

Guarding Your Treasure Colossians 1: 16-23

Intro: It was 15 yrs ago today that I sat in a little café up in Blue Jay having lunch w/ my friend Jon Courson.

A) It was actually the first time that we had really spent any time together – Jon was speaking at a youth retreat I was leading – I took the opportunity to get some alone time with him

B) As we sat there fellowshiping and talking about the Lord – Some elderly people in the booth next to us were **ease dropping on our Conversation**

1) As we got up to leave they commented on how wonderful it was to see two young men – talking so openly about the Lord in a public place

C) It was then – I experienced what I like to call one of those Courson Moments – Jon got down on one Knee –

1) eye level w/ them as they were sitting in their booth – and said *WHO BETTER TO TALK ABOUT ON THIS INDEPENDENCE DAY – THAN THE ONE WHO BROUGHT US TRUE INDEPENDENCE*

D) You could tell that in that little statement – those people were touched their hearts were stirred – **Yea True Independence**

I was reminded of that this week being up in the Mts at Twin Peaks for family camp & speaking over at the Youth Camp – Passed that café

A) I echo – Jon’s heart this morning – who better to be talking about on this day of Independence than the one who brought us true

B) **Liberty is a treasure** – That needs to be Protected – What Our response to 911 was all about –

1) Statue of liberty – An Emblem of that Liberty and Freedom

C) The Liberty that we have in this country is something that I hope everyone in this room appreciates and holds dear

1) I have traveled to eastern block countries that lived for centuries under communistic rule – seen the after math of that – It is Not pretty picture

The Liberty that we have in this country is definitely a treasure that needs to GUARDED

A) Even more so – the Liberty that we have in Christ – it is an even greater TREASURE – it needs to be Guarded

B) That is the heart that Paul brings here in this second Chapter of Col

1) Twice in this Chapter – he warns that the believers here would not be CHEATED

C) Recall – describes what a conquering army would do to the people that they just defeated – **Take their Spoil – for themselves**

1) Take them away captive

D) And at the heart of what Paul is referring to here – we have this incredible freedom in Christ – Riches & blessings because of our relationship w/ Christ

1) Paul is warning – *Don’t let anyone Cheat you* – Don’t let them rip you off

E) Don’t let them take away the fullness of all that you enjoy in Jesus all that is Yours because of Him – lead you away captive by deceptive Heresies

Paul deals w/ 4 in this Chapter – we looked at the first one last week – Philosophy – pick up in vs. 16 dealing w/ LEGALISM – Rd v. 16-23

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

A) The warning included two areas – [**DIET AND DAYS**]

1) Regarding their being judged about diet, there were those who were saying that the way to God and spiritual fullness would be enhanced if the

Colossian **believers** returned to **the dietary laws of the Old Testament.**

C) See the Old Testament categorized certain foods as clean and unclean (see Leviticus 11:2–20).

D) Now Unknown to the Jew, there were excellent physical reasons for the Old Testament DIETARY laws,

1) Which Dr. S. I. Macmillen has catalogued in his interesting book, *None of These Diseases.*

E) But There were also spiritual reasons: The distinctions between the foods was meant to serve in a symbolic sense –

1) **as a picture between purity/ impurity**

But when Jesus came, those dietary laws were abolished.

A) **In Fact Jesus said to the Pharisees, who were offended by his liberated eating habits:** *(Mark 7:18–22; “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And then he said, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²²deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³“All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”*

B) In saying this, Jesus was showing that food was not the issue but the heart –

1) **Remember Peter’s vision in Acts 10** - he saw a sheet lowered from Heaven, crawling with unclean and forbidden animals.

C) “Then a voice told him, *‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’* Peter replied *‘Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.’*

1) The voice spoke to him a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’

D) God was sending Peter a double message – the dietary laws had Changed and – that God was going to use Peter that day to share the gospel to gentiles

Paul also had something to say on this matter - in 1 Corinthians 8:8 “But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.”

A) So the New Testament Scriptures are unified in telling us that all food and drink are lawful.

B) Now it is true that dietary principles are a good idea. – You eat unhealthy things all the time – **you will not be a healthy person.**

1) So it is good to have some discipline when it comes to your diet –

C) But Paul’s point here is that dietary discipline is not a sign of spirituality.

The mark of a person’s spirituality is their heart
1) What is going on in the heart – that is the Key –

D) SO We are not to judge others, or allow anyone to pass a religious judgment on us, **in regard to food and drink.**

The same applies to days.

A) The Jews had their special FESTIVALS or feast days celebrated at certain times of the year /

B) They had their monthly New Moon celebration/ and their weekly Sabbath

1) Problem was that for many of them their mark of spirituality revolved around **those celebrations & their adherence to keep them**

C) Same thing today: People think they are fine with God if they attend mass once a week / go through confirmation / attend a Church service

1) **Because They have been baptized.**

D) The whole problem with that type of mentality is that it creates a religion that is based purely on performance / following the rituals –

1) **AND NOT RELATIONSHIP**

The Feast days Sabbath's and celebrations held an important part in Israel's history – but they were merely shadows & pictures – POINTING TO JESUS – HE IS THE REAL THING

A) Consider the Festivals or feast days : There were seven major feast days in Israel's history

B) **Feast #1 Passover** - April 14th. Commemorating the deliverance from Egypt - **Blood shed of Passover lamb**

1) Passover was a Shadow of the UTLIMATE DELIVERANCE that Jesus would bring as the Passover lamb – who came to take away sins of the world

C) Feast #2 Was the feast of Unleavened Bread –

This feast Commemorates Ex. 12 after Passover / angel of death passed the Egyptians distraught urged them to leave – left in a hurry

And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

D)They were in such a hurry to get out of Egypt that they left behind their leaven

E) Leaving of the Leaven Commemorated their leaving of the world Behind

- 1) Egypt being symbolic of the world... Pharaoh being symbolic of Satan... They LEFT behind with their LEAVEN

Now This feast looks forward in EXPECTATION to Jesus

A)The unleavened bread speaks of the body of Jesus Christ/ In Him NO sin

B) The **unleavened bread** was baked in a hot oven

1) Even as **Jesus endured the fiery wrath** of God on the cross

C) The unleavened bread was striped and pierced

1) Even as the body of Jesus was striped and pierced

Interesting During the Passover meal... that was in conjunction with the Feast of Unleavened Bread...

A)They would make 3 round loaves of flat bread for the feast.

The middle loaf was BROKEN/ wrapped in Linen and it was HIDDEN.

B) During the time of the dinner the children would search through the house looking for the lost piece of broken bread.

1)When they would find it they would bring it in to the family& they would all rejoice over finding the **BROKEN the HIDDEN** piece of bread.

C) Interesting that This is a TRADITIONAL PART of the feast for which

the Jew has no explanation. Why **THREE pieces?**

- 1) Why the **MIDDLE one BROKEN?**

E)Why was the BROKEN piece HIDDEN?/ Why the REJOICING when it

was found? THEY don't know but WE do!!

The 3 pieces of bread represent the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

A) The middle piece represents the Son. the 2nd person of the trinity... whose body was striped and pierced...

1) whose body was wrapped in burial linens... and hidden in the tomb

B)At the last supper Jesus, Jesus took the MIDDLE piece and He BROKE

and said "*Take and eat for this is MY body which is BROKEN for you*".

After Passover there was the feast of first fruits –

A) They remembered how God brought them into the land of Promise

B) They were brought THROUGH the wilderness And brought INTO a land flowing with milk and honey

1) In thanksgiving for that they were to take the FIRST fruits and offer it to the Lord

C) This Feast was a SHADOW of the RESURRECTION of Jesus

1Cor. 15:20 *Jesus is the First Fruits of those who have risen from the Dead*

Next came the feast of Pentecost which took place 50 days after the feast of first fruits

A) The feast of Pentecost commemorates the giving of the Law to his people after their deliverance from Egypt – Established a Covenant w/ them

B) The day the law was given – 3,000 souls died

C) Shadow however of the New Covenant that the Lord JESUS would establish W/ HIS Church some 50 days after his Resurrection

1) Day of Pentecost – The Holy Spirit would fall upon his Disciples Baptizing them – That day 3,000 souls saved –

Next came The Feast of Trumpets

A) The **COMMEMORATION** was the gathering together of the people of God – all the tribes brought together

B) **In that day there were no telephones or email**

1) The way of communication was through the blowing of trumpets

C) The Feast of Trumpets is a Shadow of the when Jesus is going to gather his Church – at the RAPTURE

1Ths. 4:16 ⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

The 6th feast was the day of Atonement

A) Sacrifice for sins – once a year – lamb sacrifice blood sprinkled on the mercy seat - / goat led away – sins put away

B) It was **A day of RESTORATION**...All sin in Israel was forgiven

C) The Day of Atonement – shadow of the Death of Christ – sins forgiven / sins put away – At one- ment – One with God

D) It also foreshadowed what is going to happen to Israel at the 2nd coming of Christ – See Him (Messiah pierced)

1) ask *where did you get those scars – house of my friends* – It is then they are going to realize – Jesus is the Messiah – Atonement -

AFTER the Atonement comes the LAST and the most JOYOUS of the feasts The Feast of Tabernacles

A) **COMMEMORATION** - They remembered that at one time they were pilgrims going through the wilderness

B) They **REMEMBERED** that God had carried them through that and provided for them and protected them

1) They made booths of palm branches & camped out for a week/ Family C

C) They rejoiced and feasted over the fact that God saw them through the wilderness

This is the ONE feast that we are told with CERTAINTY will be celebrated throughout the millennium

Zech. 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up

from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

A) Now WHY are we going to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles throughout the Millennium?

B) To commemorate that we too have been brought through the wilderness experience of this life on earth

1) We are going to have a camp out once a year in Jerusalem

C) We'll rejoice in how God delivered and provided and protected us through our earthly pilgrimage

D) So these were the seven feasts that Israel celebrated throughout the year.

The Celebration of the New moon was a monthly feast – Celebrated at the beginning of a New Month – symbolized a new Beginning

A) Again it was a Picture of the New Beginning that Jesus brings to those who put their Trust in Him

B) **Then there was the weekly Sabbath – day of rest – a day set apart to honor the Lord**

1) The Sabbath was a Shadow of the Complete rest that Jesus Brings to those who receive Him – follow Him

C) God Created the earth after 6 days – Declared that He was finished
On the 7th day he rested

D) Jesus cried from the CROSS – It is FINISHED – Made a way for man to experience **rest from his labors**

1) Rest from his pursuits at trying to keep the law –

The Judiazers wanted to take the believers into Judaism – keeping the rituals and Sabbath – as a form of spirituality

A) Paul's point is clear – Folks – those are Shadows –

B) A shadow has no substance in itself, / it has no existence or meaning apart from what it is a shadow of

1.) *It only exists as evidence of the real thing*

C) So here is his point - Why, should anyone be satisfied with a SHADOW when he can have the real thing?

1) Why focus on the old sacrifices-which are only copies & shadows of forgiveness & reconciliation.

D) Why be satisfied w/ the shadow when he can have real forgiveness and real reconciliation in Jesus Christ?

1) My kids when I come home from a trip run out & hug my shadow – Why be satisfied with a shadow when you can have the real thing.

So here Paul is dealing with the 2nd false influence that was trying to find it's way into the Church in Colossae

A) The tendency of these Legalist to try and put people under rules and regulations – All bond up in Days & Rituals

B) We need to be careful as well today – because there is always the danger of slipping into Legalism

1) **There is an authentic lure to legalism.**

People like a system – tell me what I need to do – { No relationship

C) Legalism is a popular thing because you can “measure” your spiritual life by it —and even brag about it! - Look at what I am doing !!!!!

However legalism also has its downside. 1st It spawns judgmentalism.

A) Legalism makes us narrow and divisive. The legalist insists that everyone live up to the standard they have adopted.

B) In other words, everyone needs to be like me. Legalism is highly contagious, it can spread like a bad virus through an entire congregation.

1) And **It produces a grotesque uniformity.**

C) Whenever you find legalism dominant, you will find people who dress the same way and use the same speech, posture, and manners—

1) When we think this way, we miss the delight of diversity in the church.

It is Interesting that Paul does not say, “*Forbid the faithful to keep special days and special diets.*”

A) Rather he says, (v. 16) *“Do not let anyone judge you” in these things.*

B) Point being There is great liberty in what we Christians can do: we can keep days and diets, or forget them.

1) But he rejects the right of anyone to judge and/or compel another to comply with his own preferences.

C) We are not to judge others by these things, or allow others to judge us.

2nd Legalism is intrinsically joyless, as the savage tribesman observed when a missionary was trying to convert him.

A) The tribesman was very old and the missionary was very OT, with a version of Christianity which leaned very heavily on the “thou shalt nots.”

B) After listening to what the missionary said, the tribesman replied, *“To be old and to be Christian, they are the same thing!”*

1) Legalism can take a vibrant faith and make **it dull and lifeless**. It can evaporate enthusiasm, jettison joy, and stifle spirituality.

C) Instead of finding freedom through Christ, many believers become burdened by the church.

3rd legalism produces a surface faith, because its adherents emphasize the things which are not really important.

A) Their “do nots” ignore deadly sins such as coveting, gossiping, slandering, bitterness, and hatred.

B) Legalism limits one to shallow self-righteousness, and that turns into bondage – Peter called it a yoke upon the neck in Acts 15:10

1) And Paul used the same image when he warned the Galatians – Gal 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage

C) Legalism turns into that bondage – surface faith – based entirely on how one is performing – not on grace or relationship

1) *Begun in the spirit are you now going to be perfected in the flesh*

4th Legalism makes it impossible for people to see Jesus.

A) There is nothing that pushes a seeker away faster than a list of rules and regulations.

B) We inadvertently portray Jesus as a drill sergeant instead of the Savior.