

## Colossians 2:16-19

- 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.**

This passage and next few weeks answers the question:

**Now that I'm a Christian what does it means to follow Jesus?**

And last week we all learned what Jesus did for us.

Stuff we could never do. Only, he could do.

Its amazing stuff.

New Christians are fun to be around b/c everything is so fresh and real and raw.

They are passionate, ready to live and die for him.

Ready to take the Gospel to the world!!! [Awesome!!!]

This happens with every new disciple and every new church.  
It's exciting and intoxicating.  
Everything seems possible ...  
This desire for "more of Jesus" is palpable.

**We realize when we are saved there is so much more of Jesus to grow into.**

**That is the "Growth that comes from God" that this passage is talking about.**

**But the question is how?**

**And that is what the next few weeks are going to answer.**

**How does God grow you personally AND us as a church?**

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that grows from a speck into one of the biggest trees in the garden.

That metaphor is a picture of following Jesus.

We don't get saved and then nothing changes.

We wouldn't want that ... we intrinsically know there is a lot in us and our churches that need to change.

**Addiction folks understand this best, and they have this simple axiom that is so true: “If nothing changes ... nothing changes.”**

And we are being changed ...

God, the Holy Spirit, is at work in us making us more like Jesus as we yield to His will.

**But in this particular passage of following Jesus we aren’t given positive instruction on how to yield to the Holy Spirit’s work.**

**We are given warnings about things that could disrupt God’s work.**

See, anything we pursue with a passion has pitfalls.

**Why? B/C you and me are ... well ... “you and me.”**

**Golfing (not my expertise). Start swinging ... most people pick up bad form along the way.**

**Means they will never reach their full potential as a golfer. [frustration at best / give up the game at worst].**

**Similarly, there are pitfalls along the way in following Jesus.**

That is what this passage is telling us to watch out for.

**It's like Tiger Woods [old school] looking at our golf swing and saying ... adjust here ... stop doing that ...**

Holy Spirit is speaking ... we would be foolish not to listen.

**Why?**

**B/C these pitfalls can make us cynical/frustrated/angry at best; and it can lead us to tap out at worst.**

**So ... One of the big pitfalls is that we let people judge our Christianity by a false standard.**

**Instead we should ...**

**Let Jesus be our judge.**

**Colossians 2:16**

**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.**

## STORY:

- This happened at a church years ago ...
- Man hit me up in lobby ...
- we aren't doing communion right b/c our bread is leavened and Jesus used unleavened bread. [PAUSE]
- We weren't following the rules closely enough for him ... so he went to another church ... this man had followed Jesus for years.

70's and 80's it was a sign of spiritual maturity in certain Christian circles to not have a TV or watch certain shows.

**I know b/c I'm still not fully healed from He-Man and G.I. Joe being banned at my house.**

Christians pass judgment over stupid stuff ALL THE TIME.

**"I can't believe so-and-so watches "that show.""**

**"I can't believe that church doesn't serve coffee."**

**[that would be how I would pass judgment on a church]**

We went to church on vacation and I found myself wrestling to keep Jesus as the focus b/c they did things different to us. [none of it big deal stuff]

It wasn't there problem ... problem was in my heart.

See, I like to put myself in the place of being the judge.

We all have that in us.

And we also are susceptible to submitting ourselves to the judgment of others.

**B/C really what we are looking for is control and approval.**

And that never takes us to a good place.

**We either become part of the in crowd who are morally superior jerks. [Controlling]**

**OR we become slavish outsiders who are trying to earn the acceptance of men. [Approval]**

The problem is that we are diminishing Jesus when we do this.

We don't believe his judgments are best. So we look to ourselves or others.

We don't believe his approval is all we need. So we seek it elsewhere.

At the heart of this is our own insecurity in God's promises as well as our desire to be in control ...

**Everyone wrestles with finding security in Jesus and all he did. [me too] ...**

**But growth from God means we grow in letting go of that desire to earn our salvation.**

**Let Jesus be the one who qualifies us.**

**Colossians 2:18**

**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,**

It doesn't matter how spiritual the person seems ... or how devoutly rigid they are with their religious practice.

Their works and words don't add or change any part of your salvation.

Go back and listen to Alan's sermon last week.

**Jesus won the victory! ... all of it!**

**He is the one who qualifies us!**

The Bible says there is now no more condemnation.

There is not a person or power in the universe that can adjust what Jesus has done.

And there are earnest people / and there are devils / who want to convince you otherwise.

**The beginning of that verse, “Let no one disqualify you” is a bit of an odd phrase in Greek.**

It's an idiom that doesn't translate well.

But the picture it gives us is like a sportsman being cheated out of victory by the umpire.

**Which is always the case when our team loses, right! [refs were paid off]**

That's what happens when we let others convince us that Jesus' work isn't enough.

They act like an umpire that keeps calling a ball a strike.

They are trying to snatch you out of Jesus' victory.

And it's done in a clever way.

It's not saying go out and steal or have an affair.

It's the subtle slippery slope of trusting in the outward appearance.

It can also be making the unimportant things the most important things.

Instead of ... you never know if/when you entertain an angel (Hebrews) ... it becomes a preoccupation of angel hunting ...

Got to see an angel ... got to have a vision.

But these things don't make us righteous or superior in any way.

The irony is that the more we pursue these things the further we move from Jesus.

And that is the real danger.

**These things can surpass Jesus as our ultimate pursuit.**

**Let Jesus be our ultimate aim for everything we do.**

## **Colossians 2:17**

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

**What is more beautiful?**

**The apple tree's shadow or the apple tree?**

**Which gives you nourishment?**

**The apple tree's shadow or the apple tree?**

To stop at the shadow is to miss the source.

We can do that with anything:

- coming to church
- reading the Bible
- fasting
- prayer

**All those things are good, but they are shadows that are meant to bring us to the true substance.**

## **John 5:38-39**

**38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. 39 You search the**

**Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,**

Jesus is talking to the greatest Bible students of his generation.  
They sought the Scriptures not to find Jesus, but b/c they thought the habit alone qualified them.

Jesus is saying in everything your aim is me!!!

Why do you come to church?

Why do you tithe?

**STORY:**

**Long time ago talking with a Biz man after church.**

**He was upset ... biz not going to well.**

**He said he was mad at God b/c he had always tithed faithfully [10%] ... where was his protection.**

See that man wasn't tithing to God.

He was tithing to himself.

We can do that with any good spiritual habit.

- **We use them to get // “more” // FROM Jesus.**
- **Instead of using them to get // more OF Jesus.**

The measure of growth from God isn't how prosperous our lives and church looks.

Faithless men can have fruitful ministries and fancy lives.

God looks for faithfulness not fruitfulness.

**And the faithfulness that God cares about is keeping Jesus our ultimate aim.**

**It is holding fast to Him ...**

**Remain in Jesus and let Him bring the growth.**

**Colossians 2:19**

**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.**

Holding fast to the Head [Jesus].

That means remaining in Him ... [Apostle John calls abiding]

This remaining/abiding in Jesus is a continual act of surrender.

Faithfulness to God will produce in us an ever growing surrender of our will to His.

It isn't a reluctant surrender, nor a surrender from fear.

It is a surrender of love.

An act of yielding to Him b/c He is good and trustworthy.

This doesn't happen in a moment ... it happens over a lifetime of following Jesus.

Here is an interesting picture of how we grow in surrender to God over time.

**1. I am a bow in your hands, Lord, draw me, lest I rot.**

**2. Do not overdraw me, Lord, I shall break.**

**3. Overdraw me, Lord, and who cares if I break!"**

**-Nikos Kazantzakis-**

Jesus, the most spiritually complete man ever prayed, not my will, but yours be done.

"Overdraw me, Father, who cares if I break."

But here is the thing ... none of us start at that final stage.

It is a process... often long and slow ... as God brings us along the path of increased surrender.

We don't get to dictate the terms and timing.

We simply take it as it comes and respond accordingly.

See, these stages of increased surrender happen in various areas of our life and at different times.

**For example: my surrender in the area of sexual purity outpaced my surrender in the area of generosity.**

And trust me ... God didn't stop there ...

I've got a whole lot of problems.

I wish God would fix me all at once, but that doesn't seem to be his way.

**Some of us are in that place where the soundtrack of our Christianity is: "The Thrill Is Gone." [singing the Blues]**

The passion for Jesus / his church / we had once has diminished.

We all go through this.

But we don't live by our emotions. [We don't manufacture false ones either].

We live by faithfulness and trust God to bring the growth.

The growth that is from God can sometimes be quick, but often it happens over the long haul.

Especially, the deep heart stuff of where we find our identity & significance.

We can't force quick change through spiritual systems or structures.

There is no magical incantation.

We are called to be faithful to pushing into more of Jesus.

[Whether "The Thrill is Gone" or not].

We push into more of Him ... keeping Him our ultimate aim.

Let him be our judge and qualifier.

**This is the quiet fruitfulness that man rarely applauds, but God delights in.**

### **Not A Christian:**

- First step is surrender to Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- Start the journey today!

### **Christian:**

- What is the surrender Jesus is calling you to today?
- Before we come to take communion think about that ...

- Communion is how we remember the ultimate surrender Jesus made on the cross for our sins.
- “Not my will, but yours be done.”
- It would be hypocritical to take it in the face of refusing to follow Jesus’ call you to follow his example of surrender.
- Before we come ... confess the area God is leading you to surrender to Him. If you are next to a trusted person in your life ... consider confessing it to them.
- Pray for His grace that forgives you and empowers you to live in more surrender.
- When you are ready, come and get communion.