

**7-24-22**

Sermon- Freedom and New Life

Scripture- Colossians 2:6-23, CTW Ps 85

Hymns- 455, 449, 459

Theme- Receiving Christ as Lord of your life is the beginning of true life in Christ. However, you must continue to follow His leadership by being rooted, built up, and strengthened in the faith. Paul tells us that Christ wants to guide us through the problems every day. Will you let him?

**I. As long as we keep our trust totally in Christ, we stand assured of God's promise of eternal life. But as soon as we rest any weight on the thin ice of our own efforts, we topple into insecurity.**

**A. Have you ever wondered about your salvation; about whether or not you are going to heaven when you die?**

Some questions we might have are "What am I supposed to do in order to gain God's acceptance and love?" "Do I have to read the Bible all the way through?" "Do I have to knock on a million doors?"

Think about a small lake frozen over in the dead of winter. A young boy walks out on a boat dock over the ice, but suddenly his sister calls from the shore. As he turns around to see her, he loses his balance, one of his feet lands on the ice, and he crashes into the icy water.

You see, as long as both his feet were solidly planted on the wooden dock, the boy stood securely. But as soon as he shifted one foot to the ice, even though by mistake, he toppled into the water.

**B. As long as we keep our trust totally on Christ's finished work on the cross, we stand assured of God's promise of eternal life.** But as soon as we rest any weight on the thin ice of our own efforts, we will topple into the icy waters of insecurity.

Some of us might think we have to do many different things to gain God's love, but there is only one requirement, and that is to know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

If we put any weight on the thin ice of our own efforts, we will drown in sin and never make it to heaven; but, if we stand on the promise of the cross, then we will be firmly secure in our salvation and relationship with Jesus Christ.

This morning we are going to see how the apostle Paul addressed the issue of our salvation in Jesus. In our passage of Scripture, Paul encountered some believers who thought they had to do more to gain salvation, than just believe in Christ. So let's see what Paul revealed about our salvation.

## **II. Walk in Jesus, and Be Rooted in Him (2:6-7)**

6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

**A. Paul said in verse 6, that we need to walk in Christ.** Walking in Christ will keep us from being deceived by the world; for when we are deceived by the world we begin doubting our salvation in Jesus. Believers can avoid being deceived by maintaining a strong stand, and by moving forward with steady progress. "When we stop going forward, we stall; [and] when we stall, we can fall."

When we accept Jesus into our heart we can't stop there and expect our life to be perfect from that point onward. We have to continue growing in our relationship with Jesus by studying the Scripture, by spending time with the Lord in prayer, and by

putting into practice what we are taught by the Holy Spirit. We have to walk forward in Christ; not stand still in the world.

Paul said in verse 7, that we must be rooted in Christ, be built up in Christ, be established in Christ, and then be abounding or overflowing in thanksgiving. We see here a steady progression that we are to have in our Christian walk, or our growth process.

**B. So how are we to grow? We are to grow in the “faith we were taught,” as Paul said.** We have no need to seek any other kind of knowledge besides what is revealed by Jesus and the Bible.

We are to grow in knowledge of the truth already revealed in Christ . . . and Paul wants us overflowing with thankfulness. This comes when we recognize that we are complete in Christ.

By accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we have everything needed to gain eternal life. Sometimes we fail to realize this truth, and so we try to do other things to gain God’s acceptance.

Right now, let’s look at some of the things Paul identified as ways that we try to gain God’s approval.

### **III. You Are Already Complete in Jesus (2:8-10)**

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. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

**A. When we fail to realize that everything needed for eternal life and God’s acceptance is found in Jesus, we can be cheated of our freedom through philosophies and the traditions of men.**

In the New International Version, verse 8 reads, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy.”

The word captive means 'to carry away' or 'kidnap.' Here it refers to someone being carried away from the truth in Christ into the slavery of error . . . The hollow and deceptive philosophy of the false teachers promises much but delivers nothing.

Paul provided the Colossians with the two origins of this philosophy, neither of which is Christ. First, Paul says this empty deception is based on human tradition. William Barclay says, 'It was a product of the human mind; and not a message of the Word of God'. How many times are people today persuaded by the words of philosophers, especially famous dead ones? It happens quite often.

Philosophy, whether it's Western American and European philosophies, or Eastern oriental doctrines; seems to be the "in" thing.

Often you will hear someone quote Neitzche's famous statement that "God is dead," or hear someone make reference to the teachings of Buddah, taking these tenets as the gospel truth.

We need to realize that the works of philosophers are the ideas of mere men, and they are beliefs that have originated in empty hearts still searching for the truth. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and He is the only "way" to heaven.

**B. The second source of this empty deception that Paul identified was the basic principles of this world . . . which refers to elemental powers or demonic spirits.**

Many philosophies and other religions may sound appealing, and may seem harmless, but behind them are demonic forces under Satan's power. These other philosophies and religions try to make us believe they can lead us to heaven, but they can't.

George Barna identifies one of the most widely held philosophical lies in existence today. He says that it is "believed that when

people of different faiths pray to their respective gods, they are really all praying to the same central power source.”

If you believe this idea, then listen to **1 Timothy 2:5** which says “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” We must never forget that Satan is a liar and a deceiver, and that he wants us to fall away from the freedom we have in Christ. He wants to enslave us under his power.

**C. When false teaching attacks, it usually attacks in two areas: (1) It attacks the person of Jesus Christ and (2) the believer’s identity in Him.**

False teachers fail to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God incarnate and undermine His uniqueness as God made flesh.

False teachers propose that “something more” is needed to make the earnest disciple complete. It may be new knowledge, freshly revealed to the religious leader; it may be ecstatic experiences, which are supposed to usher the individual into new heights of insight; or it may be legalistic activity which demonstrates sincerity.

We need to realize that “Jesus Christ is completely God, and that we are complete in Him. We just need to grow in Him. The Christian always grows by nutrition (or feeding on God’s Word) and not by addition.”

We can’t do anything extra or add anything to our life that will make God favor us more. You see, it’s not about Jesus plus something else, it’s about Christ alone. We need to realize that we have all we ever need in God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

#### **IV. Do Not Be Distracted from Jesus (2:18-19)**

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not

holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

**A. Apparently, the false teachers were telling the believers at Colossae that mystical visions and deeper experiences were necessary to make them truly spiritual.**

People went around worshipping angels and intruding into the realm of the demonic and supernatural.

Today this would equate with purchasing numerous angel trinkets, charms, and statues, thinking they will protect us from harm; or calling miss Cleo on the Psychic Hotline and having our fortune told.

When we do these things we feel a sort of control over our own life and destiny, and we become puffed up by our own mind, as Paul said. We become proud and arrogant in ourselves.

**B. Paul says that this kind of spiritual quest is in fact a dangerous distraction.** The person loses connection with the Head of the church, which is Jesus, from whom the whole body grows. The vision becomes the focus; Jesus becomes secondary.

As a result growth is stunted, and believers are disqualified . . . for the prize . . . Paul does not want Christians to be robbed of assurance and made to feel unspiritual, unfaithful, and in need of something extra – something more and higher than the cross.

## **V. Nothing Else Can Make You Holy (2:20-23)**

20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulation – 21 Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, 22 which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

**A. Paul reasoned here that if we are in Christ Jesus, then we are living under a new law; the law of the Spirit.**

So, why do we seek to be subjected to the laws of this world again – laws which only enslave us – when we have true freedom in the Holy Spirit?

Why do we wish to concern ourselves with so many human commands that tell us, “Don’t touch that, or you will go to hell!” or, “Don’t eat that, or you will be cursed and God will never love you!”? God’s only requirement for gaining His love and acceptance is that we repent and confess His Son, Jesus Christ. The keeping of numerous manmade commandments and laws won’t save us.

Paul’s final warning here is against something called asceticism – which is a religious philosophy that teaches that depriving the body of its normal desires is a means of achieving greater holiness and approval from God.

This uses Self-denial as a self-imposed form of spirituality. Paul says it has an **appearance** of wisdom. It certainly looks spiritual when someone goes through all sorts of sacrifices supposedly to bring them closer to God.

Paul says this kind of behavior has no value in restraining our fleshly desires, as people are taught. In other words, all this external performance has no effect on our internal urges.

**B. We can do many things that give us the appearance of what Paul calls, “false humility,” which is false holiness.**

For example, if we fast often, then others will see us as a godly person, but if we don’t have Jesus in our heart, then it’s a false holiness that’s good for nothing. We believe that by acting holy we will gain entrance into God’s kingdom; but in reality without Jesus in our life, we aren’t going anywhere!

We can hide behind a mask of good deeds in public, but God knows who we really are and how we act when we are away from church.

**C. Think about who you really are inside.** Are you practicing good deeds and religious works in order to fool people into thinking you are a Christian? Are you doing these things to attempt to persuade God to allow you into His kingdom? You can't fool God. The only way into the kingdom is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior then you are already complete, and you don't have to do anything else to gain God's acceptance and favor.

Amen/ Let Us Pray...