

## **False Change and the Power of Christ's Death**

"Colossians: Together for Christ"

Colossians 2:20-23

**July 8th, 2018**

### BIG IDEA

The newness of our life in Christ does not come from fulfilling religious rituals in our own strength. Jesus alone gives us a new way of life.

### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

*Context:*

False teachers in Colossae were teaching that Christ was not sufficient for salvation. They taught that dietary regulations were needed too. But Paul said that's not true. Christ is all we need.

### **Colossians 2:20-23**

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—<sup>21</sup> "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"<sup>22</sup> (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?<sup>23</sup> These have indeed 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.

### MAIN IDEAS

Christ is the key to becoming a new person. It isn't about what you do—it's about what you believe and who you believe in. It comes down to submitting your life to Jesus and pursuing your greatest joy in Him.

## 1. The Significance of Dying with Christ

*Colossians 2:20 – 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...*

Paul wants us to truly believe and embrace what was accomplished for us in Christ's death. The Colossians were getting tripped up and confused on what Jesus' death meant for them and how they were to walk in freedom. More was being added to the message and it clouded their vision of the Savior.

- a. Why do you think people drift away from the main thing and toward secondary issues when it comes to faith?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. For you personally, would you say you are living your life mindful of your union with Christ? What makes that challenging for you?**

## 2. Embrace Christ Over Worldly Wisdom

*Colossians 2:21 – “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch...”*

For the Colossian believers and for believers today, we have a real battle when it comes to preoccupation with the world's wisdom. Often times we create our own systems of unofficial rules and false wisdom.

- a. Have you ever found yourself living more for the “Do's and Don'ts” of Christianity than actually experiencing genuine relationship with Jesus?**



- b. How can we encourage other believers and ourselves against turning our life in Christ into an exercise in performance and good works?**

### **3. Pursue Eternal Over Temporal**

*Colossians 2:22 – ... (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?*

The confusion being brought on the Colossians from false teachers in this part of the passage were specifically related to the pressure to observe strict regulations in order to look and be righteous. The concerns of the world like living in excess or always comparing ourselves to others can become ultimate and can easily become a trap if we aren't regularly walking with God. This trap was holding the Colossians back from simple devotion to God.

- a. Has comparing yourself to others been a trap for you in the past? If so, how has that affected your joy and walk with Christ?**
  
- b. Materialism can be an idol for many in our day. What are ways that we can combat the constant pursuit of more stuff and keep Jesus central? How can we lead the next generation to seek after Christ more than material things?**

### **4. Build on Christ Over Appearances**

*Colossians 2:23 – These have indeed 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's big warning to the Colossians was that they remember where the true source of life is found. The allure of looking nice on the outside was a very real thing as many false teachers were leading people to worship of angels, false humility in public fasting,



and prideful harming of their bodies in order to look righteous. Those things are only an outward shell with no inner change apart from Christ.

- a. **Do you think the pursuit of external religious rules confuses people that aren't believers on what faith in Jesus is really about?**
  
- b. **How will you live differently this week to pursue genuine relationship with Christ over just doing the external things that make you seem like a follower of Jesus?**
  
- c. **Read Romans 6:6-7 together and then have someone lead in prayer thanking Jesus for His death in our place and for the freedom we have in Him.**

*Romans 6:6-7 – We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

#### PRAY

Lord, thank you for giving me freedom from sin and for making it possible to have real life that comes from relationship and not just empty religious works. Help me to embrace the union I've been given in Jesus. Amen.

#### DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [\*The Discipline of Grace\*](#) – a book by Jerry Bridges
- [\*The Cross of Christ\*](#) – a book by John Stott

#### NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

How to Leave the World Behind in Order to Save It (Colossians 3:1-4)

