

“Let Go of The World” - Colossians 2:16-23 12.1.2019

Good morning! Just to re-emphasize a few things from the announcement video. Please remember that we will have ushers at the doors as you leave the service to take up the Gideon offering. This offering will be taken up today and next Sunday. Our goal is \$4000.

This Wednesday begins our celebration of Christmas, called “Here Comes Heaven” and we encourage you to be here and to invite people. Christmas is or at least should be on the of the easiest times to witness to people about the Gospel and to invite people to Church. Let’s prepare ourselves to truly worship that God came to earth to save us from our sins.

Turn in your Bibles to Colossians Chapter 2 and we will be looking at verses of 16 through 23. As you are turning, I want to reiterate the purpose behind the writing of this letter. There has been a group of false teachers that have come in and have brought all kinds of different false teachings that pertain to salvation and living a life honoring to God. That attack by Satan has not stopped and he is still trying to blur and deceive people from knowing the truth that pertains to all of life. We have used this picture as a depiction to give us a visual of this several times.



The word here is False and it is hard to see the word true until we red it out and it becomes very clear.



That is the case. We have all truth through Scripture. The Bible is the authority on truth in all aspects of life. Do you believe that? Do you believe we have all the truth we need pertaining to life, death, sin, salvation and how we should live in God’s Word? May I encourage or challenge each of us today to then, “Just Live It!”

Nike has their, “Just Do It”, well today, I have our “Just Live It” as it pertains to the truth of God’s Word. That is what the Apostle Paul is telling these believers and lost people in Colossae to do. ***Let’s read our Scripture reference for today.***

Colossians 2:16-23

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. ²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

I want us to be reminded today of where Colossae is. Look at this map that we have used several times.



You can locate Colossae by coming down from the “F” at the top. Colossae was located in what is called the Lycus valley and it was part of a great trade route and was a very wealthy and influential city among the other cities like Ephesus, Laodicea and Perga. In the city of Colossae was a large Jewish population. But, also because of the trade from the Eastern part of the world, there was an influence from what we would call Eastern religions that were more mystical and ascetic of what we will talk about soon.

But we begin again from the false teaching that the Judaizers were trying place on the Jews and the Gentiles that have repented of their sins and surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at verse 16 and 17 again.

Colossians 2:16-17

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Once again, we see the word, “Therefore”, and when we see that word, we must look at what was established in the verses previously. These false teachers were telling these saved Gentiles that they had to be circumcised to be saved. And in the same breath telling these saved Jews they still had to follow the Jewish law. But Paul made it very clear that it is not “Jesus Plus Something!”

To quickly review from verses 9 to 15, that it was not a physical circumcision but it was a spiritual circumcision of the heart as They, You, Me are convicted of our sins and through repentance of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To take us from a path to Hell, that our hard sinful hearts was taking us to, to a new life in Jesus Christ.

Quickly turn to Ezekiel 36 and we are going to read verses 25-27. To me this is one of the greatest portions of Scripture that describes salvation. Now, this is the prophet Ezekiel calling the Jewish nation to repentance and to come back to God. Look at these verses:

Ezekiel 36:25-27

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Salvation is a complete work of God in our heart taking us from being dead in our trespasses and being made alive in Jesus, to live Holy, to be used to bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. So, look at verses 16 and 17 again.

Colossians 2:16-17

16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

What we find out is that these false teachers are not just telling these Gentiles that they must be circumcised to be saved but are even talking about following the Jewish feasts. Now there are 7 primary feasts that the nation of Israel, Jews, followed that were ordained by God for them to follow as the law was given to Moses.

Look at this list:

THE SEVEN JEWISH FEASTS	
Symbolic Feasts and Key Correlations of Messiah	
These are shadows of the things that were to come, the reality, however, is found in Christ	
SPRING FEASTS	FALL FEASTS
Passover - Unleavened Bread - First Fruits - Pentecost	Trumpets - Day of Atonement - Tabernacles
Exodus 12:1-11 - Leviticus 23:1-10 - Numbers 28:16-25 - Deuteronomy 16:1-10	Leviticus 23:24-32 - Leviticus 16:1-14 - Leviticus 23:33-36
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33
Exodus 12:1 - Leviticus 23:1 - Numbers 28:16 - Deuteronomy 16:1	Leviticus 23:24 - Leviticus 16:1 - Leviticus 23:33

Now, I am one of the crazy people that enjoys reading Leviticus. One, because it is God's Word and we are able to study the feasts and see that these all pointed to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the feast of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement.

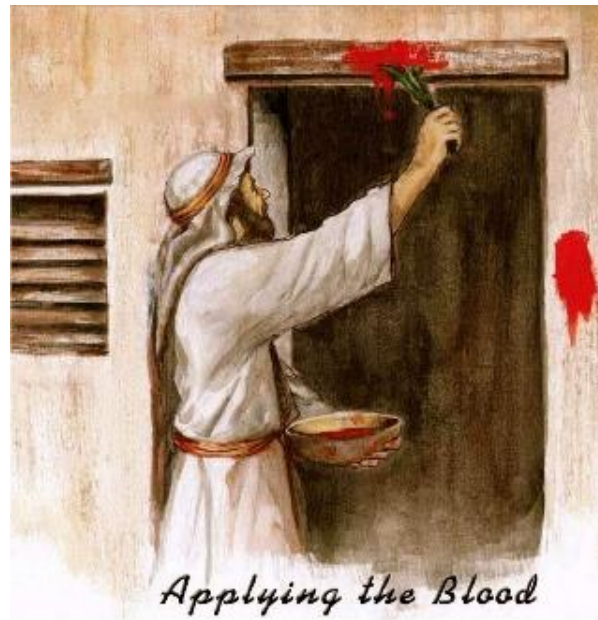
We are not going into detail but will look at three of these briefly. These feasts were given so that the Jewish nation could recognize the Messiah, the Savior when he came. Look how they are described in verse 17.

Colossians 2:17

17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

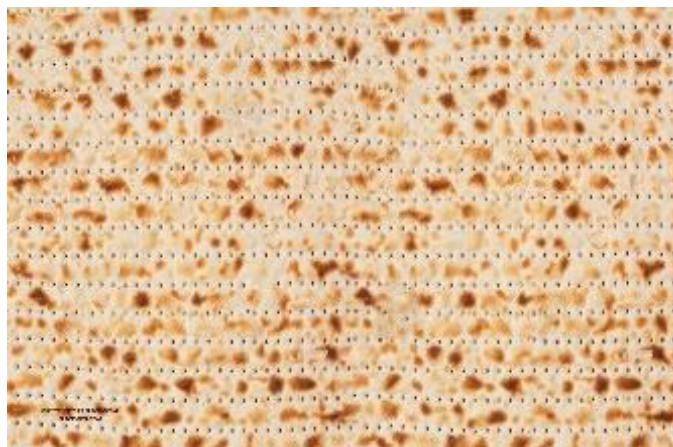
How are they a shadow? Well, let's take the first three. Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits.

On the first Passover what did the Jews kill and eat? A lamb, spotless and without blemish! What did they do with the blood of the lamb?



They were told to put the blood on the doorposts so the death angel would pass by.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread started the next day. Why unleavened? First, it recognizes their departure from Egypt. They had to be prepared to leave quickly!



Also, because leaven was recognized with sin, death, evil and they would eat unleavened bread for seven days to show a holy walk with the Lord. Seven – sign of completion of perfection.

Then on that Sunday they had the Feast of First Fruits.



They would bring a sheaf of their wheat and bring it to the Priest and he would wave it before the Lord in worship in praise of the Lord for their blessings of the Spring crop and recognizing that all is new and there is new life coming forth.

So how are they a shadow? Well, let's first describe a shadow! Is a shadow the real thing? No, it is an image of what is real. What did John the Baptist say when Jesus approached him at the Jordan River? **“Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**

How did Jesus accomplish that we could have forgiveness for our sins? By shedding his blood! Was Jesus sinless? *1 Peter Chapter 2:22 – He committed no sin, neither was there any deceit found in his mouth!* There was no leaven in him. Jesus died and he was buried. Then three days later, Sunday, he rose from the dead! Remember what we learned in connection with Baptism last week? Buried with Jesus in Baptism, dying to ourselves, but being raised to walk in newness of life, Romans Chapter 6.

What did Jesus come to do in relation to the law? Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but he came to fulfill it! All these festivals were a shadow a picture of the Messiah, of Jesus Christ. There, all the substance relies in him. *For in him the fullness of all deity dwells in him bodily!*

So what Paul is reiterating here once again, is that salvation is not Jesus plus something else, it is not Jesus plus Judaism, which would include the feasts, it is not Jesus plus circumcision, it is not Jesus plus anything. A true spirituality, a true wisdom, a true salvation comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by repenting of your sins, deny yourself, taking up your cross daily and following Jesus Christ!

But these Judaizers were not the only false teachers in Colossae. Paul warns of other false teaching. Look at verse 18.

Colossians 2:18

¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

What is asceticism? Asceticism is basically the belief that if you deny yourself of basic worldly things that you will be able to reach a spiritual height in your life. We see this kind of lifestyle primarily within Hinduism and Buddhism.

It is described as a form of humility but what comes out of it is pride because, it says, “Look at me!” May I say, that any type of so-called worship that glorifies the worshipper above the one that should be worshipped is not worship at all! It is pride!

Look at the screens and listen to these words from Psalm 51.

Psalm 51:16-17

¹⁶For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God. You will not despise.

What was happening? This Psalm relates to when the Prophet Nathan confronted David about his adultery he committed with Bathsheba. David came to the temple for a year and offered sacrifices to the Lord but had not repented of the sin he had committed. We can bring that type of worship also. God rejects that type of worship. In Matthew 15:8 Jesus confronts the people that they worship with their lips, but their hearts are very far from him. That is a quote from Ezekiel 33:31

Not only asceticism but we see in verse 18 that there was a mysticism aspect to this false teaching.

Colossians 2:18

¹⁸Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.

Worshiping angels. Which is forbidden in Scripture! In Matthew Chapter 4 what did Jesus tell Satan when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness to bow down before him. “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve!” We see throughout Scripture that the angels worship God, so why would we worship them.

As we continue to look at this verse, we see that there is this almost elitism described here. It is talking about visions, that they have the spiritual elitism if you will and they are more intelligent because of all these other outside indicators, of how spiritual they are. But look how they are described. They have a sensuous mind. Which really means a fleshly mind! They are using human wisdom, human philosophy. And this is described in verses 21 to 23.

²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

These verses refer back to all we have talked about. The legalism through Judaism, the asceticism, the mysticism and the elitism of thinking how they are so much smarter than the rest of everyone. Look at verse 22 again. It says this is just human thinking! Though it is passed off as wisdom it is a false wisdom. We talked about that on Wednesday from James. When James was contrasted True Wisdom and False Wisdom. A false wisdom creates its own little world and it wants control over everything and it is critical of anyone that may question reason or motive. It’s all about them it has selfish ambition and bitter jealousy. Paul says there is no value in this.

It’s as if these false teachers were saying. “You actually believe that salvation is just through Jesus?” “You believe that Jesus is all sufficient for salvation?” Yes! Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life! They have forgotten that, they continue to reject that truth and Paul shows us this in verses 19 and 20.

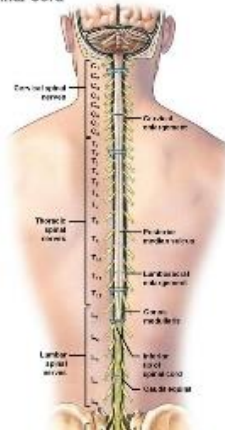
Colossians 2:19-20

¹⁹ And not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. ²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations.

In verse 18 Paul says that these false teachers have become puffed up, prideful! They are reaching out for everything else. They are listening to everyone and every philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition as quoted from verse 8 in this Chapter.

They are not reaching out to the Head. Of course, this is a reference to Jesus and the relationship between a saved person and the Church with Jesus Christ. But the analogy is a great one. You know this physical body can not function without the head. Look at this picture. I hope it does not gross you out.

Anatomy of the Spinal Cord



It is from the brain that impulses are sent throughout our body, through our spinal column and to our extremities and to our inner organs so we can function. It is through the ligaments and joints that our body is held together. Smile! Put your right hand in! Take your right hand out!

And so, it is with Jesus, when it pertains to salvation and the growth of becoming a mature Christian and the growth of the Church. Turn over to Chapter 1 verses 15 to 20.

Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

As Jesus as our Head. We should not do anything outside of his leading and his direction. Now with the physical body there is nothing we can do without the head. But we can do a lot without obeying Jesus. That is clear in what we have been studying today. And it is only through this Word that we can hold together! It is only through his Word can we be obedient! It is only through his Word that we can grow! The Bible is our authority and it is through the Bible that God reveals himself to us and how we can truly know him.

So, Paul asks this question of his listeners and I ask this of you today. Looking back at verse 20.

Colossians 1:20

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations.

Paul says, if you have died with Christ to all these false religions and false teachings, “Why do you still have hold of the world?” Let Go Of The World!! Let go of man’s teachings and the world wisdom that comes from man made religions. What the Word of God is saying is don’t let external works of legalism and mysticism restrict or define your relationship with God.

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Now, I am not saying there are not things that we should deny ourselves of. There is one thing that should restrict our freedom in Christ and that also comes from Romans Chapter 14 and 15. That, if what we eat or drink will cause a brother or sister in Christ or someone considering repenting of their sins and giving their life to Christ to stumble. That should be at the forefront of our mind.

If you consider drinking and partying on the weekend no big deal, then you are following the elemental spirits of the world. If you are in a sexual relationship that is outside the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman you are following the elemental spirits of the world. If you are prideful and you have this spiritual elitism about yourself and everything must be focused on you, then you are following the elemental spirits of the world. I could go on and on! But you are probably saying, Dale, you sure are being negative today.

Maybe, but I, to you, like Paul was to the believers in Colossae. If you are professing that you have died to the elemental spirits of the world. Then “Just Live It”, and I will encourage you now in correlation to the following verse. Galatians 2:20 says:

Galatians 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I know live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Listen to me! If you hear anything else today, please listen to this. Jesus is enough! 2 Peter 1:3 says, ***His(Jesus) divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.***

Let Go Of The World! You have died to it! And if you are professing to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through repentance and faith in Jesus. JUST LIVE IT!