

Colossians 2 – “Keep It Simple”

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us. Before we dig into today's bible study, this morning is a special moment in the history of CCC, because today, we are publicly acknowledging the special work that God has done and is doing in the life of a servant here in our fellowship as we publicly recognize them and appoint them as an elder.

The Bible gives specific qualifications that an elder must have before they occupy that honorable position. We see the requirements for an elder detailed for us in 1 Timothy 3, and in Titus chapter 1.

An elder is someone who not only meets these requirements but is someone who is actively doing these things already, prior to myself or the leadership of this church formally giving them the title of elder.

Now I know we have some new faces, so I thought it would be good to ask our current existing elders to come up as I introduce them.

Luigi C

Bob R

Jim H

Aggie W

Dave C

This morning, on behalf of our current elders and board of trustees, we are blessed to announce that Josh Jackson has

been unanimously appointed to hold the position of elder and board member here at Calvary Chapel.

Josh has been a fixture of this church for many years, most of the time working tirelessly behind the scenes to serve others. Josh has been an integral part of our men's ministry that Dave oversees. Additionally, Josh has faithfully led and overseen both our engage outreach ministry and our van ministry over the years. Josh c'mon up.

Again, what we're doing today is simply ratifying, publicly acknowledging the work that God has already been doing in Josh's life and will continue to do.

Will you join me in prayer as we formally install Josh Jackson?

Would you please now turn in your Bibles to Colossians 2? Remember, Paul wrote this letter to a group of people he never met. It was a church he never planted or even preached at. But the good report by the church's pastor, his name was Epaphras, prompted Paul to pen these words.

And what Colossians is all about, is fixing our focus upon Jesus Christ.

This morning, we're gonna study verses 1-10, and the title of this morning's message is KEEP IT SIMPLE

LET'S PRAY

In our text this morning we get to peek inside Paul's heart and look at why the HS prompted him to write these words.

1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. Now remember this region of Colosse was near Laodicea, so Paul is assuming this letter here will get shared with the believers there.

The word here for conflict in the Greek is agon, which is actually the word for the **SHOW PIC** arena where the Greek contests themselves took place. This is where the wrestlers agonized, where the runners agonized, giving their all in their event. **CLOSE PIC**

So, Paul says I want you to know what great agon, the conflict, the contest in my heart, what's going on for you and for those in Laodicea.

And this is really shocking because remember, the man writing this was the same guy who previously hated the church. This is a guy who slaughtered Christians. This is a guy who made people blaspheme the name of Jesus. **Acts 26 9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.**

This guy who previously persecuted Christians is now the man whose heart is agonizing for fellow Christians he's never met.

How could such a dramatic change happen? The only explanation for such a transformation is through the new birth, Paul becoming born again in his spirit by surrendering his life to Christ. Jesus changed him from the inside out!

And now, as he puts the quill to the page, it's the Holy Spirit speaking not just to the Colossian Church 2k years ago, but to you and me this morning.

And what is it that Paul is agonizing over? We'll see in a few minutes it's the enticing words of others that he's concerned with. Paul doesn't say I'm worried about someone convincing you to commit murder or rob a bank. No, he's talking about religious people, religious circles drawing folks away from Christ.

Again, it's not in regard to immorality and blatant sin, but in regard to those that are planted in Christ, being deceived by the winds of doctrine, as he says in Ephesians, which blow through the church.

And we know the danger of false doctrine was very real because within 30 years of this, Jesus would say to the church of Laodicea in **Revelation 3:15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[fn] I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

And the word in the Greek is cooling. They weren't lukewarm getting warmer. They were lukewarm and cooling.

The false doctrine that draws Christians away was the agon, the struggle in his heart.

Let's read v 1-3

1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And in response to the false teaching, Paul lists several desires for the hearts of the Colossians. First in v 2 is that their hearts might be encouraged-literally to be comforted.

Have you noticed that encouraged Christians are usually strong Christians? Of course, if we're encouraged it's NOT because all of the circumstances in life are perfect. No, quite the opposite, most of the time we don't know or understand what's going on.

See, we're encouraged as Christians not because of our circumstances, but despite our circumstances-we're encouraged because of our position- we're in Christ!

SHOW PIC Think about Christians who are being martyred these days, they're being hacked to death with machetes and yet they

refuse to renounce Jesus. They know on the other side of that moment there's glory, there's heaven, there's eternity. They're encouraged not by their circumstances, rather because they're in Christ. **CLOSE PIC**

Paul wants their hearts, and our hearts, the inner part of our being, to be encouraged. Because the reality is that one day we will be with Jesus.

Secondly, he says, v2 I want you to be knit together in love. Jesus tells us in **John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"

There's no place for racism, there's no place for social status, there's no place where culture should divide us, there's no place where anything should set us aside from one another because the greatest thing in each one of our lives is Jesus Christ.

And listen when a body of believers is knit together in love, it's hard to splinter and cause divisions in a church like that.

Paul said this is what I want for the church-encouraged hearts, building up in love. ...**2 and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and[fn] of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

All wisdom, all knowledge is in Jesus. Whoever desires wisdom to navigate life successfully must come to the realization that there

is nothing more to be found than Christ. All treasures of wisdom are in Him.

SHOW PIC The story is told that one day media mogul William Randolph Hearst was looking through a book of famous artwork when a painting caught his eye. “I want this painting for my collection,” he said to his aides. But after making some inquiries, they reported that they were unable to locate the particular work.

Hearst said, “do whatever it takes to find that treasure, and get it.”

Three and a half months later, the aides returned to Hearst. “Did you find the treasure?” he asked.

“Yes,” they replied. “After much searching and painstaking research, we found it.”

“Did you purchase it?” he asked.

“No.”

“Why not?” Hearst asked.

“Because we found it in your warehouse.” **CLOSE PIC**

This is what Paul is saying to the Colossians and what the HS is saying to us. All the wisdom and knowledge we will ever need to get through life is all in Christ. When we’ve got Him, we’ve got all we ever need.

So many people today are listening to podcasts to get wisdom, and that’s fine. But tell me one thing you’ll learn from any human being that’s greater than what God comforts and guides our hearts within Psalms and Proverbs?

If you're not already, I recommend just reading 1 proverb a day. Today is the 1st, read proverbs 1. Tomorrow the 2nd-read proverbs 2. You'll be astounded at God's wisdom and how it applies to every circumstance we face in our modern society.

4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

Why is knowing Jesus so important? Because it's the only way to keep from being sucked into "persuasive words,"

And it always starts off with guys who sound so spiritual. They sound so smart; they have convincing arguments. And what they always do is take away from the simplicity of Christ. They always draw you to the "deeper truths" through persuasive words.

5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Paul purposefully uses military terms here, order and steadfastness, because he's alluding to the fact there's a warfare and a very real enemy that we all face.

Paul says I'm rejoicing in my spirit because I'm beholding your order, and the fact that you're making yourself steadfast and solid in your faith in Christ.

And then as he comes to verses 6 and 7, here's the charge, here's the challenge and it's almost the central theme of the whole book of Colossians.

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, This is a great verse to put on a sticky note on your bathroom mirror for when you wake up in the morning.

Notice v 6 says Christ Jesus the Lord.

It's interesting in the book of Acts you'll find the word Savior twice in the book of Acts. But you find the word Lord 92 times.

If you're a Christian, Jesus is your Lord. And listen, you can't have a little bit of Jesus. It's all or nothing. Having a little bit of Jesus is like saying you're a little bit pregnant. That's not how it works.

To be Lord means we're surrendered fully to Him and ready to do that which He instructs us. And how does He instruct us? Through His word.

Listen you cannot tell me Jesus is your Lord if you're not in the word. Jesus is not your Lord if you are not in His word. You are your Lord. You may confess Jesus with your mouth but if you refuse to listen to Him, then you're more interested in serving yourself, not Jesus.

Luke 6:46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Let's read v 6 again.

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. The word walk here is a present imperative, we must continue to walk in Him.

We're to walk in Jesus, not in anybody else, not in anything else, not in theology, not in our head, not in what we've learned, not in our emotions, not in our political affiliation. We must continue to walk in Him, in Jesus himself.

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

What else do we have to bring to anyone? The only thing we can offer of eternal consequence is Jesus! I've been with Jesus this morning. He stooped down to me. He put his hand on me, he talked to me. He told me once again, after thousands of other times, that he loved me. He's all we need.

Here's the other critical verse...

7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it^[fn] with thanksgiving. Rooted and built up reminds us of Psalm 1 1 Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

The Greek grammar in V 7 describes being more and more established, we're being built up each day. It's a reminder that the Christian walk is a process, we're under construction in a wonderful way. We're growing, we're being conformed into His image and likeness. We should be more established right now in Christ than we were last year at this time.

Notice the end of verse 7-with thanksgiving.

Thankful Christians are hard to break off and deceive. It's hard to convince them they need something else, to go somewhere else because they're thankful of what Jesus has done for them!

It's unthankful Christians that are led away.

The scenario usually plays out when a Christian is going along, then they think, well, if I only had this, or if I could do that. You know, I'd be happy if I did this or if that happened. And without even realizing it they've become unthankful.

It's the unthankful Christian that Satan understands how to split off, with enticing words, he does this by putting something else in front of them and draws them away.

Understand, Christian maturity is being rooted in the basics. It's learning to walk by simple faith.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic

principles of the world, and not according to Christ. He says beware and the idea is we must constantly beware lest anyone cheat you. That's what happens when folks drift away-they're cheated out of the simplicity of Christ. These false teachings end up shackling the person and putting them in chains.

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; It doesn't get much clearer than this. Jesus is not just a good man, not just a prophet. No, Jesus is God! Nor is Jesus inferior to God, or less than God.

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

We'll end our study in verse 10.

10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. You're complete in Him. There isn't any higher to go. You're in Christ, you're complete. There's no ascending from there, there's no higher point from there.

Don't let anybody lay any trip on you about traditions, and you need to do this and that. The Bible is clear-you are complete in Christ. And He's coming for you.

You know, tradition is not a bad thing in and of itself, but it's a bad thing when it pulls us from Him. Jesus said in Mark 7:6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
7 And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the
tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many
other such things you do.”

9 He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of
God, that you may keep your tradition.”

This is why it's so critical that every Christian knows the word of God themselves, so when they hear people elevating traditions, or using deceitful words, we can say I don't know where you got that, but this is what the Scriptures say.

The scripture doesn't say you can't wear jeans to church, or you must wear a suit. It doesn't say that. Doesn't say you can't wear makeup. Chuck Smith used to say even an old barn looks good with a fresh coat of paint.

It's tragic because how many people we all know today that are bound by traditions, chained by them instead of experiencing the freedom found in Christ?

A pastor I know was talking to his tour guide in Israel a few years ago, and they started talking about tradition. And the tour guide said 'my wife, whenever we had a roast at home, he said my wife would always cut off both ends of the roast before she makes the

roast. He said I never thought much about it, but then he finally asked his wife, why do you do that, by the way? He thought over the years of the wasted pounds of meat.

And his wife got to thinking, and said 'Well I don't know, my mother always did it.' So, a couple weeks later he asked his MIL, he said 'mom why do you cut off the ends of the roast'. And she said, well, my mom always did it.

And now he was really curious. Shockingly, near 100 years old, that Grandma was still alive. And he later went to his wife's grandma and said, 'I asked my wife, I asked your daughter, grandma now I'm asking you, why do you always cut off the ends of the meat for the roast?' And she said, because that's the only way it fits in the pan that I have.

So, think of all that meat wasted.

That's my whole point this morning, you know? We can get caught up and do things just because somebody else did them, we can get in that rut of tradition and without realizing it, and it can draw us away from the simplicity of Christ.

Paul in verse 1 had that *agon*, the conflict in his heart, the agonizing, and I believe that's the heart of the Lord, watching people not enjoy the simplicity of faith in Him.

It says in Zephaniah when Jesus comes and He sets up His Kingdom and He has us all back, it says:

Zeph 3:17 The LORD your God in your midst,

The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

He loves us. He wants to see our hearts strengthened. He wants to see us built up in love in the family of God.

He wants to see us understanding all of the assurance of riches that we have in Christ.

He doesn't want any of us to be deceived with enticing words.

I gotta tell you, this was the hardest part for me during Covid.

How many Christians walked away from the simplicity of Jesus Christ and now they are shipwrecked. I've seen it happen to pastors, even Calvary Chapel pastors. No longer teaching the word of God.

Look at all these talking heads 4 years ago and what they were saying, and now look how they've led people away from the simplicity of Christ. Even today a lot of these prophecy buffs are getting everyone all worked up over current events.

Suddenly Christians are more interested in current events than they are with walking in Christ! And they get shackled by it, all worked up and there's no joy, there's no thanksgiving.

When did we forget who's on the throne, and calling the shots?
You think it's politicians in DC?

Listen, let me ask you a question. The people you are listening to, the folks you're watching- are they continuously drawing you to the simplicity of faith in Christ and walking in Him?

If not, then dump them!!!!!! Stop listening to them, stop watching them, and get back to just you and Jesus. Just like it was when you first got saved, when you were just head over heels in love with Him. And you longed for Him, you longed for His word, you longed for His spirit.

Because here's the tragedy all around us-a lot of Christians would rather watch their favorite teacher on YouTube for 30 mins than spend 30 mins alone with Jesus.

Listen what can anyone out there offer you that Jesus can't give you? But Jesus can give you what nobody else can give you.

If you've allowed stuff to creep in and crowd out simple faith in Jesus, ask Him for forgiveness right now. Take 20 mins today, just you and your Bible, and get back to simplicity in Christ.

I know we're busy. Things to do.

Listen, we find the time to eat, don't we?

Find time to shower, get dressed, don't we?

Listen, we find time to do that which we want to do. I pray you make the time to just get alone with Jesus.