

## COLOSSIANS 2:14-23

### Introduction:

\*In last week's lesson, we saw that God has a spiritual baptism and a circumcision for believers in Christ today. Unfortunately Christendom wants to always go back to the physical aspect of using rituals, ceremonies, and requirements regarding the Law.

\*Paul now goes on to describe something wonderful that was included in the work of Christ - our freedom and victory that we have over legalism.

\*Sinful humanity is proud by nature and wants to show itself worthy of God's favor by performing these visible deeds for the Lord. These outward rituals and ordinances help to feed this pride and become attractive to others.

Colossians 2:14 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

1. If God could overlook sin, then the cross would not have been necessary. God though loved sinners so much that He devised a plan to wipe away their unrighteousness.

Ephesians 2:15-16 - Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; Eph. 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

2. The word "handwriting" is the same word from which we get the word "autograph" or "signature". It is used for our signature on an IOU. This means God has erased our sins with the work of Christ.
3. But the good news is also that which was against us (the law that condemned us) has been "blotted out" - erased and taken out of the way. We have been removed from under its condemnation - Law!

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

4. When the handwriting of ordinances was removed, it was fastened with nails to the cross - removing our sin and ending it. When we believe the gospel for today, the D.B.R. of Christ, the Law is finished.

Galatians 3:23-26 - But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Gal. 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal. 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

5. Instead of having the heavy hand of the Law over us and keeping us from yielding to the old man nature of sin, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us. We also have the Word of God to guide and instruct us and our love for Christ for what He has done for us.
6. Satan used the Law to show us what failures we are. But being in Christ, He has removed the dominion and power that Satan held on us. Being set free from the bondage and condemnation of the Law, we believers now live by the law of love and truth.

Galatians 5:14 - For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

7. Today, it is our decision as to what choices we make. This is a big reason why many churches use legalism over you - because they are fearful of this liberty you have in Christ. But this liberty we have by

grace does not give us a license to sin.

Galatians 5:13 - For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

\*Paul now demonstrates how complete Christ's work was on the cross.

Colossians 2:15 - *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

1. Christ has not only made us complete in Him, but He has also triumphed over Satan and his evil forces. These principalities refers to wicked angelic leaders and the fallen angels who had followed Satan in his rebellion.

2. Satan had these spiritual authorities helping him to keep man in darkness and defeated.

II Corinthians 4:4 - In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

3. By Christ's D.B.R., he conquered the evil powers and made a public spectacle of them by triumphing over them. Christ defeated and dethroned Satan. Christ made a show of them openly and humiliated Satan as He passed up through the atmosphere on His way back to heaven. Christ passed right through the very domain of the prince of the power of the air - Satan's world.

4. This is the same triumph that is described in Ephesians 4:8 - *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

\*By the cross, God disarmed and deprived Satan and his evil forces the power they had over the believers, particularly the Colossians.

Colossians 2:16 - Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

1. After lifting Christ up, Paul now begins to focus on the crazy things that hinder our completeness and freedom we have in Christ. One of these false teachings attacking the church in Colosse was legalism.

2. They were putting dietary restrictions, festivals, rituals, and other requirements of the Law on them. Some of these Judaizers were criticizing the Colossians by putting legal practices on top of their faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Paul is telling the Colossians not to allow the Jews to judge them by not paying attention to them. Don't listen to what these fraudulent religionists have to say. Remember, we are complete in Christ.

4. Paul tells them that when the Jews or legalists try to judge believers with the O.T. Jewish prophetic programs (what we eat or drink, the feast days, and the Sabbath days), do not pay attention to them. These things have no merit or application to members of the Body of Christ.

5. All of these things had a part during the Mosaic law period. Leviticus 23 lays out what the Jews had to obey and observe about Israel's feasts and Sabbath days. But since the Law has ceased, they are not to be observed by believers today in the Body of Christ.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 14:17 - For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Colossians 2:17 - Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

1. The Jewish religious observances were "a shadow of things to come". But the substance - "the body is of Christ" is for today. The whole purpose of these rituals was for the Jews to picture, or envision, the reality that would come through Jesus Christ one day.
2. The "shadow of things to come" is a picture of the contents at the tabernacle of Israel (the brazen altar, the seven candlesticks, the table of shewbread, the laver of water, and the Holy of Holies). What these things represent would become a reality in the future.
3. "but the body is of Christ" is that contrast not foreshadowed in the O.T., the Gospels, or early Acts. The O.T. prophets knew nothing about the gospel of grace, the mystery truth for today.

Romans 16:25-26 - Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, Rom. 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Colossians 2:18 - Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

1. Paul is telling the Colossian believers to not let these false religious cults (particularly the Gnostics and others) deceive, or trick, them and cause them to slip back into false practices.  
  
\*It is important to remember that if you know dispensational truth (Paul's mystery truth) and you fall back into unscriptural practices, it will cause you a loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2. Another part of this verse says that these false teachers, acting humble, are clever at using deceptive tricks to actually persuade their prey. Just because someone seems humble does not mean they teach true sound doctrine.
3. "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" means being "puffed up" and thinking you have more wisdom and are far superior with the imagination of the carnal mind. They did not act in subjection to Christ. Their flesh was doing exactly what they themselves wanted to do - independent of Christ.
4. Paul mentions the "worshipping of angels" in this verse. People today seem obsessed with angels. Television and books promote angels all the time and some people even say an angel has spoken to them.
  - a. God says to stop all such worship of angels. The reason why is: Such angels are the fallen evil angels, because the holy angels know that worship must be directed to God only.
  - b. The Gnostics professed to have a deep secret knowledge of angels and many so-called visions. So Paul tells them to stay away from these heretics.
5. Today, we have someone greater than angels that lives in us - the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our weaknesses and need of understanding the truth.

II Timothy 3:16-17 - All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Tim. 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Colossians 2:19 - And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

1. Paul continues his warning to the Colossians about those who were trying to stop the operation of grace, the mystery program, and the Pauline truths from being a part of the believers' lives.
2. "And not holding the Head" means that some people have a loose relationship with Christ. If they turn from grace by following man's religion and if they worship angels, then they are not honoring Christ as the Head of the Body Church.

Colossians 1:18 - And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

3. It is Christ Who feeds and strengthens us, looking to the Lord for sustenance and direction. This is done by His Word and the Holy Spirit within us.

I Corinthians 1:10 - Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

4. If we let Christ's Word and Holy Spirit help in our thinking, then we can act as one having the same opinion or understanding.
5. When we as a church body learn rightly dividing -the mystery gospel of grace - and practice Pauline truth faithfully, we then mature more in the grace of knowledge of Who God is to mankind today.

Colossians 2:20 - Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

1. The basic principles of the world refers here to rituals and ordinances. Paul's challenge was to remind them that since they had been identified with Christ by His D.B.R., they had spiritually been separated from the worldly and religious principles.
2. So Paul says, "Why are you living as if these Pauline truths are not true, by submitting back to these unnecessary ordinances?" Remember what Colossians 2:9-13 said last week!

Colossians 2:9-13 - For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: Col. 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Col. 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Col. 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

3. Paul wants believers to know we have been set free from all those legalistic rule systems. We are to live under what God says to us and not what man wants us to live by in life.

Colossians 2:21 - (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

1. "Touch not" - means as the Jews under Law were not to handle unclean things.
2. "taste not" - these false teachers were saying eating certain foods on a limited basis would help them with their visions by fasting.
3. "handle not" - comes from the Gnostics thought that certain foods would hurt or harm one's soul.

**Note:** By doing this, they were adding to the gospel of grace, and by doing that, they were perverting Paul's gospel.

Colossians 2:22-23 - Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?  
Col. 2:23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

1. Paul had been speaking of these false teachers imposing their cult practices on the Colossian believers. Paul says that the Lord had never given these religious practices as part of the truth for the Mystery Body Church.
2. Even those things, that were scriptural to Israel while under the Law, have been done away with by the work of the cross - Christ. All the physical ordinances are no longer God's message for today.

Galatians 3:23-25 - But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Gal. 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal. 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

3. What is the value of all these practices? Absolutely nothing! Legalism does not help us to have victory over our flesh. Legalism actually causes our flesh to even desire wrong more.  
 \*The more we are religiously told not to do something, the more powerful our sin nature becomes.
4. The only cure against the sins of the flesh individually, or by man-made religion requirements, is the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

Galatians 5:16 - *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.