

Colossians 2:16-23

Combating Heresy

Reckoning it So! Holding fast to the Supremacy of Christ.

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Reckoning it So! Holding fast to the Supremacy of Christ.
Col. 2:16-23

Warren Wiersbe had this to say about this passage:

"Sad to say, there are many Christians who actually believe that some person, religious system, or discipline can add something to their spiritual experience. But they already have everything they ever will need in the person and work of Jesus Christ."

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Reckoning it So! Holding fast to the Supremacy of Christ.
Col. 2:16-23

"Man's way of safeguard is by placing various restraints and negations of evil ... God's way is by 'stripping off the body of the flesh' through death and resurrection with Christ, giving us a new life, a new nature, and a continual flow of nourishment for that new life direct from the Risen Head in Heaven." *Lincoln, p. 35.

* Lincoln, William. *Lectures on the Epistles to the Colossians*. P.35, Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie, n. d.

Where we left off . . .

Last week, we considered Col. 2:6,7 as a summary statement of the supremacy of Christ that Paul had presented in the first chapter of Colossians.

And we stated our simple understanding of that statement as: - *“in view of the supremacy of Christ and the Colossians’ acceptance of His completed work on their behalf have already obtained every thing that one needs for life and service to Christ!”*

Moreover, these passages should be considered as the foundation upon which one must reference their life and service to Christ - especially in resisting heretical teaching. We then examined Paul’s exhortations in Col.2:8-15 against ‘vain philosophy’ that the Colossians were facing.

In closing out this doctrinal section of his letter, Paul reveals in some detail the kinds of heresy that the Colossians have been susceptible to.

Now, let's look at today's passage - Col. 2:16-23!

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Colossians 2:16-17 (ESV): Legalistic Religious Warnings

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.

v.16 - Describe how this can still happen today.

How would you describe what v.17 means?

(Heb. 10:1-4; 9:11-14)

The shadow is not the substance!
Christ is the substance from which the shadow is cast!
Christ is the only one to whom we must look,
because He is our redeemer and judge.

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Colossians 2:18-19 (ESV): Legalistic Religious Warnings

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.

What do you see are at least 3 errors of these false teachers?

What is asceticism?

Asceticism includes false humility, self-denial, self-abasement, and practices of abstinence of sensual pleasures and material possessions in order to earn favor with God

What do you think ‘holding fast to the Head’ should look like?

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Dangers and Potential deceptions

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.

Describe where/how Asceticism can happen today.

In what ways can fasting be considered Asceticism?

Do you see any dangers for Christians who practice any of the spiritual disciplines such as: prayer, Bible reading, service, stewardship, worship, or fellowship?

If so, describe.

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Dangers and Potential deceptions

Colossians 2:20-22 (ESV)

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?*

A number of scholars consider 'the elemental spirits of the world' to include some required or expected external and physical acts.

What 'expected external and physical acts' do you see in our culture today?

Which of my own 'acts' are directed and motivated via the Holy Spirit?

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The deceptions of the 'appearance of wisdom'

Colossians 2:23 (ESV)

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.

*What are some self-made practices that seem wise
but may have questionable motives?*

*In what ways can submitting to these things corrupt the development of a
person's Christ-like character?*

Christ is the one and only redeemer and sanctifier

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)

*⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to His mercy He saved us,
through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

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Warren Wiersbe
Col. 2:20

Warren Wiersbe had this to say about this passage:

“When we make Jesus Christ and the Christian revelation only part of a total religious system or philosophy, we cease to give Him the preeminence.

When we strive for ‘spiritual perfection’ or ‘spiritual fullness’ by means of formulas, disciplines, or rituals, we go backward instead of forward. Christian believers must beware of mixing their Christian faith with such alluring things as yoga, transcendental meditation, Oriental mysticism, and the like.

*We must also beware of ‘deeper life’ teachers who offer a system for victory and fullness that bypasses devotion to Jesus Christ. In all things, He must have the preeminence!”**

*Tom Constable, (Galaxie Software, 2003), Col 2:20.

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Final Exhortations

Beware of striving in your own wisdom and strength in order to be more spiritually acceptable to God; for Christ has already made you acceptable through His completed work on the Cross!

Instead, strive to be more and more occupied with Christ letting the “light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” transform you into Christ-likeness.

(2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4b; Rom. 8:29)

A Godly friend of mine use to always say:

*Do not - **try, try, try** ; instead - **trust, trust, trust!***