

King Over Our Worship
Colossians 2:16-23
Sunday, June 21, 2020

Introduction

- The pride of my early days
- Matt and me – “discussions” that were actually just venting sessions.
- Self-righteous, prideful, demanding in terms of what a life devoted to Christ looks like.
- Stayed internal for a while, but then eventually began to bleed over into my life and hurt others.
- Of course I still slip into this and need to remain watchful, but I realized early on that I truly need a King over my worship. → I'm a bad judge
- If left up to me, I would always be righteous and everyone else would always fall short.

Worship = unceasing outpouring

Colossians written to encourage believers and confront false doctrine.

As we will see, both are exhibited here.

Last week we talked about what true freedom looks like -
its foundations, the world's fraudulent freedoms,
the fullness and finality of the freedom offered in Christ

- This is almost a part one and part two.
- This week we are looking at what devotion to Christ looks like in light of this freedom
And how right worship fuels further freedom. ↻

False Worship Chases Shadows, True Worship Chases Substance

Colossians 2:16-17

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

Scenario of judgement (salvific) based on adherence to various religious practices
Pushing Jewish observances – Food and drink / festival, new moon / Sabbath

Features of shadows

They exist because the source object exists
They bear strong resemblance to the object itself
They can even be used to lead back to the source object
But they are not the substance itself.

Paul here is saying that the Colossians should not let anyone judge their salvation or holiness based on adherence to the wrong things
Over commitment to the shadow instead of the substance is an empty exercise; it's a win in the wrong game.

Basketball – more gear, usually not as good.
More free throws, less Foot Locker...

→ These lessons in worship must always be applied to ourselves first.

The temptation in these types of sermons is to look around and see all the ways people are failing.
We need to look at ourselves first, then perhaps we can look at the church as a whole.

Look very carefully at the things you are devoting yourself to – do they roll back up to Christ?

Or are you finding too much purpose and honor in the thing itself?

This is hard – even good things can become objects of our worship aside from Christ →

Are you judging or disqualifying others based on peripheral things?

*the above elements
given as gifts.*
BASED IN SUBSTANCE
OR SHADOWS?

False Worship Produces Pride, True Worship Produces Growth

Colossians 2:18-19

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, 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.

- Again, let no one disqualify your salvation on your holiness based on false things:
 - Asceticism – false displays of humility
- Worship of angels, detailed accounts of visions, puffed up (proudful) without reason in carnal minds
 - However: Not holding fast to the Head, which is Jesus.

Intentional “holding fast” to Jesus means the body is blessed with a growth from God himself, a growth consisting of connection and nourishment.

①
② **When we aren't holding fast to Jesus, we lose sight of who we are in him and it becomes far too easy to judge others based on the object of false worship.**

Because we have devoted so much of ourselves to our own image, our own self-perceived holiness, our own aspects of worship, our own visions, we deem these most important and we get prideful because of them. **And then, unfortunately, we begin to tie these things up with Jesus, and then all of a sudden, we begin to look just like the religious elites of the day – judging others based on a bunch of things that matter, but don't matter nearly as much as devotion to Christ.**

~~Do we judge others based on how they hold fast to Jesus, but didn't hold fast to Jesus himself? Friends based on what they do vs. friends based on who they are.~~

Getting gear over
Getting good

These lessons in worship must always be applied to ourselves first. It's far too easy to cherry pick everyone else's failures in this – and guess what? That makes us puffed up! We are doing this exact thing when we look to critique each other before we look at ourselves.

The plank in your own eye before the speck in the eye of the other.

· **Two things to watch for in ourselves to see if we are holding fast to Christ – pride and growth.**

Pride is the root of so many other sins.

We believe we deserve something, so we do whatever it takes to get it
Or we envy others who have it and covet what they have.

And in this context, it is so easy to build ourselves up in our spiritual lives based on peripheral things because we are insecure in our relationship with Christ.

The knowledge we have, the lives we lead, the amount of times since we last sinned in that area...

What makes this tricky is that these are good things and we should aspire to them, but we must remember that every good and perfect gift comes from above – it is not something we have earned.

① Growth should not puff us up, but should lead us to further worship of the Head, from whom all growth comes.

If we aren't growing, perhaps we are not holding fast.

· **We need to be constantly monitoring pride and growth in our lives.**

① **The more we qualify ourselves and others based on the peripheral, the more prideful we become and the less we grow.**

② **The more we hold fast to Christ, the more humility is grown in us and the more we grow in the fruit of the spirit.**

Devo to peripheral =
more pride
Devo to Jesus =
more humility

False Worship Brings Death with Demands, True Worship Bring Life with Liberty

Colossians 2:20-22

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 – “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are being used) – according to human precepts and teachings?

- Paul here is reminding the Colossians of their positional freedom and what this freedom means.
- As we saw last week, through our faith in Christ, his death became our death, his life our life.
- Meaning – through faith in him we have received our righteousness from him alone, not anything else.
 - This is foundational to our new identity and new life in Christ.

· **So Paul is asking a logical question – if that is true, why are you so concerned with adhering to these traditions?**

- These were likely regulations around food and drink, as mentioned earlier – “to remain holy, don’t eat this, etc.”
 - If you have tasted and seen the freedom purchased for you in Christ, why are you submitting to other regulations to make yourself more righteous?

Adolescent peer pressure – the raw desire to fit in without the self-awareness and personal conviction.

There is a demand to fit in with certain crowds – you need to be like us in all these ways.

Why am I doing these things to fit in? Do I even like these things? Do they really reflect who I am?

This continues into adulthood unfortunately – and people waste years accumulating to fit in with others.

· Paul adds another interesting note towards the end of these verses:

- The things that these religions and philosophies are so concerned about are passing away, just like the people who insist you adhere to them.

· And listen – of course following Christ requires obedience.

· We don’t just get to do what we want all the time.

· But the main difference is the reason we adhere to the law of Christ.

· **Are we doing so to lift ourselves up and bring merit to our existence and efforts?**

· **Or do we do them out of humble submission as our desires and affections are changed by the gospel?**

(**Sometimes the delight follows discipline, but delight is not sustained by discipline alone.**)

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

False Worship Looks Fancy, True Worship Brings Freedom

Colossians 2:23

These indeed have 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.

Paul here is acknowledging truth – devotion to the exterior life of the believer does make you look good.

You do look wise and knowledgeable.

You do look humble and you do look like a sacrificial person.

You will likely be admired on the outside both in the church and without.

But what you will be lacking is the ability to actually lead the life you are called to in Christ.

What benefit does the appearance of a holy life provide if there is nothing in it?

And this fullness, this substance in Christ, is not just something we seek to attain based on principle alone.

It's not just about being a good Christian.

It is because in him we are given strength to face the temptations of the opposition.

It is because in him we are changed – our indulgent desires are replaced with righteous ambition.

Our spiritual cowardice and apathy are replaced with Spirit-filled competency and sacrifice.

If you are in Christ, deep, deep down you desire to be free from the ties that bind you.

Free from the passions of your flesh.

Free from being a slave to what feels good.

Deep, deep down you desire to be used in the hands of a mighty God.

Deep down you want your life to count, to make a difference in the lives of others.

Deep down, you want to reciprocate the sacrifice of Christ with a life of your own sacrifice.

Not out of guilt or obligation, but because you know, you've tasted, that this life is the one worth living.

The world keeps telling you to live for yourself, and we waver in between worlds, never fully satisfied in either.

So we settle for half-hearted adherence to both,

and the most pleasure we get is the affirmation of others, so we posture.

When deep down, there is an adventure of freedom, free from indulgence of the flesh, that beckons.

Friends, family, will you answer this call today?

Will you stop trying to make yourself look so good before God and others

And instead worship fully the God who desires to free you?

You have no power in yourself. Let him be strong for you.

Conclusion

India – worship all night.

**When you make Jesus the object of your heart's affections,
it's amazing how little we need and how much he supplies.**

Revelation – Heavenly picture of worship – all people, all nations, praising God together.