore, your members which are upon the earth. That is, the members of your body, those body desires, put them to death.

Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry, for which things sake the wrath of God is coming on the children of disobedience. Now, as Paul is writing to the Ephesians, he tells them much the same thing, that for these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the earth. Therefore, we should not be guilty of these things.

Know this, he said, no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ in God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things, the wrath of God is coming on the children of disobedience. As he was writing to the Galatians and listed the works of the flesh, fornication, all of these things, he said that we know that those who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

In Romans 1, he says, for the wrath of God is going to be revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. And then as he gives this long list of things, parallel list here, he said that they which do such things are deserving death. So don't be deceived, don't let men deceive you.

You cannot live after your flesh and inherit the kingdom of God. The very fact that I have accepted Jesus Christ, the whole concept is that I have renounced the life of the flesh. I'm dead to the flesh that I might be alive unto God in Christ, living after the spirit.

And if I am still living after my flesh, the ritual of baptism not only is negated, but all that I might say is also negated. John said, if a man says he loves God and yet hates his brother, he's a liar. The truth isn't in him.

If a man says he abides in Christ, then he ought to be walking as Christ walked. In other words, it's not what you say, which really counts. It's how you're walking that counts.

And so are you walking after the spirit? Have you renounced these hidden things of the world? Have you mortified the deeds of the flesh? For don't be deceived, if you are living after the flesh, you are not an heir of the kingdom of God. It is a spiritual kingdom for those who are living and walking after the spirit,

regardless of what you may say or affirm to be so. They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

So he lists these things and he says, look, the wrath of God is coming upon the earth because of these things. Don't presume upon the grace of God. The children of Israel made a tragic mistake thinking, well, we are God's chosen people and we can live like the nations around us.

You can't. You must live as God's people. Mortify, therefore, those fleshly things in the which you also once walked when you lived in them, but now ye also put off all of these, not just these more overt sins of the flesh, but put these off too.

Put off anger, put off wrath, put off malice, blasphemy and filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that you've put off the old man with his deeds and you have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. So we should be, as John says, walking at Jesus' walk.

He is our example. He is the image into which the Spirit of God is seeking to conform our lives. And so put off the old man and put on the new, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.

But Christ is all and in all. We don't have distinctions in Jesus Christ. Religious, ethnic or whatever.

Christ is everything. He is all and he is in all. There's not rich or poor.

There's not favored and special class. We're just all one. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.

Now you put on Jesus Christ, you put off these things, put off anger, wrath and malice and instead put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. And if any man has a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of completeness.

So, not only am I to just put off the works of the flesh, the old life, I'm to put on Jesus Christ, living after him. And then let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body and be thankful. So we're called to thanksgiving.

We're called to the peace of God. And then verse 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. And that's why we're here tonight, that the word of Christ might dwell in our hearts richly, that we might teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Now, wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband as it is fitting in the Lord. Now, as we have mentioned when we're going through Ephesians, God gave very simple rules for marriage, two rules, one for the wife, one for the husband.

And if we'll follow these rules, we can have a very happy marriage and a happy relationship. If we violate these rules, we're going to bring misery into our marriage. The rule for the wife, submit yourself unto your own husband, to the husband, love your wives, be not bitter against them.

So the husband is to love the wife or his wife as Christ loved the church. The wife is to submit to the husband. These two are tied together.

God knows that the greatest need that the woman has is to know that she is loved. That she is loved supremely. When she knows that she is loved supremely, she is secure and she feels that security and thus anything my man does is all right.

And she finds it easy to submit to him because she knows that he loves him supremely. And as she says, well, honey, you know, whatever you want, God knows that the greatest need a man has is to be macho, to feel he's in control. And to challenge that is to court problems.

But to play up to that is to open the door for all kinds of demonstrations of love. Oh, my little sweetheart, man, what can I do for her today? She's such a doll. You know, she trusts my judgment.

She trusts my wisdom. How can I show her how much I appreciate and love her? So as the wife submits, the husband finds it easy to show his love as she rebels. Then he's got to show that he's macho.

I don't need you. I don't need anybody. I'm able to handle, you know, I'm macho man.

I can do what I want. And so he becomes cold. And as he becomes cold, then she feels all the more insecure and she has to challenge all the more.

This creep, I don't know if he loves me or not. I think what he wants to do is stupid. We have to lose everything and then he's going to take off.

I know he is because I don't know if he loves me or not, you know. So you feel like you've got to challenge everything. Are you sure? Do you know? You really know what you're doing, right? You know, macho.

I know what I'm doing. You know, leave me alone. And he gets the cold and two rules.

Why submit husband's love and you have a happy relationship because the wife feels the love and the security and she knows, hey, he's my man. And the husband, he feels so macho. Hey, she's my little gal.

She's trusting me to do the right thing. And it's beautiful. It's heaven on earth.

Simple, isn't it? Well, you say it would be simple if my husband really knew what he was doing. And she says, well, it would be simple if he really loved me like Jesus loved the church. Now, children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

As we were going through Ephesians, he said, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And we do recognize that the highest authority in our life is God. And we the presumption here is that the parents are Christians and are seeking the spiritual welfare of the child.

If the parents are not Christians and are demanding the child to do something that would be a violation of his conscience before God, then we must obey God rather than man. But assuming that the parents love the Lord and you have a Christian home, children, obey your parents in all things. This is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. And to anger is not in the original text. You notice it's in italics.

It's just fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged. It's easy to discourage the child through unreasonable demands. Isn't it interesting how we want to make sure that our children don't make the same mistakes that we made? How we want them to be better than we were.

We don't want them to goof off and get mediocre grades in school. We want them to get all A's. And sometimes we are guilty of pushing our children with unreasonable demands.

And what it does cause is discouragement on their part. Make sure that we're not making unreasonable demands upon them. Taking away their humanness, causing discouragement.

And so, don't provoke your children so that they get discouraged. Actually, I have seen something that I think is a terrible evil. And that is, I've seen fathers sometimes tease their little babies until the baby screams in frustration.

Here, you want this candy? Here, the candy. You know, and they keep teasing the child, pulling it away until the child just loses control and screams. And then they go, isn't that funny? You know, and hands them the candy.

Don't do that. Don't provoke your children. That's not a wise thing to do.

You're not teaching them when you do things like that. Servants or employees, to put it modern, obey in all things your bosses according to the flesh. Not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.

And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord. And not unto men. Oh, that you could have employees like that, that are doing things as unto the Lord.

They do it heartily. They do it with joyfulness. They do it with, you know, a great spirit.

Not to be a man pleaser. Oh, the boss is coming, look busy. But doing it as unto the Lord, knowing that of the Lord, you are going to receive your reward of inheritance.

For actually, you are a servant of the Lord Christ. Now, you may be making your living by working there at that office or factory or wherever. That may be putting bread on the table.

But your life really is bound up in Jesus Christ. You're His servant. You're called to serve Him.

Now you make your living over here. But even in making your living, if you will do things heartily as unto the Lord, it will open up many opportunities for you to witness. People say, how is it that on Monday you can be so happy? You're whistling.

And oh man, my head aches so bad, I can hardly see, you know. And you seem to have such a good attitude. You know, boy, if he told me that, I would have just really said, hey, you take this job, man, and stop it, you know.

And you just, you know, you have such a good attitude. You just went ahead and did it. How is it? Hey, it opens up so many opportunities to witness for you.

Do it as unto the Lord. You're the Lord's servant. He's watching.

For he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done, and there is no respect of persons. Now masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal. Pay them a decent salary, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

Now continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving. As we said, prayer has many parts, and an important part of prayer is praise and worship, thanksgiving. A minor part of prayer is request, petitions.

But then Paul says, pray for us. And of course, in each of the churches, he requested prayer. And I think that every minister feels his need of prayer.

Pray for us. And Paul desired that they would pray that God would open to them a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ for which I'm in bonds. Here I'm in prison because of my preaching, but pray that God will give me an open door here even to declare the glorious truth of Christ, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.

Now, walk in wisdom. The exhortations continue in prayer. Watch the same with thanksgiving.

Pray for us. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, that is towards those in the world. Walk in wisdom toward them, redeeming the time.

Don't waste time. We don't have that much time. Take advantage of every opportunity that God gives you.

Redeem the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man. Peter said, be ready to give unto every man a reason for the hope that you have within you, that you might be able to answer men.

And so your speech always with grace. God help us to bring this tongue under control. Now, all of my state or how I'm doing, Tychicus will tell you who is a beloved brother.

He's a faithful minister, and he is a fellow servant in the Lord. Tychicus delivered this epistle to the church. Paul was in Rome in prison.

He wrote the epistle to the Ephesians and this epistle to the Colossians at the same time. And Tychicus carried this epistle. He also wrote at the same time an epistle to the Laodiceans.

And they were to trade them back and forth. They were to read the epistle, this epistle in the church, and then read the one that he also sent to the Laodiceans. And so Tychicus was the one that brought these epistles from Paul to the churches there in Asia Minor.

Interesting things that he says of him. He's a beloved brother. He's a faithful minister, and he is a fellow servant in the Lord.

What neat things. He's a beloved brother. He's a faithful minister.

He's a fellow servant in the things of the Lord, who I have sent to you for the same purpose that he might know your estate. He might tell you how I'm doing and that he might find out how you're doing and comfort your hearts. With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother.

Now this probably is the Onesimus for which the book of Philemon was written. The runaway slave who ran away from Philemon, who met Paul in Rome and received Jesus Christ, who Paul was sending back

to Philemon with a personal letter from Paul to Philemon, begging Philemon's forgiveness and begging Philemon to set Onesimus free from his slavery. With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you, and they shall make known unto you all of the things which the Lord is doing here.

Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you and Mark, the sister's son to Barnabas. Barnabas, of course, was the first companion with Paul on the first missionary journey. He was the one who went to Tarsus and found Paul.

After Paul's conversion and going back to Tarsus for several years, Barnabas came and found him when there was a need in the church of Antioch for someone who really understood the Greek culture to come and minister to the Gentiles and got Paul involved in the ministry, went with Paul on the first missionary journey. And Mark went with him on the first journey, but got frightened and came home. And so when Barnabas wanted to take his nephew with his sister's son, wanted to take him on the second journey, Paul said, no way.

And the contention between Paul and Barnabas came so great that Barnabas took Mark and went and Paul took Silas and went in another direction. So now the same Mark that Paul didn't want to go on the second missionary journey is with Paul there in Rome, and he is greeting with Paul the church. And Paul is saying, if he comes to you, receive him.

And Jesus, which is called Justice. Jesus was a common name in those days. That's why he was usually called Jesus of Nazareth, to distinguish him from all the other little boys that were named Jesus.

It is the Hebrew name for Joshua and or Yeshua. And so it is the Hebrew is Joshua, the Greek is Jesus. And so here's another one in the Bible called Jesus, which is called Justice, who are of the circumcision or they are Jews.

These only are my fellow workers under the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. Now, Epaphras, who is one of you. He had been the one who was ministering there at the church of Colossae.

You had come and told Paul of the church in its condition. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, is greeting you, always laboring fervently for you in prayer. I love this.

Epaphras was there in Rome with Paul, but he was always praying for those in Colossae, laboring for you in prayer or laboring fervently. The Bible says the effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much. And here's Epaphras, their minister, though he's away from them, fervently praying for them.

Was he praying that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God? John said, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth. Oh, it's a very discouraging thing. If you go away from a church and you hear all the whole thing's gone to pieces, you know.

Fractured. But to go away and years later here, oh, they're walking in truth. They're going on with the Lord.

No greater joy. And here's Epaphras praying that they might really walk perfect and complete in the will of God. For I bear him record that he has a great zeal for you and for them that are in Laodicea and in Hierapolis, these three cities that were close in proximity to each other.

Luke, the beloved physician and Demas greet you. Luke, of course, was Paul's companion in much of Paul's journeys. The beloved physician, the one who wrote the gospel and the book of Acts, Demas.

Now, later, Paul is to speak of Demas in his epistle to Timothy. Tragically, Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present world more than things of God. But here he joins in the greeting to the church.

Greet the brethren which are in Laodicea and also Nymphos and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read, then also read in the church of the and when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans. In other words, after you've read it, send it over to Laodicea.

And you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea and say to Archippus, whoever he is, take heed to the ministry that you have received in the Lord that you fulfill it. So, you're Archippus tonight. I want to say to you, take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord and fulfill it.

That's something that all of us should be concerned with. What is it that God has called me to do? I must be fulfilling it. As Jesus said, I must do the will of him who sent me.

So, take heed to the ministry that God's called you to fulfill. See that you fulfill it. And this salutation by the hand of me, Paul, remember my bonds.

Grace be with you. Amen. So, we come to the end of the Colossian epistle.

And next week, we take the first two chapters of Thessalonians and we move on through. Won't be long till we will have completed the Bible once more and we'll go back to Genesis. I don't think I'll ever make it again.

But we'll go as far as the Lord allows us. I'm slowing down. You notice that? You know, the first time we went through 18 years ago, we went through the whole Bible in two years.

I mean, you know, young and full of steam and all but just slowing down. Shall we pray? Father, we give thanks for the word of instruction, the word of truth. May it indeed become a lamp unto our feet and the light into our path.

And may we walk in the light of your truth, Lord. Redeeming the time in these evil days. Taking advantage, Lord, of every opportunity of serving you and of knowing you better.

Lord, we thank you for your word. For the opportunity of gathering to study the word. And may the spirit of God enrich our hearts in your truth.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. God bless.

Give you a beautiful week. Keep you in the love of Jesus Christ and cause you to abound in all things in him. In Jesus name.

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