

Colossians - Part 3

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on Christ and not on human philosophies or traditions, and it highlights the significance of Christ's preeminence in Colossians.

Duration: 54:16

Scripture: Colossians 1:15 - 2:23

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing his concern for the listeners and those he has not met in person. He desires their hearts to be comforted and united in love, with a deep understanding of the mystery of God and Christ. The preacher warns against being deceived by enticing words and false philosophy. He encourages the listeners to remain rooted and established in their faith, walking in Christ and abounding in thanksgiving. The sermon concludes with a reminder to focus on the true substance of Christ rather than grasping at shadows.

Transcript

Now, I have to apologize to you. Again, I bit off more than I can chew. I was going to bring this in three messages, this study of Colossians.

We will complete the third today and we'll be at the end of the second chapter, which means that chapters three and four, I guess you'll just have to ask me back again sometime in order to finish it up. I don't know what else to do. At any rate, it's not nearly as bad as it was.

In the pastor to New York City, I was bringing a series on the prayers of the New Testament, of which I see seven apostolic prayers. And we came finally to John 17 and I announced a series of four messages on the high priestly prayer of our Lord. Well, it didn't quite work out.

When I was bringing message number 37, I was down to verse 23. And I received an anonymous letter in the mail from a friend whose typewriter I recognized asking me if I didn't think that perhaps there was something else in the Bible besides John 17. I wasn't offended because that same day or that I received the letter, I decided perhaps there was and made changes as well.

The difference is we're going into Colossians on what one would call an analytical approach. What we were doing in John 17 was exegetical. And though I had not intended it to be that way, yet that was the

way the Lord seemed to lead.

We have an outline that would help you perhaps in your reading in the days to come. We have seen that there are five sections in Colossians. The first is what I have called introduction.

You know, that's a very inventive and imaginative term, isn't it? But we couldn't do any better. That's verses 1 to 14. And in that you have two portions.

A, the apostolic greeting, verses 1 to 8, and B, the prayer for the church, verses 9 to 14. The second section is the doctrinal section. And that is chapter 1, verses 15 through 29.

We saw that last Lord's Day. A of that is Christ's glorious preeminence. And B, Christ's headship of the church.

C, Christ's ministry to his church. And Christ's ministry to Colossians. Christ's glorious preeminence, verses 15 to 17.

Christ's headship of the church, verses 18 to 20. Christ's ministry to his church, verses 21 to 23. And then Christ's ministry to the Colossians through Paul, verses 24 to 29.

This morning we come to the third section. In my outline, that's Roman numeral 3, and it's called polemical, P-O-L-E-M-I-C-A-L. The polemical section, the battle section, is contention with the heretics.

And that's the entire chapter, chapter 2, verses 1 to 23. There are three sections in this chapter. A is affirmation of concern, verses 1 to 7. B, warning against false philosophy, verses 8 to 15.

And C, warning against grasping shadows and losing the body, 16 to 23. Well, we'll see that again in just a moment. But let's unite our hearts for just a moment of prayer.

Our Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for this privilege of coming together Sunday by Sunday. This group of Thy children who meet here and who open Thy word and open their hearts to Thy word, we thank Thee for them. And we ask Thy blessing upon them throughout the days, the weeks of this fall and this really new church year.

We pray Thy blessing upon them richly. We pray today, however, Father, for Karen James and for Father and Mother with her. And we're asking for full recovery.

We're praying also, Father, for others in this group who have loved ones who are ill. And we ask that we might sense in the Lord Jesus that He is our sufficiency. Father, we'd have to ask Thee to help us when there are times of emergency and sickness and need.

If we have nothing else in the Bible to encourage us other than that promise, my God shall supply all your need. So whatever our need, Father, Thou hast encouraged us to come to Thee in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, which we do this morning, asking for Thy blessing upon us as we open our hearts to Thy word. In Jesus' name, amen.

Just in background for you that may be joining us for the first time, a heresy had come into Colossae. It had been brought by apparently some Judaizers, some Jewish renegade, Jewish intellectuals who had decided that they had to improve upon Moses and did so by amalgamating the dualism, the philosophy of Plato with the teachings of Moses and did end up with quite a hodgepodge. At this time it hasn't a name.

In about a hundred years it's going to have a name and it's going to be the major battle in the early church in the second and third centuries. At that time it's going to be known as Gnosticism. A sort of superior revelation or knowledge that supplements and adds to and completes the scripture.

The essence of it is that the account in Genesis of creation is not really correct according to Plato and the Gnostics. Of course to you and to me it is, but to them it wasn't. Originally God had created man as spirit.

Then when man sinned God punished him by creating a physical world and giving man a physical body and the essence is that the body is a prison for the spirit and that all of the essence of physical matter wherever it occurs is evil and it's controlled by not God but by the very opposite of God, by Satan. That's the essence of Gnosticism. Matter is bad and spirit is good and therefore you're going to see that the implications are that when Christ died he died to save people from the penalty of their sins of the spirit but he couldn't do anything about that physical world which was administered by another entity, another power.

So in order for them to be protected from the deprivations that might occur by the lord and master of matter they had to follow all these ascetic rules. They couldn't eat this. They couldn't drink that.

They couldn't touch this. They couldn't taste the other. They had to observe days of feasting on order, days of fasting on order.

They had to beat the flesh and buffet the flesh and finally that's expressed in the absurdities of the 2nd and 3rd century when you have those that would be most devout who are whipping themselves with scourges tearing the flesh from their bodies or setting themselves up on big piles of rock or on broken columns or pillars there to live the balance of their life just to bring the body under, if you please. And you can see it still in India where the Shaker, the holy man will lie on a bed of spikes or walk on a bed of coals or will stare at the sun until blind or measure the continent by lying down putting his fingers out putting his toes in the mark his finger made and thus crossing the continent from one side to the other showing that he has absolutely no respect for the flesh because according to the teaching all evil resides in the flesh. Well, that's what's assaulting the church.

Now it's not organized into a system at this time. It hasn't been given a name but it's there in its entirety. Paul says it has to be dealt with so he's dealing with it and it's going to... it doesn't just stop in the third century it continues until the very present.

You hear it today when you hear people saying that well, one of the areas is that wealth is bad that affluence is bad that things are bad and that one should show their devotion to Christ by disposing of things as though somehow in the essence of material surroundings by divesting oneself of these they have become somehow spiritually better. Now it's a very subtle thing because there is such a thing as the essence of sin is selfishness and the expression of pride is very frequently through material things but the distinction is that the evil is not in the thing. It's in the heart.

Someone has said the problem with the automobile is the loose nut behind the wheel and not the way the manufacturer did it. That's what it's used for. An automobile is not of itself intrinsically evil.

It's the use to which it's put. It's just iron and other metals but it's how it's used. So from a scriptural point of view we see the apostle in this portion we're looking at coming along and being very strong and forthright in his opposition to this this heresy.

But you have to know the heresy to understand what he's fighting. So in the polemical section it's very important to understand that he's coming at this whole basic heresy because we know that the scripture tells us that God made the world and when he made the land he said it's good and he made the vegetation he said it's good he made animals he said they're good and then when he made man in his image and likeness and gave to him all the urges and drives for food, for shelter, for status, for pleasure, for sex, for knowledge he looked at the man in whom he put all these urges and drives and he said it is very good. Very good.

Now the heresy is oh no, that's not what really happened at all you see. So what Paul is doing is coming back and saying let's come back to the scripture let's approach let's understand what the scripture says and not be moved about by the philosophies that appeal to our egos. Let's not do that let's get scriptural, let's see it.

So what do we find? This first section the affirmation of his concern in chapter 2 verses 1 to 7 And this I say abounding therein with thanksgiving. Now what is he saying? I would that you might know what great conflict or what striving what straining that's the strength of the word that I have for you. He knows that there is great subtlety in this heresy that it's tremendously appealing tremendously satisfying to the flesh.

Look back on Phariseeism at the time of Christ when they loved to afflict their faces and put ashes on their faces to accentuate the fact that they were fasting and to hurry the loss of weight and the evidence of pain and so on. The flesh is greatly satisfied by this and so he knows it's very appealing very subtle especially to people that have been groveling in front of pagan altars and all kinds of afflictions beatings, sacrifices human sacrifices immorality and now they put their faith and their trust in Christ and there's none of this and they're in the habit of doing these things and it doesn't seem quite complete. So somebody comes with a very well developed and sophisticated philosophy and says well what you believed in Christ is alright but it's not enough you know there's these other areas and so Paul said I am striving I'm straining in my desire to see you protected and to see you warned and to see you preserved and I don't want you led astray by a heresy.

I want you to be encouraged in verse 2 for all the riches in Christ you don't have to go anywhere else to anyone else. The wealth of truth is in Christ. Everything you need is in Him.

You don't need to go to any other teachers any other books. You don't need a key to this or a supplement to that. There you have it.

It's all in Him. It's all in Him. And then in verse 3 he has this intense concern that they have full assurance of understanding that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

You do not need to have Plato or Aristotle or any of the philosophers supplement the revelation of the Word. It's in Christ. Here it's enough.

We don't let them tell us what's correct about the Scripture. We let the Scripture tell us what's correct or in error about them. Because in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.

And you don't have to go anywhere else. And somebody comes to your front door and says, we want you to read this. Angels gave this to our founder.

Say, well look, this was given by God to a servant. Now we're not going to let you judge this by what some angel gave. We're going to let this judge what you bring.

Take the initiative. Take the position of, if you want to talk about religious things, splendid. But here's our source.

We'll talk from this, not from anything else. Because in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That's what we're talking about.

That's what he's saying. Oh, I'm striving for you. I'm yearning for you.

I want you to understand that all the riches are in Christ. That all wisdom and all knowledge is hidden in Christ. You need not go anywhere else.

Verse 4. I say this. I emphasize this. Why? Lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

They're going to come so subtly and so sweetly and sometimes so nice. You know, if the people that know and love Christ could be as nice as those that are trying to woo us away from Christ. You know, if someone's little child's prayer, Oh God, make the bad people good and make the good people nice.

Deserves recognition. And they're going to come with enticing words to draw you so subtle, so honey, and so logical. Listen, friend.

If you will assume the premise I give you, I can prove anything in the world to you. You just assume my premise. Prove anything.

But you see, argument begins with proving the premise. Not building a structure on an assumption. And so they come and they say, Now let us assume, and they put that down, and then they build a structure and you can't find any error in the structure.

It's enticing words. Why? Because they seduced you into assuming their premise. But if that occurs with you, you're going to say, Oh no, no.

We never assume a premise. Because we prove a premise. And we prove it from the scripture.

And if you've got to proving the premise, because the average person that merchandising heresy today has, like a salesman, some salesmen in superficial sales, have memorized a spiel, like a record. But if it skips a groove, they'll never find their way back. And so if the discussion has to begin, then you simply say, Well, this is our premise.

Oh, now let's prove that. Let's not go on until you prove that. Well, they can spend about two weeks and find they can't prove it.

See, we have authority. They have presumption. So we'll stand on that.

Alright, so he said, They're coming to you with enticing words. And I want you to know that. But I want you to also understand that I'm not accusing you to having listened to these enticing words, nor do I so much as suspect that you will.

I don't even think you will. Because in that fifth verse, I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. You've already been exposed.

You've already been assaulted and seduced. But you've stood. Now what I want to do is reinforce your standing.

I want to give you a little additional ammunition. I want to help sharpen your sword, just a trifle. And of course, the Spirit of God is saying this to us and to all believers in all generations.

So He expresses confidence in their order and in the steadfastness of their faith. And then in verse 6, He emphasizes the priorities. As you therefore receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in Him.

Continue to walk in Him. Keep on holding fast to Christ, believing Him and obeying Him. Continue to be rooted in Christ, not in some other book or teaching.

To be nourished, rooted. To be strengthened. To be fed by Him.

And then to be foundation, established in the faith. Continue to be built up, foundationed in Him. Having been founded in Christ, continue to be built up and foundationed in Him.

You know, you get a solid foundation. I go see some of the houses that are built on a pile of stones with a split 2 by 400, you know. And if a little bit of water comes, the stones may sink.

The ground gets soft. And occasionally you'll drive through the hills and the Appalachians and you'll find a house that has a lean. One fellow said he grew up in a house that had such a lean that if you dropped a marble up on the second floor, it would whirl downstairs and go right through the screen door.

It was going so fast when it hit the door. I don't know whether that's true or not, but I've seen some that had that kind of a lean in them because they weren't foundation. They weren't foundation properly.

But here he said, you're foundationed in Christ. You're built up in Him and you're rooted in Him. Now walk in Him.

Keep your nourishment from Him and keep standing on Him and all that you've learned about Him. Then in verses 8 to 15, you have this warning against false philosophy. 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. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power, in whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, 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, blotting 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. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Now remember what the warning is in verse, early part.

Particularly this philosophy that he's talking about, vain deceit, reduces what the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, has done for our salvation. It says that the Lord Jesus died to deal with the sins of the spirit, but that He has no influence whatever over the material world. You have to have a total system other than Christ in order to protect you against the physical world and those who administer that physical world.

Now, Paul says, this is philosophy and vain deceit. Let me give you this paraphrase. Maybe it will help make it clear.

Beware lest there be anyone who makes booty of you. It's like a pirate coming to steal something that belongs to another. Beware lest any make booty of you by means of his philosophy and empty deceit in accord with the traditions of men, in accord with the elemental things of the world, and in non-accord with Christ.

Because in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily matter. And in Him have you been made full. He is the one who is head of all rule and all authority.

Now, what's the error described in verse 8? First, it's in accord with the traditions of men. Well, I traced it back to Plato. But where did Plato get it? He was gathering up bits and pieces of various philosophies from the Egyptians, from the Indians, from Shintoists, Zoroastrians, all of the various eastern cults that focused in and around Egypt, which he visited, to Alexandria.

In those years he was staying down in Sicily because there was regular commuter service abroad. And he was getting also from Moses. So what do you have? You have this man bringing these bits and pieces in and then giving it new form and new shape and giving to it basically the concept that matter is bad and spirit is good and that the function of life is to free ourselves from the tyranny and the chains and the pressures and the pull and the power of the flesh.

Because in that sense. So he called this elementary things of the world. This deceitful and empty philosophy dealt with physical and material things with humanly invented rules and regulations regarding these things.

Now, you don't taste that, you don't handle the other. You fast and you feast according to instructions. You beat the flesh, you buffet the flesh, you don't, well, whatever.

Now what's the answer to this error? Verses 9 and 10. Well, the answer is Christ. Their philosophy is a human invention in contradiction to Christ.

Why? Because in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Christ is very God himself. He is the head of all rule and authority in the universe.

Of what influence, of what significance, of what force is a philosophy about physical substance ruled by anyone other than Christ? I mean, it's nothing. Why? Because the scripture tells us he is the head. He is the head of all principality and power.

Everything is under his control. How ridiculous, says Paul, that the Colossians, Christians, should have to use some means other than Christ to escape the power and the rule and the authority of the very world that Christ controls. You see, there's the absurdity of it.

If he has all power, if in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, if all things were made by him and for him, and all things by him are held together as we saw, then what in the world is the reason they should have to go to some other philosophical teaching or force to escape from the influence of the universe, the world, that Christ controls? You see, that's what he's saying. He made it. He made it for himself.

Now, they come to you and say, Oh no, that isn't the way it was. Paul says that's the way it was. For, you know, all things were made by him.

All things. And without him was not anything made that was made. So, when they tell you you've got to go to some other system, how ridiculous.

Believers are complete. Believers are full in Christ. Why? Because he's the head.

He's the head of everything. He's in charge. He said all authority in heaven and earth is given unto me.

That's the one whom they know and love and serve. Verses 11 to 15 to give us strength against the error. Now, what is this strength? What's the source of the Colossians' strength in refuting this error? Why is it that they can be so confident that they can overcome the error? Well, it's seen in their union, their identification with Christ.

In verse 11, In whom also you are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. This is one of the indications that we think that these intellectuals that were bringing the heresy were renegade Jewish people because they were insisting that the Gentiles be circumcised. And Paul is saying, look, you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands.

Circumcision of the heart, of the spirit, in your association with Christ. Now, why? What is this circumcision of the heart? What is it? Alright, look at verse 12. Bury with him.

Well, now you aren't buried until you're ready for it. You understand? So the verse that precedes this doesn't occur here. It occurs in Romans 6. In verse 6, you don't need to turn to it.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ. And in Galatians 2.20, I am crucified with Christ. So what's the circumcision of the heart? The day the Lord Jesus Christ died for you, on that cross, the Father saw the cross from above and it looked to the Father as though there were two people on it.

Remember, Christ was on the outside, but because He was your representative, dying your death, the Father saw it as though you were on the inside of the cross, crucified with Christ. I give you that merely as a technique to help you understand what that word means. The day Christ was crucified in the Father's eyes, you were crucified.

Crucified with Christ. Now, that's the circumcision of the heart. The day that you come to recognize that not only did Christ die for you, as a little while ago our pianist played for you.

You weren't asked to play. She was. But you were asked to die because you'd sinned.

And Christ identified Himself with you so that He was crucified for you. But since it was for you, in the Father's eyes, you were with Him. With Him.

So that day that Christ died, you died. Now, that's the circumcision of the heart. That when you recognize that you, that you are by nature, that opinionated, self-determining, choosing, self-protecting, self-loving, you, me, I died the day Christ died.

I'm crucified with Him and buried with Him. That's where it begins. But you see, we have a law of rhetoric, a law of hermeneutics, that whenever one of a known series is in place, the other elements of the series are there by correct inference.

So if it begins with buried with Him, and the series is crucified with Him, buried with Him, quickened with Him, raised with Him, and seated with Him, you do not need to have crucified with Him stated. It's implicit.

It's implied.

Because this is a rule of hermeneutics where one of a known series is stated, the other elements of the series are there by inference. So what you have here is that you are crucified with Him. There's the circumcision, the cutting off.

The day Christ died for me, I died with Him. Buried with Him, as pictured by baptism, wherein you are also risen with Him through faith in the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Ah, there's where Paul points out this vastly superior relationship. The argument is that if the circumcised Jews needed asceticism and abstinency, how much more would the uncircumcised Gentile converts need asceticism and ritual and rules. But scriptural circumcision is an act of God in our union with Christ by which He stripped away the body of our sins like you'd strip away an old garment.

And Paul points out our vastly superior relationship. We are crucified with Christ, jointly crucified. Buried with Christ, jointly entombed.

Raised with Christ, jointly raised up. In Ephesians we are told we are seated together in the heavenlies in Him, jointly enthroned. And so in verse 13, he points out this vastly superior life.

Vastly superior. Our life is not just our warmed over, dedicated human life. That which makes us alive in Christ is not the fact that we've made a commitment to Him, but He to us.

You see, salvation is not a decision or a plan or a scheme or a ritual. Salvation is a person. He that hath the Son hath life.

Life is in the Son. Writing to the Corinthians, He said, Christ be in you, except you be reprobate. Salvation is not a scheme, it's a person.

And so we have a vastly superior life. What is it? It's the Lord Jesus Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, there none of His.

You see, this we have to see is what He's telling them. It's not just having forgiven us all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances. All of this is true.

All of this is wonderfully, gloriously true. But, it's more than that. It's that He Himself has become our life in our joint union with Him.

But in verse 15, let's look at that quickly. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over it. Now what have the Judaizers, philosophers said? You have to recognize that this world is controlled by the God, it's God, Satan.

And therefore, you have to pray to angels to intercede for you with the God of this world to protect you. Well, I saw the people at the Obus Bridge carrying the old chief, carrying a chicken. And I said, Where are you going, chief? He said, I'm going to sacrifice it.

I said, To whom? Give him the name of God. He said, Oh no, I don't even know that he wants chickens. I'm sacrificing this to Satan.

I said, Why? Because he's the one who troubles us. He's the one who kills our cattle. He's the one who lets our chickens die.

And I've got to have food if I'm going to get along. And why should I waste chickens on God? I don't even know that he wants chickens. But you see there, this philosophy has been absorbed.

And so they're placating evil spirits to intercede with the God of this world. Among the people that we visited who knew my wife and I, they knew the name of God who made the world, but they also knew the name of Satan. So what he is saying is here that when the Lord Jesus Christ died, he stripped away all rulership and authority from the God of this world.

Stripped it away. And he said, All authority is given unto me. He said, But yet, Satan still... Still... I know.

Sure. Still. But he was defeated at Calvary.

He made a show of them openly. Captivity was led captive. Why do you think the Scripture says give no place to the devil? Simple.

If you give place, you'll take it. That's all. And why is he so trying to deceive? Why doesn't he want us to understand what happened at Calvary? Because the Lord Jesus has turned over to his body, the church, the enforcement of his victory at Calvary.

MacArthur didn't have to be on every street corner in Japan after the signing of the unconditional surrender. MacArthur himself didn't have to be present. What did he do? He sent his body out.

What was his body? All the corporals and sergeants and privates of the allied forces. And wherever one of those stood and raised his hand, blew a whistle, it was the government. The allied governments were the supreme commander in the Far East, MacArthur.

It was MacArthur that blew the whistle, though he wasn't there. They didn't stop because some little private from Duscombe, Alabama was standing out there who had failed his eighth grade and got drafted. No, that wasn't why they stopped.

They stopped because he had the uniform on. And because that uniform represented victory. And that's why the Lord Jesus... That's why we're instructed by Paul, put on the whole armor of God and having done all withstand.

Why? Because he spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over it. And so he says, when they come to you and say you've got to ask angels and you've got to sacrifice, he says, that's nonsense. Sheer nonsense.

Don't let yourself be beguiled by enticing words. Understand who Christ is and what he's done. Then, verses 16 to 23, very quickly, warning, Paul warns against our grasping the shadow and losing the substance.

Verse 16, let the word of Christ... Let's see. Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a holy day or the new moon or Sabbath days. He said, don't let anybody put you under bondage.

You've got to observe this day. You've got to eat this. You've got to eat that.

You've got to do this. You've got to do that. He said, look, you're in Christ.

Legalism, with approval or disapproval. The heiress have decreed that some days are for fasting and some for feasting. And he says, we believers, Colossians, are to despise such philosophy and tradition.

Don't sew filthy rags onto the spotless robe of the ineffable glory of the Son of God. That's what he's saying. Don't try to patch the robe of his majesty and of his glory with the teachings of the ridiculous and the absurd.

Don't do it. That's what he's saying. The Old Testament festivals, the peace, were but shadows fulfilled in Christ.

Now, if you choose to observe them because you find pleasure and joy, privilege, but not obligation, doesn't add a bit to the merit of Christ. We may observe Christmas, but in no sense does the observation of Christmas add one iota to the ineffable glory of the birth of the Son of God, which has relatively little relationship. But it may be an emotional time and a family time and so on.

So with festivals, you may choose to observe them, but don't let anyone bring you into bondage to them. They're not necessary, nor do they add. That's what he's saying.

Then in verse 18, let nobody whatever deny you the prize. Let no man beguile you of your reward, rob you, cheat you out of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels. Disregard anybody who tries to do it.

Laugh at him. Ignore him. Don't try to persuade him.

Man convinced against his will isn't the same opinion still unless there's real evidence that they want. Ignore it. Laugh at it.

It has no relevance to you. My father used to say when I would tell about something, he'd say, Son, you can't stop and scratch and hunt fleas with every dog that barks at you. You just can't do it.

Too busy. And somebody comes up to me and says, What do you think about that? Alright, it's up to you. Good day.

It's not going to trouble me any. Don't blow my hair out. I'm not worried about you.

It's not going to... I just can't be bothered with everybody that comes along. If I were willing to spend the time to answer every question that fools could ask, you'd never have time enough to do anything for, but answer questions from foolish people. And you can't do that.

Life isn't made up for that purpose. So, what he is saying is, essentially, don't let anybody rob you of your prize by his mere will. Don't let anybody say, Now, you've got to worship angels, which were to fill up the distance between man and God.

According to this teaching, there are successive orders of angels or emanations. They were so familiar to these philosophers that they were named. And by this voluntary submitting to angels, oh, what humility it exuded, you know.

But, oh, what sophistication and pride it engendered to think that I know the name of all these angels. So, he's saying, Don't, in verse 20 to 23, don't let anyone pester you with decrees. That's really what it says.

Don't let anyone pester you. Believers are free from worldly ordinances because you died with Christ to the world. You're buried with him.

You're quickened with him. Such ascetic requirements are meaningless to you. Touch not, taste not, handle not.

Oh, trouble me no more. I'm long past that. You can't touch this.

You can't taste that. You can't have... What he's saying is, Look, we're not children tossed to and fro by every word of doctrine by cunning people who are going to come along. No, no, no.

We can't do that. Can't do that. Our union with Christ renders us safe to this world.

They come with their silly decrees when 10,000 such decrees would produce not the least safety for them nor for us. We just can't be bothered. So, this is what he is saying.

Which all are to perish with the using. I remember years ago being one of the speakers at a youth retreat and one of the speakers got up and his message was to the young people, Touch not, taste not, handle not. And you know, I was silly enough to think it was a good sermon.

So, one day, I read the rest of the verse, the next verse, which says, which all are to perish with the using. And I realized that somebody missed the part on that one. He just hadn't been with it.

And so, that's what Paul is saying. They're saying that Christ's work was so ineffectual that the spirits of this world, the evil spirits, can harm the believer. Nonsense.

Nonsense. Not so. We know about evil spirits.

My wife and I have lived in Africa. We know that. And we know that they would come and say, the spirit here where you are is so strong and so white and so powerful.

But when we go to our own village, all we know about evil spirits, but don't for a moment say that you have to go through these rituals and rigmaroles to have protection. All these things are used up. It's ridiculous to build a philosophy around them.

This kind of decree may seem wise in connection with self-willed worship and lowliness, but not when it comes to the Scripture. What is he saying? Well, Christ is before all things. By Him are all things.

Nay, He by Him all things are headed together. In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. You know Him.

That's enough. Father, we thank You for Thy Word. We thank You for its relevance today.

We know that these Judaizing intellectual heretics have not all passed away. They've come up under a variety of names, a variety of philosophies. They're still rampant in the world.

We'll have them at our front door before the month is out. Someone representing them, trying to bring us into bondage. But oh, how glad we are we know Christ and we love Him and we serve Him.

And so we pray that somehow, as we've thought together, the Epistle to the Colossians will take on a new meaning and significance to us and that we'll be blessed and the Lord Jesus will be glorified. For we ask it in His name. Amen.

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