**IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE: Jesus in Colossians**

**The Truth on Spiritual Life and Growth, Colossians 2:6-23**

Sunday, July 24, 2022

**WE Slide 1 Turn to Colossians 2, pg. 1179** Paul’s writing to believers he’s never met about a teaching that’s creeping into the church that says Jesus is great, but He’s not all a person needs to be spiritually complete and growing, there are other things one must do. **Up to this point Paul’s been slamming that teaching with the truth about who Jesus is- He’s the image of God and as God He is the Creator of the universe, Creator/leader of the church, the Creator of a restored relationship between man and God. Slide 2** Last week we learned that Jesus is in those who follow Him and in Him we all we need for life. **There’s obviously nothing more we need than a relationship with Christ and living life His way.**

**NEXT WEEK Paul will begin to show how this doctrine/theology transforms how we live this life, but before he does he takes time to contrast Jesus/His teaching with this man-made, man-centered teaching that’s coming into the church. With Jesus there is no middle ground- believers either live life as Jesus directs us and experience the spiritual growth and depth of relationship it brings, or we try to live both ways, man’s/God’s, which means we end up living life man’s/our way.** **We’ll see from what God had Paul write living that life never meets our spiritual need nor brings the spiritual satisfaction a believer is desiring.** This man-centered thinking/teaching is alive and well in churches today.

**TEST TIME!** Answer these in your minds, not out loud. **ARE YOU THINKING LIKE JESUS OR LIKE MAN?**

1. **Slide 3** The Christian faith is founded on 3 primary calls as we see through Jesus: to love God, to love our neighbor, and to love ourselves.
2. **Slide 4** The Christian faith is our way of being faithful to God, but it is not the only way.
3. **Slide 5** Love of God involves all aspects of life, not just human life. Care of the Earth and its ecosystems is an expression of Christian faith and stewardship.
4. **Slide 6** Love of neighbor means extending kindness and care...to those in our family and in our local and global communities…includes affirmation of LBGTQ community, immigrants, people of other faith communities, and even those who are enemies.
5. **Slide 7** We cannot properly love others until we come to love ourselves first.
6. **Slide 8** As a Christian my goal is to become the best version of me I can be.

**Slide 9 All are FALSE or partially false- all are held by the Progressive Christian movement, Jesus isn’t God/Bible isn’t inspired, a couple are things I’ve heard Christians say, and all are contrary to what Jesus teaches in the Bible.** Let’s see what God has for us this morning. **As we read there is a spiritual truth that comes into view- Slide 10 SPIRITUAL TRUTH: Spiritual life AND spiritual growth are only found in Jesus, His teachings, and living them out in our lives- we need all three.** Look what Paul writes in vv. 6-7. **Slide 11-12** **He starts out by saying “as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him…” Let me ask you, how did you receive Christ?** Right, by faith!

**GOD**

1. **LIVE LIFE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS, Colossians 2:6-7**
2. **How Did You Receive Christ Jesus the Lord? By faith in Jesus Christ.**
3. You realized, “I can’t do anything to remove the sin that separated me from God.”- no amount of good works/religious activities, traditions could do it.
4. You heard that God the Son, Jesus Christ, did what could only be done- took your eternal punishment on Himself when He died on the cross, defeated sin/hell when He rose again.
5. You trusted God when He said put your full weight of trust on that and your sin will be forgiven, spiritual life given, adoption into My family, and eternity in heaven with Me.

**Awesome! Amen! We love this truth and praise God for it but then Paul says…so live life in Him.**

1. **How Do You Live Life?** By faith in Jesus Christ, by faith in self, a little bit of both? **Slide 13**
2. Just like we take God’s word for how we are made right with Him, so we take God’s word for how we are to live this life.
3. Starting next week, we’ll be learning how a relationship with God through faith in Christ transforms our lives. The question will be **“Do I trust that God’s way to do life is the right way to do life?”**
4. The faith you place in Jesus for heaven is the same faith you place in Him for earth- you trust Him when He says His way is the only way to live life.
5. We live this way because He is Christ- our king/ruler, He is Jesus- our savior, and He is Lord- our owner/master.

**We do this because we have been firmly rooted in Him. Slide 14**

1. **We Have Been Firmly Rooted in Jesus**
2. rhizoo; firmly fixed, thoroughly grounded.
3. Perfect tense/passive voice- past completed action done by God at salvation; Christ in us and we are in Christ and all of it done by God.
4. Spiritual life/growth come from having been “firmly rooted” in Christ by God at salvation

**We were firmly rooted at salvation and now as we live we are built up in Him, established in the faith, just as we are instructed.** In other words, now we live life God’s way to grow in faith in Him. **Slide 15**

1. **We Live Life God’s Way**
2. Spiritual growth occurs as God makes us more like Jesus and more confident in Him through our obedience to His “instruction” (Bible)
3. “now being built up in Him”
4. epoikodomeo; to build on something that has already been built; once established in Christ now we grow to become more like Him, more and more obedient to God the Father like He was.
5. Present tense/passive voice- an ongoing process of spiritual growth that God does in us as we obey what He’s instructed us to do.
6. “(now being) established in your/the faith”
7. bebaioo; to make a person firm in commitment, strengthen.
8. Present tense/Passive voice- ongoing process of becoming more confident in God, His ability to fulfill His promises as we obey what He’s instructed us to do.
9. “as…instructed”- this comes from the reading, studying, and teaching of God’s Word, the Bible and then living it out in real life situations and circumstances.
10. “overflowing in gratitude”- the more we take steps of faith to obey what God’s teaching us the more we live like Jesus and gain confidence in God which can only produce a grateful heart to God.

**As Christians we need to choose whether we believe, willing to entrust our earthly lives to, what Jesus says about living this life or believe what man/ourselves say about how to live.** God has Paul warn us to not be taken captive by man’s reasoning- don’t think you or anyone else knows better than God. **Look what Paul writes next- there’s a lot in here. Slide 16-29** Paul gives 2 commands- Don’t be taken captive by man’s reasoning and don’t be bullied by the religious activity- neither will gain favor with God or satisfy you spiritually.

1. **DON’T PUT YOUR FAITH IN MAN, Colossians 2:8-23**
2. **Don’t Be Taken Captive by Man’s Reasoning, 8-15**
3. “captive”- sulagogeo; captured treasure; they were in danger of being carried away from the truth
4. Philosophy, empty deception, traditions of men, elementary principles- the man-centered/selfish thinking that has no value or help in having greater confidence in God/His promises.
5. **This goes all the way back to Genesis 3**- man has always questioned God’s word/promises and decided his opinion was more trustworthy than God.
6. Eve “reasoned” the lie she was told was true then chose to disobey God and Adam followed her lead.
7. Ever since that first sin, man has decided what’s right/wrong, man determines if the Bible is true or not.
8. **“I’m a believer! I saw those 8 things as being false! I’m good right?”** Let me ask you, Spouses loving/respecting/encouraging? Staying pure sexually? Anger? Forgiving?
9. Every time we choose our way over God’s we are choosing man’s wisdom over God’s wisdom.

**I love how Paul takes an abrupt turn away from man’s failed reasoning to all that Jesus has done for us. What philosopher, teacher, religious person, religious leader, has ever done this for us?** Look at all He’s done for us! **Slide 30 Jesus has done everything we need and continues to give us what we need.**

1. **We Are Made Spiritually Complete in Christ**
2. God the Son, by being in believers, has made us complete- we have everything we need, God, His Word, and His spiritual family.
3. Jesus is the head over all rule/authority- He is supreme, in authority over the authorities, in control.
4. **“circumcised”**- He removed our sinful flesh’s power over us when we were baptized into His death on the cross.
5. **“raised up in new life”**- to be lived for God as Jesus lives for God.
6. **“He made you alive together with Him”**- God gave us spiritual life by canceling out, forgiving the infinite IOU we owed God due to our sin against Him.
7. **“He disarmed the rulers/authorities”**- the spirit world has no more control in our lives because Jesus defeated them when He rose from the dead.

**Paul continues and addresses the “religious people”.** Paul’s saying nobody has power over us except Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior/His teaching so don’t let religious people bully you. **Slide 31 I’m so glad we don’t have this in our church!**

1. **Don’t Be Bullied by Man’s Religious Activity, 16-23**
2. “defraud…prize”- katabrabeuo; to judge as a referee that one is not worthy to receive a prize; the prize being a close, intimate, growing relationship with Christ based on Him/His teachings.
3. **Slide 32** The “religious” were attempting to find spirituality/growth through unnecessary religious rituals and completely unbiblical activities all with an attitude of pride, “look how spiritual I am!”
4. “delighting in self-abasement”- taking pride in their spiritual sacrifices, rituals.
5. “worship of angels”- God too majestic/distant to be worshiped so they worshiped His messengers.
6. “taking his stand on visions/dreams…inflated…by his fleshly mind”- living life based visions due to exaggerated perceptions of themselves.

**It’s amazing to me how religious people have to add to what God has plainly stated.** I think part of it is that they want to “feel” spiritual/have a spiritual feeling, but not have to do the hard work of developing a relationship with God. **Having said that…**

1. Jesus is NOT SAYING we don’t do the “religious” activities He commands us to do, but even in those we don’t do them to gain favor with God- we already have it in Christ.
2. We spend time with God/His word/prayer, we worship with church family, we serve, we share the gospel, we baptize those who place their faith in Christ, we celebrate communion, we sing, we pray together.
3. How often we baptize/have communion isn’t specified nor does doing it more often show spirituality.

**Paul finishes up this section by stating the obvious that we all know. Slide 33**

1. **Man’s Self-focused Teaching Never Satisfies.**
2. Paul asks, **If you’ve died to man’s thinking, which includes your own thinking, why do you continue to listen to/live by man’s thinking?**
3. “no value against fleshly indulgences”- plesmone; process of securing complete satisfaction, gratification in a spiritual growth sense.
4. These things may look wise, deep, or spiritual but in they don’t bring the spiritual satisfaction man is desiring.

**Again, A LOT of information so as the band comes up what are our TAKEAWAYS? Slide 34**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Is there an area of your life where you’re following man’s/your reasoning? It’s self-centered and of no value to your spiritual growth.**
2. **Are you in God’s Word so that He can do His work of growing you to be more like Jesus and help you gain confidence in Him?**

**Spiritual life AND spiritual growth are only found in Jesus, His teachings, and living them out in our lives- nothing more, nothing less.**

**PODCAST: What’s the right path to spiritual life and growth? Colossians 2:6-23**

**Tags: Spiritual, life, growth, wisdom, deception.**