

Col 2:1-10

Announcements

- **Halloween's** origins trace back to the **ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (Sahwin)**, a pagan celebration when Celts believed the boundary between the living and dead was thinnest, prompting rituals to ward off spirits... later mixed with **Roman Catholic festivals** (*All Hallows' Eve*), though pagan elements persisted (a time to honor saints and pray for the dead), and eventually influenced *All Saints' Day, the next day.*
- **Because of its origins and focus on the occult**, many Christians have historically been cautioned against participating, recognizing that it can subtly draw us toward practices contrary to God's Word. *ghosts, witches, and occult imagery*; Scripture calls us to **avoid practices rooted in darkness, fear, and occult imagery** (*Ephesians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:22*), and we should seriously consider whether celebrations centered on **death, witchcraft, and evil** glorify God or **expose our families—especially children—to spiritual harm...**
- At the same time, there is **also Christian liberty here** (*Gal. 5:1*): some believers choose to **redeem the evening through harvest festivals, or neighborhood engagement** as ambassadors of Christ's light in the darkness (*Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23*). Such moments **can be opportunities to shine His light** in a darkened world...
- **The key is discernment**—asking the Holy Spirit whether your participation honors God, edifies your conscience, and provides gospel opportunities, or whether it compromises your witness and glorifies darkness.
 - **Please pray about that as a family, and be intentional if you do participate.**

Please open to **Colossians Chapter 2** (need a bible? **Backs of chairs!**)

- **Last Time:** *Standing, Suffering, Stewards, Splendor, Straining (His Might) for the Gospel*
- **This Time:** **Avoid the traps of false religion** (*Philosophies (this), Legalisms (next)*)

Message Title: **Dangerous Deceptions**

- **Pastoral Perspectives** (verses 1-3)
- **Ripped-off or Rooted** (verses 4-7)
- **Kidnapped or Complete** (verses 8-10)

There were people in Colossae, **sophisticated false teachers** offering "*deeper*" spiritual experiences and "*higher*" knowledge. **Faith in Jesus was not enough.**

- **Greek mysticism** (gnosticism) & **Jewish legalism** - and even **a mashed up blend** of it all.
- Today's *church faces the same danger—deceptions that promise more but deliver less.*
 - *Fake news, email scams, conspiracies, algorithms, demonic agendas, WEF/WHO, etc*
 - **Even fake plants, or fruit!**
- **So, let's see how the Scriptures encourage us to fight against it all...**

Pastoral Perspectives (verses 1-3)

V. 1 - *For I want you to know*

- **For** = connects to previous passage. A **Hinge Word** back to **Col 1:29**

V. 1 - *What a **great conflict (struggle)** I have for you*

- The **struggle** is real. **Agony**. In **prayer and doctrine** specifically.
- **Have** is **present tense** = ongoing spiritual battles.
- **Ministry is often wrestling for the faith of others.**

V. 1 - And those in **Laodicea**

- **Sister cites**. **Map?** (Paul is not concerned only about the immediate circle, but the whole flock!)
- **Laodicea** = a church in the Book of Revelation, chapter 3. = **Lukewarm**

V. 1 - And for as many as have **not seen my face in the flesh** (seen me in person)

- Paul did not plant this church, nor has he visited.
- Reminds me of a **missionary: William Carey (picture)** who was a shoemaker in the late 1700's / early 1800's, who made a leather globe so he could pray for a world he could not see. Ultimately Carey's heart led him to India (40 yrs) as he became known as the "Father of modern missions"

V. 2 - That

- **That** = a term of purpose. Here's why Paul agonized in prayer.

[all three on one screen]

- (1) **Hearts are Encouraged**
- (2) **Knit Together in Love**
- (3) **Full Riches of Assurance**

V. 2 - Their **hearts may be encouraged**

- Strong hearts **leave no room for the devil**.
- **Heart** = central place of will and thinking and emotion.
 - Luke 6:45 - "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. **For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**"
 - Proverbs 4:23 - Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life.
- How's your heart today? Psalm 51 - create a clean heart in me O God, renew a steadfast spirit.

V. 2 - **Knit together** in love

- **United** like a beautifully woven fabric!
- **Aorist tense** - a time in the past when this happened. This is what happened to you all!
- **Passive voice** = something **God was enabling** in their lives
- **Love** = agape sacrificial love. A **new type of community**. Not dog eat dog. But others focused
 - **Rich Koinonia!** (no man left behind)

V. 2 - And **attaining to all riches** of the **full assurance of understanding**

- **Attaining to** is **"motion"** language. Paul is **praying directionally** for them - "Here's where I'd love for you to be moving towards" (parents understands this - teachers do to)
- **All Riches**: **abundance**. **Assurance**: **certainty**. **A wealth of certainty!** Isn't that what we want!
- **Understanding** = Bringing it all together. Connecting the dots (eyes to see and ears to hear)

Their unity came from **love**, but also from **truth!** (**both are needed!**)

V. 2 - To the knowledge of the mystery of God

- Resulting (to) is “motion” language again. Paul’s prayer is that they would “move towards...”
- Knowledge - epignosis = complete, precise, full knowledge! (in your face, Gnostics!)
- Mystery - previously hidden, now revealed to the saints.
 - What is it? Christ in you, the hope of glory!
 - (Gentiles too! = All the nations!)

V. 2 - Of Christ (some translations mention Father here too - but Focus is on Christ)

- Christ Himself (and no other!) - He is the source of all assurance, knowledge, understanding, and wealth of confidence. = All things are found in Him!
 - Are you confused or scared in this life? You need Jesus Christ = The answer!

V. 3 - In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- In whom = In Christ
- Treasures - Ooooh, treasure. Love it! We're like pirates!
- Knowledge (gnosis) = what can be known (like searching for answers on Google only to find conflicting advice, chasing worldly wisdom leads to confusion....)
 - Christ is the ultimate source. He is THE TRUTH (absolute moral truths)
- Wisdom (sophia) = what to do with that knowledge. How to live it out...
- The world does not have this treasure, but the church does! The world is looking in all the wrong places (self help, mystical experiences, etc), but we have the treasure map!
- It has been revealed to the saints! 1 Cor. 2:7-10 - “...the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory... but God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”
- Why read the Bible? To discover the “riches” of wisdom in Christ. Even just 10 minutes daily

It's more important than you realize. Dangers at every turn...

Ripped-off or Rooted (verses 4-7)

V. 4 - Now this I say

- Paul has just expressed his loving concern, now he enlarges (expands upon) what he means.
 - Don't be lured away from the glorious treasure in Christ. There's shiny stuff everywhere

V. 4 - Lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

- Deceive = delude, beguile or lead astray...
- Paralogizomai: para = beside + logizomai = logic/reason - “to place beside or alongside the truth or reasoning” - Forces and ideologies that want to rip you off from the TRUE WORD!
- Persuasive words = “to talk someone into something.” Fine sounding arguments. Truth and error can sometimes sound or appear the same, but one is a counterfeit!
 - Examples today: AI FOR SURE (videos, voice, etc) Propaganda news (legal scams - court case...)
- Outside of general traps, also worldview traps. Through big lofty smart sounding words

- Years ago, a Junior Higher won first prize at a Science Fair by showing how conditioned people are to believe anything labeled "science." In his project he urged folks to sign a petition demanding strict controls on the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." 86% of folks supported the ban... Only one person realized "dihydrogen monoxide" is another name for water. - people are dumb like sheep. And gullible.
- **Online influencers. YouTubers**. Modern day "internet learning" (witnessing it - hear about it all the time, as a pastor) - **Be very very careful...**
- It reads like the serpent in the garden deceiving Eve by his "cunning." Satan disguises as an angel of light. Seems enticing. "follow your truth" "manifest your destiny"
 - **Deshan (Northern India) - Bathroom, ha!**. God in you... All religions lead to God...
- 2 Timothy 4:2-4 - "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." (pastor, preach this, preach that. Entertain me. Don't challenge me or call me out. Make me feel good about myself. "Self help, prosperity" (politics too (both ways)))
 - **"Buffet Christianity"** where people church-hop until they find teaching that confirms their pre-existing lifestyle choices - **Algorithms will feed you this!**

V. 5 - For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit

- Paul was in Rome in prison, but his heart and spirit were with them **through prayer**.

(I really love the pictures Paul paints for us next of a solid Christianity)

- V. 5 - Military Order
- V. 6 - Pilgrimage
- V. 6 - A Rooted Tree
- V. 7 - A Strong Building
- V. 7 - Good Students
- V. 7 - A Flowing Fountain

V. 5 - Military Order

V. 5 - Rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- Rejoicing = present tense. Paul was **glad to hear they were standing strong**.
- Good order (taxis) = military discipline. Ranks, battle array, squadron posting.
- Steadfast (firm) (steroma) = solid like **a fortified wall**. Unchanging. Holding steady
 - The Christian life is not a playground, it's a battlefield.

Vv. 6-7 - Calvary Chapel JH verses from back in the day... (these verses meant a lot to me)

- These verses **still remain my prayer** for children's and youth ministries. And Discipleship

V. 6 - As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord

- Have received = A **true Christian community** standing there ground!
- Christ = Messiah (The anointed one - there are no others...) (OT prophecies)
- Jesus = Name (Yeshua) & person - (The name above all names - There is no other name!)
- The Lord = His supremacy over all (this is what we're confessing when converting)
- Who is Jesus? Matt 16 - Who do you say that I am? **Biggest question!**

- **All major religions** have something to say about Jesus. (islam, J-Dubs, Mormons, Hindus, Christian Science) (**Liar, Lunatic, Lord** - CS Lewis)
- If we walk in the true reality of "**Christ Jesus the Lord**" - we are in a **good battle array**!

More pictures...

V. 6 - A Pilgrimage

V. 6 - So **walk in Him**

- **Walk** = The way you're going and **path of life**. **Narrow or broad road?**
- **In Him** - is the **way/path/sphere/realm** of life for the saints.
 - **Received Christ Jesus as Lord** → Justification
 - **Walk in Him** → Sanctification
 - **Born, walk, run!**
- **Idea** = continue to walk with **Jesus as a way of life**.

V. 6 - A Rooted Tree

V. 7 - **Rooted**

- **Rooted** = an **agricultural word**. A rooted tree is **not chaff in the wind**. It's **stable**.
- Can **endure storms and bear fruit**. **After a hurricane**, trees standing are ones with **deep roots**.
- **Psalms 1, Jer 17, Isaiah 61** - **All planted strong trees**. **John 15** = **abiding in the vine** (roots)
- No longer **tumbleweeds or transplants** blown around by "**every wind of doctrine**" but **firmly rooted**. *Isn't that what we want for our youth? Isn't that what we want for ourselves?*
 - That's **my prayer for all of you**...

V. 7 - A Strong Building

V. 7 - And **built up in Him**

- **Built up** = an **architectural word**. **Progressive building. Layer by layer. Brick by brick**.
 - **Present tense** = **continual process**.
- **In Him** = Christ the **solid rock, the chief cornerstone, the firm foundation** on which we build.
- **V. 7 - Established in the faith**
- **Established** = **Similar to a firm foundation**, but is **a legal term meaning a firm guarantee**.
 - **Emotions fluctuate** up and down, but **doctrine anchors** fixed...
- **In the faith** = a **very specific location/sphere** = **THE faith IN Christ!** **Deshan is wrong**...

V. 7 - Good Students

V. 7 - As you **have been taught**

- **This phrase confirms** the **deep roots** and **firm foundation**. They were **taught, learned, received and grew** in the Gospel. **The Faith. In Him**. **Aorist Tense. This happened**. (**School of Tyrannus**)
- **Instructed/Taught (didasko)** = **systematic/expositional**, **formal or informal**.
 - **I.e synagogue teaching!** (**Luke 4 / Isaiah 61**) = **"as was His custom"** (**Luke 4:16**)
- Even if **church** is sometimes **basic or repetitive** - that's **a good thing**.
 - **If it's true it's not new, and if it's new, it's not true** - **Give me the old solid rock!**

V. 7 - A Flowing Fountain

V. 7 - **Abounding with thanksgiving**

- **Abounding** = *In the present tense = always overflowing*. Super abounding richly! Exceeding abundance! Picture *a river overflowing its banks (not a dried up creek)*
- **With thanksgiving** = **an attitude of gratitude**. 1 Thess 5:18 - "in everything give thanks" | Eph 5:20 - "give thanks always for all things"
- We **drink of the Lord** and *never thirst again* but then *out of us flows rivers of living water!*
 - And, **thankfulness is a good test of spiritual maturity**.
 - **Gratitude is an antidote to deception** as well.
 - **Discontented hearts** always "seek more" (is that you?)

The Progression: Deep roots → Solid structure → Grateful overflow

Yet *rather than remain in the truth* about Jesus, the **Colossian heretics collected a wide range of spiritual experiences** and incorporated them (*syncretism*). Similar to **people today that sample elements of various faith systems** to build *a worldview that suits their own desires*.

- *A buffet! A hodge podge of goulash.*

Kidnapped or Complete (verses 8-10)

Kidnapped. I *don't mean physical*, but **mental/spiritual**.

- The enemy is out to **hijack people's identities**. *A roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*

V. 8 - **Beware** lest anyone **cheat you**

- **Beware** = *watch out*. *Keep your head on a swivel*. **Don't be sleepy**. *It's high time to awake!*
- **Cheat you** = *take you captive*. **Kidnap**. *Carry off as spoil/plunder/booty... (app w free trial)*
 - **Indicative** = a *real, not hypothetical* danger. Taken **from freedom to slavery**.

Paul gives some descriptions of captivity:

- *Human Philosophy*
- *Empty Deception*
- *Manmade Traditions*
- *Elements of the World*

V. 8 - Through **philosophy**

- **Philosophy (philosophia)**: *Love of wisdom...* is *not inherently evil*. It's just **a worldview or way of thinking**. *Paul encountered philosophers and even quoted them (Acts 17: "Epicurean/stoic")*.
 - *Marxism, Socialism, Atheism, new age, even no king's day (silly) (worldviews!)*
- But when it's **human reasoning apart from divine revelation**, that's *a trap*
- **Galatians 1:8, CSB** - *"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!"*
- This **new spirituality** in Colosse was **steering believers away from simple faith** in Christ.
- **Modern Examples:**
 - **Postmodernism**: "Your truth isn't my truth" (no objective truth)
 - **Relativism**: "All religions lead to God" (all paths equally valid)
 - **Naturalism**: "Only material reality exists" (no spiritual realm)
 - **Humanism**: "Man is the measure" (self-deification)

V. 8 - And **empty deceit**

- **Empty and deceitful both describe the character of the philosophy.**
- **Empty (kenos) = devoid of truth. Vain. useless. Fruitless. False. No purpose. (no fulfillment)**
 - **Meinong's Jungle** - argued that because we can meaningfully talk about things that don't exist (unicorns, and round squares), they must have some kind of existence.
 - **Potatoism**: "Everything is, in essence, a potato."
 - **Is a hot dog a sandwich (ice rink)? Is cereal soup (Derek)? - those are fun...**
- **Deceit (apates) = delusion. Cheat. Beguile. Seducing by perversion.**
 - **Gibeonites (Joshua 9)** - Hivites in Canaan. Old wineskins, old sandals, old garments, moldy bread... (seem from far away). **It was a deception - Joshua fell for it!**
 - Talking to a pastor the other day about this: **Discernment in this day and age!**
- **Deception** - is that which **intentionally causes a person to believe something that is not true. (Gender ideology - satanic deception)**

Deception looks or feels authentic, otherwise we wouldn't be deceived. The enemy knows how to **"bait the hook"** so we might take it...

- **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** - "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness..."
 - **(be careful - mormonism)**

V. 8 - According to the **tradition of men**

- **Traditions** are **not bad if they are God given. Worship, Preaching, Communion. Baptism.**
- But when they are **"Traditions of men"** - they're of no use...
 - **Blessing the Cats** - In parts of France, there was a tradition of bringing cats to church to be blessed on the feast day of Saint Gertrude. **I can only imagine the chaos of dozens of cats in one sanctuary! Ha! Satanic!**
 - **The Pig Pilgrimage** (Medieval Europe): In some medieval towns, pigs were "arrested" and put on trial for crimes like eating crops.
 - **Jumping Over Babies** (Spain, El Colacho): Since the 1600s, in Castrillo de Murcia, Spain, men dressed as devils leap over rows of newborn babies laid on mattresses during a Catholic festival. It's supposed to cleanse the babies of original sin and scare off demons.
- **Kidding aside, this is also where people get hurt. (excessive Sabbath rules (Pharisees & Puritans (public shaming) "put in stocks for kissing his wife" (massachusetts 1700s)) / purgatory and indulgences (Catholicism))**
- **Man-made rules elevated to divine status (Greek Orthodoxy and Catholicism)**
- Just because **religious folks have believed something and handed it down** through the ages does **not necessarily make it true, godly, or right**. We must be **good Bereans** and ask is it **"according to the Scriptures"**?
- **Matthew 15:1-9, NIV** - "Some Pharisees... asked, 'Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?' ...Jesus replied, 'And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ...you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; **their teachings are merely human rules.**"'"

V. 8 - According to the **basic principles of the world**

- A **few possible meanings** here about the "**basic principles (elementary spirits)**"
 - **Elementary sounds/letters: ABC's** (letters, numbers, or troops, in order, single file)
 - **Basic universal elements: water, fire, etc** (basic building blocks of matter, such as atomic and subatomic particles)
 - **Spiritual entities: astrologies, angels, etc** (Astrology was the queen of the sciences, always consulting the stars...) - **Zodiac and horoscope warnings, even enneagram**)

V. 8 - And **not according to Christ.**

- **This is the point.** Satan **kidnaps good theology** and **twists it a little.** **Angel of Light...**
- **Christ Himself** is the **source, head and ruler** of it all. **Don't allow yourself to be kidnapped.**

V. 9 - For **in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**

- **For** = **because...**
- **In Him** - **fronted** = **in Christ and no one else.**
- **Pleroma tes Theotetos** = "All the fullness of Deity (the state of being God)" **This is as clear as it gets! All of God is found in Christ Jesus.** Not half n half. Not 90%. **100% God.**
- The **very essence of God and all His attributes** are found in the **person of Jesus Christ!**
 - Someone tell the **Jehovah's witnesses** about **THIS VERSE!**
- **Bodily (In bodily form)** = **not symbolically. Not mystically. Actual physical body.**
- God **took on human flesh.** Jesus is **not a lesser being, or phantom, or mere emanation...**
 - **Docetism:** claimed Jesus had no actual human body, only "appeared" to have one.
 - **Cerinthianism:** "Jesus the man" was separate and distinct from "the Spirit of Christ."
 - **Richard Rohr (on the Oprah show in 2015)** - distinguish Jesus (the historical man) from a "Universal Christ" that he claims is present in all of creation.

Friends, why dig into **empty philosophies** or **man-made traditions** of this world, when we have the **fullness of God in Christ!?**

- **Why drink from polluted puddles and empty cisterns, when you have a flowing river!?**
- **Look no where else!**

But, wait, there's more...

V. 10 - You are **complete in Him**

- **In Him** is **fronted again for emphasis.** **In Christ, and no one, or nothing else,** are you **complete and fulfilled** in **this life** and **the life to come.**
- **Complete (pleroo)** = **lacking nothing.**
- **Perfect passive.** It **HAS happened.** And **you didn't make yourself complete (that's a false lie!)**
- **In Him** = the **sphere in which completion happened (union with Christ)**
 - **In Him, every spiritual blessing is ours** (Ephesians 1:3)
 - **In Him, we have everything we need for life and godliness** (2 Peter 1:3)
- **Shalom (wholeness)** Psalm 23 = **sufficiency of God as our shepherd, fulfilled in Christ.**
 - **The world is empty and deceitful, but in Christ there is fullness of shalom!**

V. 10 - Who is the **head of all principality and power (rule and authority).**

- Oh yeah, and BTW, Jesus is the **main and final boss**. *He's in charge of.... Let me think... everything!*
- **Head (kephale)** — *source and authority over every power that exists*
- There is *no force, philosophy, god, power, ruler, angel, or being* that is **mightier than or above in position** than **our Lord Christ Jesus**. *In your face, Gnostics!*
- **Is (estin)** is **present tense** portraying **Christ's continual Lordship**. The *indicative mood* emphasizes that this is **an actual (not hypothetical) reality**. *(The Bible is not shy about it!)*
- **All (pas)** means *without exception*
 - *(share message of Benin Africa - Hindus need that too (Nepal))*
- *Eph 1:21 - "[Christ is] far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." - Amen!*

Closing:

Church, **the dangers are real**. *False teachers are sophisticated. Cultural deceptions are appealing.*

- The *enemy studies each generation*, looking for openings.
- **Paul's pastoral heart** points us to being *rooted and complete in Christ*.
- You are **complete in Christ**. *The dangers are real. Stay vigilant.*

The Invitation:

- *For those being deceived*: Come back to **Christ alone**.
- *For those standing firm*: **Stay rooted. Keep building**.
- *For those who've never received Christ*: This **completeness is available to you today**.
 - *Plead with the souls of men...*

PRAY