**Merge Group Questions:** Don’t be deceived!

**Sermon #4:** Colossians 2:8-15

Steady progress is possible when we are grounded or rooted. Christians are not to be tumbleweeds with no roots, blown about by every wind of doctrine. We avoid this when we are firmly rooted in Jesus Christ. Roots don’t exist for themselves: they exist to give the plant strength and help the plant grow. We are to be rooted and then built up and strengthened. We are to grow. How are we to grow? We are to grow in the faith [we were taught]. We have no need to seek secret or “higher” knowledge. We are to grow in knowledge of the truth already revealed in Christ. Finally, Paul wants us overflowing with thankfulness.¹ A thankful believer is not easily led away from Christ. A discontented, grumbling, whiny believer, however, will be easy prey for false teachers who are more than willing to offer “just what you’ve been missing.”²

**Questions:**

1) The people of the Colossian church were facing the real threat of being captivated by false teaching. Paul’s warning becomes very direct; “See to it that no one holds you captive.” (vs 8) What does the word captive mean?

2) What kind of philosophy were they being threatened with? Paul gives two starting points of this philosophy, what are they? (vs 8)

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3) When false teaching happens it attacks on two fronts, what are they? (Vs 9-10)

4) Where is our FULLNESS found? (vs 9-10)

5) Where does Paul say we get our spiritual maturity from?

**OUR FORGIVENESS: 2: 11-15**

6) What does spiritual fullness mean? (vs 11-13a)

7) Paul gives two examples of our FULL salvation. What are they? (vs 11-12) What is Paul trying to say through these two examples?

A little hint: No religious ritual can make us alive with Christ. Paul picks two familiar rituals in these verses, but he clearly is not talking about the physical acts of circumcision and baptism. Instead, he is talking about the spiritual reality behind the physical rite. The Jews were masters at physical rites. In Genesis 17, God instituted circumcision as a physical sign of the Abrahamic covenant. Every male was to be circumcised as tangible testimony that he was in a covenant relationship with Yahweh. The Jews began mistakenly to think that the physical ritual was sufficient all by itself.³

8) How does putting off the sinful nature happen? By human hands?

9) The second reality of spiritual fullness is total forgiveness. What does forgiveness involve? Paul gives some examples, what are they? (vs 13-14)

10) What did God do to cancel our debt? (vs14)

11) What did Jesus Triumph over? (vs 15)

Conclusion:

Spiritual fullness means complete salvation, full forgiveness, and absolute victory. We have spiritual fullness because of our participation in the conquest of the cross. On the cross a cosmic drama was played out as God, in Christ, battled and gained victory over the powers of evil. Jesus Christ not only paid the penalty to atone for sin, but he also won a decisive victory over Satan and all the host of supernatural beings who were in league with him.

Wrap it up: (Principles to discuss)

* Jesus is fully God. Yes or No?
  • Every believer has spiritual fullness because of our union with Christ. Yes/No?
  • Every believer has experienced full forgiveness. True or False?
  • Jesus defeated Satan on the cross and stripped him, and all his demons, of their power over mankind.
  • Spirituality is not a matter of rules or experiences, but a relationship with and obedience to Jesus Christ.

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

In his book *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, J. I. Packer reminds us of the need to keep Jesus Christ central. He warns of the danger of becoming preoccupied with the Spirit rather than the Savior to whom the Spirit points. Such warning applies to anything which might distract us from Jesus Christ. Should our interest shift from knowing the Son to knowing the Spirit, two evils would at once result. On the one hand, like the Colossian angel worshippers, we should impoverish ourselves by “… 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” (Colossians 2:19). On the other hand, we should enmesh ourselves in a world of spurious “spiritual” feelings and fancies that are not Christ related and do not correspond to anything that actually exists except Satan’s web of deceptions and his endless perversions of truth and goodness. We should not take one step down this road. Questions about the Holy Spirit that are not forms and facets of the basic question, How may I and all Christians—and indeed all the world—come to know Jesus Christ and know him better? ought not to be asked. This is a basic mental discipline that the Bible imposes on us. In golf it would be described as keeping your eye on the ball (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1984, 92).4

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