



May 5, 2024

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Colossians 2:16-23

“The Substance of Christ”

SUMMARY

Last week we heard Paul remind the Colossians of four guiding principles, each referring to a different aspect of Christian development or discipleship:

1. As you Received...so Live!
2. As you are Rooted...be built up!
3. As you were taught...be established in truth!
4. Oh, and be Thankful!

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

We have been raised with Christ, and the record of our debts, of our sins, has been nailed to the cross by Jesus. We are no longer subject to it. We have been born again and set free. So, considering that, let's live like it.

In our text today the first thing we should notice is there is another “therefore.” This is the second of five “therefores” in the letter. And, as always, we need to ask, “what is it there for?” This is connecting what Paul just said to what he is about to say.

Verses 8-19 contain three warnings.

1. Don't let anyone kidnap you! (Verse 2:8) (Last Week)
2. Don't let anyone condemn you! (Verse 2:16)
3. Don't let anyone disqualify you! (Verse 2:18)

Today's pericope is ordered around three main verbs. The first two are imperatives:

“See to it that no one takes you captive...” (NRSV)

“Do not let anyone disqualify you...” (NRSV)

The third main verb is a part of the question he asks in 2:20, “why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?” (NRSV)

QUOTES/THOUGHTS FROM THE SERMON:

Screwtape writes: "Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours – and the more 'religious' (on those terms) the more securely ours."

—CS Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

"Salvation by faith in Christ sounds too easy for many people. They would rather think that they have done something to save themselves. Their religion becomes one of self-effort that leads either to disappointment or pride, but finally to eternal death. Christ's simple way is the only way, and it alone leads to eternal life."

—NIV Life Application Bible

"When I was a monk, I wearied myself greatly for almost fifteen years with the daily sacrifice, tortured myself with fastings, vigils, prayers, and other very rigorous works. I earnestly thought to acquire righteousness by my works."

—Martin Luther

"One of the marks of a certain type of bad man is that he cannot give up a thing himself without wanting every one else to give it up..."

That is not the Christian way. An individual Christian may see fit to give up all sorts of things for special reasons—marriage, or meat, or beer, or the cinema; but the moment he starts saying the things are bad in themselves, or looking down his nose at other people who do use them, he has taken the wrong turning."

—Mere Christianity, pp. 78-79.

QUESTIONS

- 'Religion' is based on performance. It is based on the idea that spirituality is about observance of rules. According to verse 16, how do religious people view others?
- The Old Testament taught us to observe many things such as, keep the Sabbath; not to have tattoos; not to eat pork; not to wear a sweater mixed with both wool and cotton; and not to forget the Passover etc. Why according to verse 17 are these no longer applicable?
- What are some rules that are sometimes added to Scripture? What are your thoughts on these rules?
- How does Paul contrast our life in Christ with a life ruled by human teachings, traditions, and spiritualities?
- Are there things in your Christian walk that you either say, "Oh, I don't think Christians should do that?" or "If you are a Christian, then you should do this?" If so, what is your biblical basis for it? If those are hard and fast commands from the Bible, then you should be able to back it up from Scripture. If not, then you should evaluate why you believe them.
- Are you imposing specific regulations on yourself or others as if those are a means to righteousness?
- How can you personally develop a deeper relationship with Jesus?
- How can we avoid a rules-based approach to our faith?
- What happens as we grow fully mature in Christ?
- Where are you still in the habit of living as though you belonged to this world? Ask God to help you grow into the full and substantial life he won for you in Christ.
- What is one area of your life that doesn't reflect Jesus? What would it look like today to confess it to God and ask Him to help you honor Him in that area of your life?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Consider using Colossians 2:6 as the basis of your prayer.

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."