

Col 2 11-23

Good morning and thank you for joining us! We're continuing our study in the book of Colossians so would you please turn in your Bibles to Colossians 2?

Last week we studied verses 1-10, so we'll pick up in verse 11 and finish the chapter.

What we'll see this morning is a warning to every Christian, to be careful what we believe. And the reason for this warning to us is the HS knows our tendency to drift into legalism, and our tendency to lean towards mysticism.

Legalism makes us judgmental, because when we become legalistic it's easy for us to look down on other Christians and think, well, at least I'm not that guy. And when that happens it reveals we don't understand the grace of God at all.

Hey it's even possible for us to be caught up sometimes in mystical things, the mysterious arena where folks get drawn away from abiding in Christ.

And the problem with both legalism and mysticism is they take away from Jesus, and His sufficiency.

We're gonna study verses 11-23, and the title of this morning's message is Jesus is Enough!

Let's pray

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins^[fn] of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, Now, in the book of Galatians and other places in the NT, Paul had to deal with the issue of circumcision because it was such an issue with the Judaizers. You remember the Judaizers were Jewish Christians who said you still had to keep the OT law while being a follower of Christ.

Similarly, in Colossae, the false teaching was that circumcision, among other things were necessary to be really acceptable to God.

What was spreading around Colossae was Jesus AND. It was that Jesus isn't enough, you had to do something on top of the sacrifice of Christ to be acceptable to God. Jesus AND these other things that you need to make you more spiritual.

V11 confronts it directly by saying you were circumcised. In a minute in verse 12 it's gonna say you were buried. And then later in v12 it's gonna say you were raised.

The idea is these are things that have happened in the past, and they stand established today, and they're passive, which means they're already done.

Verse 11 it says you have been circumcised- it stands completed. It happened in the past-it happened when we became followers of Christ, when we became born again in our spirits. And listen we didn't have anything to do with this circumcision.

And we know that for sure because it says this circumcision was made without hands. It's not human. And it says it's relative to the putting off of the body of sins, putting off their means to rip off, it describes to take off armor or to take off clothing.

When we became born again, we put off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

The Jews took pride in the process of circumcision and what they thought that circumcision gave them in their relationship to Abraham. But even in the OT we see that circumcision was more than a physical act. **Jeremiah 9 25 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised— 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."**

The physical act is symbolic of a spiritual truth, the cutting away of the carnal nature of the flesh.

Before we were Christians, we were entirely governed by our fallen, sinful nature. The fallen nature would say, lust after that girl, or drink this, or fine go punch that guy right in the eye. And because we were ruled by our flesh prior to Christ, we agreed. We were run and ruled by our flesh.

But then we get saved, and we're born again. We receive that circumcision of heart, the breaking away of the carnal nature.

So now when our flesh says hey go punch that dude we say I can't. I'm a Christian now.

When our flesh tempts us sexually, no I'm not going to do that. There's the breaking of those things we used to just give in to. The old flesh that ruled our life has been cut away.

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. It says we have been buried. This reminds us of **Romans 6:3-4** 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Baptism is just like circumcision in that both of these physical acts carry spiritual significance.

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, Pause here. We're dead in our trespasses, our sin. You know the real definition of death is separation from God.

See when someone dies, it isn't just that their body stops functioning. Their frame, their earthly tent remains, but their spirit-who they really are, moves on to eternity.

When a person dies without Christ, like Christians they leave their physical frame behind, but they are separated from God. That's real death. It isn't just a physical death, it's the eternal death on

the other side of it. Eternally in outer darkness separated from God. **Matthew 22:13** Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Matthew 25:30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Luke 13:28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

Listen if you're not a follower of Christ, that is your eternity.

But for every person who has surrendered to Christ...

...13 He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Prior to Christ we were dead in our trespasses and sin. But Jesus has made us alive together with Him, by forgiving us.

Look what it says here:all trespasses.

When a person is born again by trusting in Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior, there's no more separation. All of our trespasses are forgiven. We're alive now because all our sins are forgiven.

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of

the way, having nailed it to the cross. The chilly weather got me thinking. Can you believe Christmas is 108 days away!

And soon all around us we'll be bombarded with that old song **SHOW PIC** -Santa Claus making his list, checking it 2x gonna find out who's naughty and nice. **CLOSE PIC**

Every time you hear that jingle, remember this verse. Our heavenly Father makes a list and checks it once. He nailed it to the Cross, where the blood of His Son Jesus covers it completely.

He's wiped out our sins!

The word there for handwriting is a specific word, its a word from the business world, it describes a bill of debt. Jesus has obliterated, He wiped our sin debt.

He did that by nailing it to his cross.

Now in those days it was a common practice for them to nail a placard above the victims head on the cross the crimes that they were guilty of.

You remember, above the head of Jesus

Matthew 27:37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

That was Jesus' alleged crime!

And it says here in v 14 we no longer have that handwriting of debt written against us.

Notice it doesn't say it wasn't true. It just says it no longer has any power.

It was nailed to his cross. Every guilt, every crime, every sinful thought of every believer who's ever lived! You may say 'but you don't know what I've done'. You're proly right. But God does, and He nailed it to the cross!!

And in the process of doing that...

15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. You may recall from past studies that when a Roman general conquered an enemy, he would return to Rome in a triumphal procession.

SHOW PIC The general would ride in the lead chariot, followed by his victorious soldiers. Behind the soldiers walked the conquered men, bruised, wounded, and chained to the jeers of the crowds lining the streets. **CLOSE PIC**

Paul borrows from this image in this verse.

It says here that Jesus, through what He accomplished on the cross and the blotting out of our sins, He disarmed principalities and powers.

Now there's those who say well the devil made me do it. First of all, Satan can only be in one place at one time. And he ain't bothered by you or me.

But there is spiritual warfare we're all engaged in.

But listen we are fighting from victory and not for victory. How? Because our King has already come back from the battlefield in triumph! He bore our sins, He died, He rose again, He ascended to the right hand of the Father.

The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom and access to God was laid open for us.

And you and I are in a warfare. We're in a battle, but we fight from the position of victory. We are not fighting for victory.

That's what is meant by pleading the blood. It's not a phrase you use; it's an understanding you have. Wherever I plead the blood of Christ, its a reminder that Satan nor his demons have any power or influence over me. Jesus disarmed them on the cross.

Notice who did all of this. It was Jesus. And what role did we play in this-nothing. We can't add, we can't improve on it.

Which is why v 16-17 are so important...

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, What we eat and the day of

the week we worship don't get us closer to God. We cross over from an eternity in hell to everlasting life only through the sacrifice of Jesus.

17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. All of the OT feast days and diet of Judaism were pictures of the work of Christ - symbols pointing to the Messiah

As Christians, we are of course to warn one another. Certainly you want someone around you that loves you enough to challenge you if you're sinning.

The Bible tells us Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

But that's not what it's talking about here.

It's talking about people judging in regards to legalism, and mysticism. They were laying these burdens on people saying if you really wanna be acceptable to God, you really need to have this feast, or worship this day.

Romans 14 1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or

falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord;^[fn] and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and rose^[fn] and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.^[fn]^[fn]

Look at the end of v 17 again 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. **SHOW PIC** What is a shadow? A shadow is a place where the light has been blocked. That's what a shadow is. **CLOSE PIC**

And when someone is trying to be more righteous by being legalistic, they're actually in the darkness. They're in a place where the light's not shining.

The substance is Christ. All of the Old Testament sacrifices at the morning and evening sacrifice, the lambs being slaughtered. The Passover feast, the blood of the Lamb, all of it, they were shadows, pointing to Jesus and His work on the cross.

So he says don't let anybody put all this stuff on you. That's all shadows of things to come. But the substance is Christ and you're complete in him.

18-19

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not^[fn] seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

V 16-17 deal with legalism, while verses 18-19 deal with mysticism. And here's the problem with all mysticism. It doesn't hold to the head, which is Christ. Mysticism pulls people away from Jesus

And every few years there's a new fad, a new thing, that blows through the church and can sweep Christians away when their not holding onto the Jesus.

Ephesians 4:14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Mysticism is divisive. Legalism is judgmental. Legalism divides b/c it makes people look down at each other. But remember, we're complete in Christ. We've been set free.

Mysticism comes then and tries to make people more spiritual and it causes division.

And there's all kinds of that still around today. Contemplative prayer, centering ourselves, all that stuff. Perhaps the biggest one today is the mysticism of the great big happy, all inclusive church-that we all worship the same God. They say it doesn't matter if you're Muslim or Jewish or Hindu or Buddhist. They say all roads lead to God.

For me personally the most terrifying verse in all the Bible is **Matthew 7:13** "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

All around us folks try to declare that all roads lead to God. They do, but to the Great White Throne judgment. You don't want to go there. **Revelation 20 11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's where all those roads go-but only one road leads to everlasting life in heaven. And the 1 road is through Jesus Christ. Jesus made it clear-**John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

And the tragedy is that those in religious, even Christian circles when they delve into mysticism they really don't understand what's happening to their faith, they get puffed up by their fleshly minds. And it all happens because they are not holding fast to the head.

Listen, it's Jesus Christ. If you have Him, you have everything. What more do you need?

I don't need to study all the blood moons, I don't need to look in the supposed hidden codes in the scriptures.

Over the years folks come to me, upset that I'm not doing enough to warn people about current events, with covid vaccines, and folks thinking Obama is the antichrist, warning about the elections.

And I understand where they are coming from-I have a microphone, and a limited position of influence.

But until the Lord tells me otherwise, I'm called to do that which Paul did **1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**

You wanna know how to vote-abide in Christ. You wanna know how to deal with your jerk of a boss-abide in Christ. Wanna know how to deal with social issues-abide in Christ

Jesus is enough-why search elsewhere?
Lets finish the chapter 20-23

20 Therefore,[fn] if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using— according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

I heard a story of a man who went to a monastery and took a vow of silence for a whole year in an attempt to grow closer to God. And at this monastery you're only allowed to speak 2 words once every year. He's there for a year and he came into the head monk that was running the monastery he used his 2 words and said. 'Food cold'.

The following year he said bed hard.

The following year he came back and he looked at the head monk. He said 'I quit.' And Headmonk said 'I'm not surprised-you ain't done nothing but complain since you got here!'

That's not a true story, by the way. But it makes the point that people think they're more spiritual because they take these vows and they're going to do this and do that.

Listen- we cannot improve our standing with God.

You wanna be a vegetarian-fine. You wanna eat meat-fine! But none of those things make you more spiritual. You wanna not have a christmas tree-fine! You wanna christmas tree-fine!

Listen the minute a person tries to improve their standing with God through things THEY do actually become an offense to the blood that was shed on the cross, because they're saying what Jesus did wasn't enough. Next week in chapter 3 it's gonna tell us now that we're in Christ, this is how we should live our lives, there's a natural outflow from all of this that's taken place.

This chapter is exhorting us to be careful what we believe, because we are established through the blood of Christ and the completed work that He did there on the cross for us.

You are in Christ, so you're complete. You've entered into that place and He has broken the carnal nature in your life. And you've entered into His death and resurrection. You are risen with Christ- you're a new creation. And it's all His doing-not us!

Lookout for legalism, because it sounds good. Legalism makes people sound like they're being more spiritual. We just read no, that's just shadows. That's a place where light is not shining. Christ is the substance.

Beware the modern mysticism out there. 5 years ago a survey revealed that 26% of surveyed Christians believed in their horoscope. The problem is they're not holding to the head.

Listen if you're holding onto Jesus, you got everything.

As we get ready to close let me take a moment and be very direct here so there's no misunderstanding on this topic.

See both legalism and mysticism mess with God's glory. Don't let anybody mess with it.

Because we can all be inclined to legalism, to try to earn God's favor. Then we become judgmental of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We can all be inclined to mysticism. Oh, did you read this new book? This is what this scripture really means.

In heaven's court our sin debt has been wiped away. The Father looks down on us, and he sees you and I with the very righteousness of Jesus Christ upon us. That's what He sees. You can't get better than that, and you can't improve on that.

Don't let anybody mess with that. It is the work of the cross.

God paid an unimaginable expense at heaven's cost to a father who watched his son suffer in your place and restrained himself.

And God the Father fired down all of His own holy wrath upon His Son to satisfy our sin debt, so that He could call you and me His own sons and his daughters.

Luke 23 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Luke 23 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

Careful what you believe, careful what and who you listen to.

Let's stand, let's pray.