Colossians

Complete in Christ (Part #2)

Lesson #5

(Col 2:15 – 3:4)

The points we reviewed last week:

**Point #1** **Vs 9** – ***For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,***

**Point #2** **Vs 10** - ***and you have been filled in him, we have been (perfect tense) filled (made complete) in Him.***

**Point #3** **Vs 10b** – ***who is the head of all rule and authority… Jesus is the head (authority over) all principalities and all powers!***

**Point #4** **Vs 11** – ***In Him, we have been circumcised, by the circumcision of the heart.***

**Point #5** **Vs 12** – ***having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.***

**Point #6** **Vs 13** – ***having forgiven us all our trespasses.***

**Point #7 Vs 14** – ***canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.***

***2:13-15 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”***

**Point #8** **Vs 15** – ***He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him*** (at the cross).

At Calvary, Jesus stripped away the power for Satan to slander you and I and put all demonic powers to an open shame.

**Speaking about his coming crucifixion, Jesus said:**

*“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.” (Joh 12:31 ESV)*

The cross and the death of Jesus stands as the emblem of the defeat of Satan and the failure of demonic powers to thwart God’s plan.

But more than simply the failure of demonic powers, at the cross Jesus openly defeated Satan’s power, authority, and kingdom.

The picture is a king who had resisted Rome falling to their power, then being paraded, with his troops through the streets, all as a spectacle to Rome’s power.

**Satan has been defeated; Calvary is a public display of his defeat.**

Not part of this text, but something we must not forget, Satan is still the god of this world, you and I must continue to resist him and struggle against him.

Again, the companion text (Ephesians) is very helpful:

*“12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” (Eph 6:12-13 ESV)*

We must resist the devil and to be successful we need to follow God’s instructions on how to resist him.

**So, what started as a warning, that we can only speculate all that they were teaching that was erroneous, turns into 8 reminders about what we possess in Christ.**

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(Legalism or Jesus)

***2:16-17 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or about a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”***

Let no one judge you on your obedience to these Jewish rituals.

Clearly one of the things these false teachers were advocating was the observance of various Jewish observances. It is likely that false teachers were advancing the necessity for circumcision as well as the need for Christians to keep all the Mosaic ritual laws.

**Food and drink** – dietary laws

**Festivals** – Jewish Holy days like Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, etc.

**New Moon** – Celebration at the first day of the month (Num 28:11-14)

**Sabbaths** – all forms including the weekly requirements (Lev 23)

Now on the face, demanding believers keep all the Jewish food laws, and holidays seems reasonable. It seems like a plausible argument.

The problem, it’s not based on the full revelation of the New Testament. First, it denies what God had told Peter, after he had the same visions three times:

*“****10*** *And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance* ***11*** *and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.* ***12*** *In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.* ***13*** *And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."* ***14*** *But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."* ***15*** *And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common."* ***16*** *This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.” (Ac 10:10-16 ESV)*

This vision involved much more than food, for it involved the Gentiles themselves, but at a minimum it involved food.

Vs 17 - These Old Covenant observances pointed to the **future reality in Christ that you and I are a part of right now.**

All these festivals and celebrations foreshadowed what you now possess and Jesus!

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(Asceticism and mysticism or Jesus)

***2:18-23 “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. 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 — 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used) — according to human precepts and teachings? 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.”***

**Vs 18** – Let no one ***disqualify you***. The Greek word means to **defraud** you, **beguile** you, or deprive you of something that is rightfully yours!

**Error #1 Vs 18a** - ***Insisting on Asceticism*** (the practice of strict or extreme self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline) –

It is the lie, that by heaping on yourself demands God never made you will be more holy, more loved by God, and more accepted by God.

This is exactly what the religious leaders of Israel had done when Jesus showed up on the stage. They had added to the law.

**Error #2 Vs 18b – Mysticism** - There were those who were insisting they worship created beings (angels) and not the creator alone!

This included those who went on and on about visions they had received. This embracing of visions and angel worship was sheer **mysticism** that was **not taking them closer to God, but instead further away!**

**Vs 18c** - But then Paul tells us what is really behind the false humility and the mysticism.

This was really pride, this was natural mindedness, this was really a sensual mind. **This was in all honesty not religious but demonic.**

**Vs 19 -** The people doing these things were actually **destroying Christian unity** as they exalted themselves. They were not nourishing the body. Quite the opposite! They were not holding to the **head Jesus Christ**.

**Vs 20 -** If you have died with Christ and been made alive with Christ, why in the world would you believe that you are saved by keeping man made rules.

All of these additional do nots, that do not come from Scriptures, are nothing more than ***“human precepts”*** and ***“human teachings”!***

**VS 23** – Paul acknowledges that they can have the appearance of wisdom.

But what they are really doing is promoting a self-made religion and promoting man’s ideas of what holiness and godliness looks like.

**V 24** Ascetism and legalism have one point in common. **They can do nothing to help us overcome the power of our fallen nature.**

**In conclusion, as Paul has taught against error and he provided eight key points about our completeness in Christ!**

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***3:1-4 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.***

If then, is a first-class conditional, as you remember for the sake of this argument, we are to assume it is true, and indeed Paul has proven it to be true.

*having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.****13****And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him… (Col 2:12-13a)*

You and I have been raised, by Christ, to walk in newness of life.

We are right now, spiritually entered into Christ death and resurrection. This occurred the moment we believed!

***4****But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,****5****even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—****6****and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:4-6, ESV).*

You and I have enjoyed the first part of the resurrection now (eternal life), life lived in Christ, metaphorically seated in the heavens with him now and we wait the fullness of the resurrection (our glorified bodies).

Paul said it this way to the church in Galatia:

***20****I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20, ESV).*

You and I have been made alive in Christ, Christ is now living in us, we live by faith, we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, by faith.

If this is all true… AND IT IS!

**Vs 1b – 2 *seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.***

Vs 1b – ***seek*** is present tense and indicates a continuous action. It is the idea of seek and keep seeking!

Paul is advocating a preoccupation with heaven govern the believers in Colossae’s earthly responses.

Vs 1b – Seek to know Christ better, seek to understand who He is and what He has done from you. Seek to grow and mature in your faith, set your mind on spiritual matters and let those govern your response to earthly matters.

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Mt 6:33 ESV)*

Seek to live worthy of your calling and worthy of what Christ has done for you (Eph 4:1; Col 1:10).

Christ is the one seated at the right hand of the Father, in the place of preeminence (name above all names, Phi 2) and the place of authority (Col 2:10).

Because this is all true, set your mind on things above. Remove your focus from things on earth.

**Vs 3 - *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

We have died to the worldly system (Gal 6:14), Paul expressed it this way in Galatians:

***20****I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20, ESV).*

This language indicates more than our death to this worldly system. Paul uses language that highlights our safety and our security in Christ (hidden with Christ in God).

*“28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one."” (Joh 10:28-30 ESV)*

*“31 ¶ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 8:31-39 ESV)*

**Vs 4 -** ***When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.***

When he **“appears”** then we will **“appear”** with him in glory. This is what awaits every believer and what every believer is waiting for. The appearance of our Lord.

Paul described it this way to the church in Thessalonica:

*“****16*** *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ***17*** *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (1Th 4:16-17 ESV)*

To the church in Corinth:

*“51 ¶ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."” (1Co 15:51-54 ESV)*

**When Jesus (who is our life right now) returns, we shall be resurrected, receive our new glorified bodies, and we shall be with Him in glory! T**hese truths should shape our reality today. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_