

## **Colossians Week 2 part 2**

### **Dealing with cultural pressures and false teaching. 2: 6-23**

V 6-7 Following Jesus is the only way to live. You must be securely rooted in Jesus so that you will grow strong and firm in your faith. As we mature (grow) in our understanding then “we will no longer be blown here and there by every wind of teaching and the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.” Ephesians 4: 14. The outflow of this is thanksgiving.

#### **Philosophies of men.**

V 8 Be on your guard against wrong teaching. False teaching is a real threat to the church at Colossae. Paul uses the words of the false teachers to expose their error. The Greek for philosophy (literally means lover of knowledge) is used to describe the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees and was more widely used to describe general thinking and ideas about the basic principles of this world, or elemental spirits, which point to the principle of pagan religion. Pagan religion has its basis in the demonic and can be hidden in human tradition. So be on your guard.

V 9-10 Jesus Christ is the only truth we need, He has the fullness of God in Him, and we have the fullness of Christ in us. Nothing needs adding to this to make us complete. Jesus is the head over every power and authority. Philippians 2: 9-11

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The Colossian Christians needed this assurance of the fullness they had in Jesus, so they could stand against the pagan demonic realm which surrounded them.

#### **Following Jewish Ceremonies**

V 11-17 The local Jewish community were insisting that the law of Moses still had to be observed, even as Christians. Pressure was being applied to non-Jews to be circumcised, this was a sign of being part of God’s special people. Paul assures these Christians that circumcision of the heart, carried out by the Holy Spirit, was the mark guaranteeing they were part of God’s family. Ephesians 1: 13-14 “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

The outward observance of religious rituals was part of the Jewish religious system and had no relevance to the Christian expression of faith. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the written code with its regulations, had been cancelled. We are made alive through faith in Jesus not by observing rituals.

The cross reveals the inability of demonic powers to stand in God’s way of salvation. Paul uses the Roman military illustration of parading a defeated king and army through Rome as a public humiliation for all to see. This is the completeness of what Jesus’ death on the cross accomplished.

## **Angel worship**

V 18-19 These false teachers were saying they had special insight which gave them fresh and new ways of living a life of faith.

Those who claim this special knowledge have actually lost connection with the head, Jesus. The church which functions and grows in a healthy way, grows as God intends, which is acknowledging Jesus as head of the body, His church.

## **Asceticism**

V 20-23 Harsh treatment of a believer's physical body was taught by these false teachers so that they would show how sincere they were in their faith, how dedicated they were to not let the pleasures of the flesh distract them from following God. This was again following rigorous disciplines of do nots and may have included some forms of self-mutilation. The fact that "we have died to the basic principle of this world" releases us from these acts of self-imposed harsh discipline.

Discipline in seeking God through worship, prayer and reading His word is good. This is to develop our relationship with Jesus, the head of the church.

Let us be on our guard *not to add anything to the fact that Jesus paid the full price to make us right with God*, His death on the cross means we have wholeness and completeness in our relationship with God. We can add nothing to what Jesus has accomplished for us.