

Jim was planning on being here this morning but near the end of the week came down with a cold and has lost his voice. So I was called on to fill in. Please open your Bibles to Colossians Chapter 2. The last few times I have filled in for Jim we have been in the book of Colossians, so we are going to pick up where we left of last time.

Paul wants to see the Colossian believers grow up in their faith. His desire is that they would mature.

Colossians 1:28 ESV

(28) Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, **that we may present everyone mature in Christ.**

This was Paul's focus, maturing believers. He then takes the next chapter to attack some of the various false teachings that had started to pop up at the church.

He wants these believers to grow and he knows that will not happen if these false teachings are left unchecked. He starts by wanting them to know that Christ is the mystery of God, and in Him is all wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:2 ESV

- (2) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and **the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,**
- (3) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

One of the lies the false teachers were using was that there was some higher, hidden or special knowledge that you had to obtain to live the Christian life. Paul wants the believers to know that all is found in Christ. He continues to warn them in verse 4

Colossians 2:4 ESV

- (4) I say this in order that no one may delude you with **plausible arguments.**

We should rely on Christ and not turn to Plausible arguments, the word here for plausible really is persuasive speech or **well-crafted arguments**. It is not neutral it is enticing and on the surface it sounds right and is persuasive.

These are the beliefs that aren't Biblical, they aren't true but when you first here them they sound right.

Paul does not want the believers to fall into these types of arguments so he tells them in verse 6 to:

Colossians 2:6-7 ESV

- (6) **Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,**
- (7) rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

The answer to not falling into the plausible arguments is to remain in Christ. Paul tells them to continue in the faith the same way they started; it is by faith and trusting Christ, and by relying on His strength and power.

We cannot try to hang on and combat false teaching by our own strength or abilities, we must rely on G=Christ and on His truth.

This leads us to our passage this morning.

Colossians 2:8-15 ESV

- (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.
- (9) For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
- (10) and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.
- (11) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,
- (12) having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.
- (13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,
- (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.
- (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Paul continues his argument in verse 8

Colossians 2:8 ESV

- (8) **See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy** and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

At first glance this may seem like a repeat of verse 4. He just finished telling them, not to believe plausible arguments, but really what is happening is that Paul continues to build his case.

The plausible arguments sound right; they are enticing and can easily be mistaken for truth.

The philosophy he mentions here and empty deceit runs much deeper than simple arguments this is a way of thinking. This philosophy is questioning what truth should be based on. It is an entire system that influences how you make decision and what your life is based on.

Colossians 2:8 ESV

- (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, **according to human tradition**, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

We can see this at the end of the verse. Instead of being based on Christ and His truth this philosophy is based on one of two things.

First it is based on human tradition

This was what the Pharisees were doing during Christ life.

Mark 7:1-8 ESV

- (1) Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,
 (2) they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.
 (3) (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, **holding to the tradition of the elders**,

Notice the people follow the human traditions

- (4) and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)
 (5) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "**Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders**, but eat with defiled hands?"

Christ disciples did not follow after these man made traditions.

Verse 6-8 NP

- (6) And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,
 "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;
 (7) in vain do they worship me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'**
 (8) **You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."**

This is so tempting to do. We take an application. It usually starts as a correct application from a passage of scripture and then turn it into **THE** application. Christ points this out in verse 8. When we do this we abandon the truth in God's word and instead focus on the tradition of men.

I have seen myself do this many times. One example is that at one time in my life I was convicted that I needed to stop listening to secular music. It started as a desire to only surround myself with things that aided my Christian walk and some of the music I was listening to did not help me grow closer to God. Nothing was wrong with this conviction. It started to become an issue when I held all other Christians to the same standard. No longer was my focus on growing in Christ, but showing how pious and Holy I was. If you listened to music I didn't approve of then you must not be very spiritual.

When we buy into this line of thinking our focus is taken off Christ. We substitute a rule for a relationship. We cannot do this. WE cannot reduce Christianity down to rules and regulations.

It is a personal walk with Jesus Christ.

Not only is this human philosophy based on manmade traditions it is based on

Colossians 2:8 ESV

- (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, **according to the elemental spirits of the world**, and not according to Christ.

The NKJV actually does the best job translating this section.

Colossians 2:8 NKJV

- (8) Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, **according to the basic principles of the world**, and not according to Christ.

This human philosophy is based on the world and its basic understanding. Paul describes these basic principles of the World in Ephesians

Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV

- (1) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins
- (2) in which you once walked, **following the course of this world**, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—
- (3) among whom we all once lived **in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

The World's basic way of thinking is to carry out the desires of the flesh, It is to be enslaved by our fleshly passions, It is to do what feels natural. Listen to how Paul describes it In Galatians

Galatians 4:9 ESV

- (9) But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, **how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world**, whose slaves you want to be once more?

The World system is weak and worthless. And yet as Christians we can be tempted to start acting like the world. To follow after its system and base our decisions off of its wisdom.

As I have been teaching through the story of King David with the High School I have come to see that David's biggest failures were when he followed after the basic principles of the World. It was when he looked out his window and saw how the World operated and decided that he should do the same thing.

There are three clear examples of this in David's life.

-David putting the Ark of God on a cart

The ark of the covenant had been captured by the philistines, When it was in their country it caused all sorts of plagues so they put it on a new cart and sent it back to Israel, so when David went to move the Ark instead of listening to God he followed the World, He put it onto a cart, then when it started to slide off the cart Uzzah reached to steady it and was killed. Listen to what David says when he realizes what he had done.

1Ch 15:13-15

- (13) Because you did not do so at the first, Jehovah our God broke in against us, **for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.**
- (14) And the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah the God of Israel.
- (15) And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God, as Moses commanded, **according to the Word of Jehovah**, by staves above on the shoulders.

-David and Bathsheba

Another example is David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 we know the story of David committing Adultery and then having her husband killed. But What we can miss is that according to the nations around Him David had every right as king to do what he did. The king had total authority. I was actually watching a History channel documentary about king David and the scholars on the program defended his actions and said he was allowed to do this because of his kingship. God obviously disagreed. Listen to the clear instructions in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 17:17-19 ESV

- (17) **And he shall not multiply wives to himself**, and his heart shall not turn aside. And he shall not greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.
- (18) And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, **he shall write for himself a copy of this Law in a book**, from before the priests, the Levites.
- (19) **And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah your God**, to keep all the Words of this Law and these statutes, to do them;

-David numbering Israel

Lastly one of David biggest sins is when He numbered the people of Israel. The story is found in 1Chronicles 21. David sends his commander out to number Israel but his main focus is on tacking an inventory of his Army. He wants to know how strong and powerful his army is so he can know who to attack. This was common thinking for that day, don't attack an enemy that has more men and weapons than you. God on the other hand wanted David to rely on His strength.

In each of these stories David followed after the basic principles of the World. He looked at how the World around him operated and he sought to do the same thing. Each time God showed David what folly this was.

As believers we are not called to follow man made traditions and we are not called to follow after the World. Listen to verse 8 one last time.

Colossians 2:8 ESV

- (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, **and not according to Christ**.

We have been called to seek after Christ. He should be our focus.

Paul is not trying to say that all philosophy is wrong. The word itself has a good original meaning. It is a compound Greek word

combining philo, (to love) and Sophia (wisdom) So philosophy is a love of wisdom. When rooted and founded on Christ philosophy can be a wonderful thing. And Paul starts to describe for us who Christ is, He tells us more about the one that we should be focused on.

Colossians 2:9 ESV

(9) For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

This is an incredible statement that we should sit back and marvel at.

Notice that the fullness is emphasized. It is not just the fullness of God, it is the whole fullness. It is beyond our comprehension to fully understand how incredible this was, and what an act of service this was by Christ. It was humiliating for Christ to take on Flesh. I want us to think about what this was like for Him. Jesus who created the entire universe took on flesh.

John 1:1-3 ESV

- (1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- (2) He was in the beginning with God.
- (3) All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

It was through the Word of God that all things were made.

John 1:14 ESV

(14) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Word then humbled Himself to the point that He took on flesh.

So picture what just happened. Jesus Christ, the Word of God who spoke the entire universe into existence, became flesh, he became a baby and had to learn how to say his very first Word. Mama or Dada.

My little daughter is just over two months old, she can't talk, she is almost laughing, her biggest trick right now is smiling, and their great I love them, but think about what it was like for Christ to come as a baby, and not be able to speak, to have to learn how to talk.

Christ love in taking on flesh for us is simply incredible. This is the Christ that we are called to focus on. And as Paul continues it gets even better. Not only did He take on flesh but listen to verse 10

Colossians 2:10 ESV

- (9) For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
 (10) **and you have been filled in him**, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In Him we are made complete, we have been filled up. So not only did Christ take on flesh, but we have the privilege to be In Him. To partake in the body of Christ. Listen to what we have been invited to partake in in John 17

John 17:20-23 ESV

- (20) "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
 (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, **that they also may be in us**, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Notice what Christ prays for, he prays for our unity, but also prays that we would partake in the unity that the Father and Son share. WE are not invited to be outsiders, but have the opportunity to have an intimate relationship with God.

- (22) The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,
 (23) **I in them and you in me**, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Again the unity that is offered to us is astounding. Christ is in us as the Church. We are called the body of Christ.

Paul goes on in Colossians to describe all of the rich blessings that accompany being filled up or completed in Christ.

Colossians 2:11-12 ESV

- (11) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,
 (12) **having been buried with him in baptism**, in which **you were also raised with him** through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

When we accept Christ as our savior our old selves, our old flesh is done away with. This is the circumcision Paul describes. Our old flesh is done away with. This was done when we were baptized into His death.

The baptism described here is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the moment when a person puts their faith in Jesus and they become identified with His death, and also with His new life.

Water baptism is the picture, the symbol of what this passage describes. When we submerge the person under the water it represents that person identifying with the death and burial of Christ. When that person rises up out of the water it represents the new life in Christ.

Water baptism is just a symbol though; it represents this tremendous spiritual truth of the Holy Spirit baptizing us identifying us with Christ death and resurrection. Listen to how Romans 6 describes this amazing event

Romans 6:3-5 ESV

- (3) Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- (4) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
- (5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.**

The point here in Romans is that we have not just been forgiven from our sins but we have been united with Christ in His new life. We have the ability now to walk with Christ. We do not have to follow after the philosophy of man. We don't have to be enslaved by human traditions or by the basic understanding of the World.

As a believer we have been called to so much more! We are called to a resurrected life. That life doesn't just start when we die or when the rapture happens. That new life can be started now.

Instead of seeking after the philosophies of man we would seek after Christ. This is what Romans 12 describes.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

- (1) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
- (2) Do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We have the ability as believers to have a transformed mind; this is what it means to walk in a new life

Think about the stories we looked at with David. In each one of them he conformed his life to that of the World. His actions, by using a cart for the ark of God, but committing adultery with Bathsheba, and by numbering His military he was modeled and acted like the World.

We so often do the same thing.

-Just as David put the ark on a cart

- We let the World tell us how to worship God
- WE ignore His Word and His instruction of how to worship Him and instead come up with our own methods.

-Just as he committed adultery

- We let the World define morality. No longer does God's Word dictate what is acceptable now it is whatever society says is ok. Just like David we ignore God's desire for our purity

-Just as David numbered His military

- We rely on our own strength and try to accomplish things on our power instead of through the Spirits power.

Yet we have been called to have transformed Minds, to live out the new life. This is what 1 Peter describes.

1 Peter 1:13-16 ESV

- (13) Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is a case where I like the King James language better.

1Peter 1:13 KJV

- (13) **Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind**, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

When this was written men would wear long robes. If they wanted to run or be free to move, they would grab their robes and gird them up. They would wrap them up around their waist so that they were ready for action. No longer

hindered by the rob they were free to move. Notice how we are called to prepare our mind.

1 Peter 1:13-16 ESV

- (13) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

It is to focus on Christ and the incredible Grace that has been offered to us. Walking in the new life of Christ is not done by our own effort. It is only done by relying on His grace. When we rely on His grace we are able to:

- (14) As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,**
 (15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
 (16) since it is written, "**You shall be holy, for I am holy.**"

When we rely on His grace, in the new life in Christ we are able not to be conformed as the World but to be Holy.

Paul wraps this section up in Colossians by making sure we remember what Christ has done for us, how incredible His grace is for us.

Colossians 2:13-15 ESV

- (13) **And you, who were dead** in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him**, having forgiven us all our trespasses,
 (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. **This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.**
 (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Our sins and our old life have been nailed to the cross. We must live like it.