

Guarding Your Treasure Part 2 Colossians 2:18-23

Intro: Growing up at CCCM – Jr high there was a game that we used to play that I really loved – Capture the Flag –

A) Divide group into 2 teams – Colored arm Bands { Sometimes it was Cowboys & Indians – each team had a Flag – they were to protect

B) Coned area – The goal was to get the other teams flag – get it across to your side of the field – without getting tagged

1) The really good players – would come in by STEALTH – They would casually walk across the lines – hiding their arm band

C) They were appearing to be what they weren't – they were appearing to be an Indian for instance when they were really a Cowboy –

D) That is exactly what the false teacher does – They appear to be what they are not – Appeal to be For Christ – in reality – NOT OF CHRIST

1) Their goal is to Rob you of your treasure -

Here in Chapt 2 Paul is dealing w/ the subject of false teaching-

A) Here in Colossae - the False teachers were coming in by Stealth – appearing to be for Christ – but in reality – NOT OF CHRIST

B) They were saying that Jesus was Cool – Jesus was Important – but HE WASN'T SUPREME- there was more – need to add to Jesus certain things

1) So that is primarily what Paul is dealing with here in Ch. 2 { **Rd v.8-23**

Now I know that this section in some ways has not been fun & uplifting and inspirational, really it is just the opposite,

A) It is difficult, it's harsh and it flies in the face of the Global religion of the day, which is Tolerance.

B) But it is a section of Scripture that we have to know and understand because false teaching is as prevalent today as it has ever been.

1) Plus it is easier for False teachers to get to us today – INFO AGE

C) Now in this section Paul breaks down false teaching into 4 basic elements, here they are, first you have Man based philosophies,

1) then you have **Legalism**, adherence to religious rules and regulations , then **hyper spirituality or mysticism**,

D) lastly you have Asceticism, the Practice of radical self denial,

E) All false religions will fall into one of these FOUR categories or sometimes a combination of these FOUR categories.

Now we have already talked about the first two, Man based Philosophies and legalism,

A) Today I want to Consider the last two, mysticism and Asceticism. Let's start with Mysticism. Look at verses 18 and 19.

18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

B) Now this is the 2nd time that Paul has made this plea **Let no one cheat you** 1st in v.8 = **Take away your Treasure & to take you away CAPTIVE**

C) This word could also be translated **DEFRAUD** – Which means to declare someone as being unworthy of a prize.

1) It's like stripping someone of the Gold Medal that they had won at the Olympics

D) Now one of the ways that the False teachers seek to do this is by telling you that you are not worthy of fellowship w/ God –

1) you are unworthy of standing in His presence- for that reason you

need is someone who will represent you to God,

2) Someone who will be a **MEDIUM** between you & God.

Note this is a Common Characteristic of most false religions –

A) False teachers and their doctrine **are always trying to get something or someone, between you and God.**

B) In the case of the MYSTICS - **their medium of choice were Angels.**

1) They believed that men and women could pray to Angels and that the Angels would then pray to God on their behalf.

C) Now the way that they would approach this was thru a Pseudo type of Humility –

1) They would say – *we are not claiming to have all the answers*

D) *In fact we realize that there are others who are a lot closer to God than us – like the Angels - - We need to learn from them – Look to them.*

In Recent yrs we have seen a resurgence of interest in Angels –

A) **It was only a year or so ago that some of the books on the NY Times best sellers list – about Angles – Mediums –**

B) **People were getting all excited about Angels – And that is what was happening in Colossae – Local Starbucks – talking - Angelogy –**

1) Problem was they were ascribing to the Angelic beings – Position that the Bible – never gave them – Not Mediums but ministering spirits

B) **What they were doing is Similar to the New age – They have spirit guides – well the Gnostic's had angelic spirit guides 2000 years ago.**

1) This points us to the fact that there is **nothing new in false religion, it's just a rehash of the same old stuff.**

C) **It's the same idea, you are unworthy of approaching God so you need someone that will stand between you and God.**

D) Other ways that this false teaching has infiltrated the Church is thru the Practice of Praying to the Saints & also Praying to Mary

Now this mentality completely ignores two Key Biblical Doctrines about the Christian life – The first is seen here in our text – v.19

A) The fact that you are a part of Christ – You are connected to Christ – You no don't need a Mediator –

B) My kids approach me – they don't need to call the Church and make an Appointment w/ Margy - open door any time Excuse me – { Pastors Kids –

C) Well Paul uses an even Richer description here – we are a part of Him – His Body – **He is the Head we from whom the rest of the body is nourished**

1) In other words we have a direct link to Jesus – like the Joints and Ligaments have a direct link to the Brain –

D) We don't need a go between because we are as connected as you could possible be .

#2 – Paul declared in 1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*

A) **To put this plainly Jesus cut out all of the middle men, no need for guru's, no need for religious systems that tell you how to get to God,**

B) There is no need for spirit guides, no need for the **physic hot line**, you need one thing and one thing only, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

C) **Jesus said it Himself, He said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me”***

1) That is about as straight forward as you can get.

D) “That's a radical claim, how could Jesus make a claim like that?”

1) Well Jesus can make this claim because **He did what no other religious LEADER was able to do,**

2) **and that was to deal with that which was keeping you from God which was your sin.**

Jesus dealt with your sin by becoming sin for you – Died at Calvary – And Rose again 3 days later Prove that He was the Real Deal

A) And when He died - **VIEL WAS RENT – OPEN ACCESS** - You & I are free to spend time w/ God – **CLOSENESS W/ GOD – THRU JESUS**

B) I have been pondering this past week the Picture we have in the Scriptures of the Church as the Bride of Christ –

1) It is one of the most Prominent Pictures – but the least talked about –
2) We are living in anticipation of a **WEDDING – OURS TO JESUS**

C) We are living in anticipation of a wedding Feast – ours w/ the Lord

Now think w/ me for a moment – what does a young groom want the most from his bride - Love / Communion / Faithfulness

A) Listen that is what Jesus desires – **LOVE HIM / spend time w/ Him**
Stay Faithful to Him

B) **STARTS W/ LOVE** – God said to Israel not Sacrifice I am looking for – it is **OBEDIENCE** -

1) that sounds **BURDENSOME** until we understand what he is wanting us to be obedient to.

C) **Jesus put it this way – all of the commandments are summed up in these two – Love the Lord – w/ all your heart /soul/ mind / strength**

1) And the 2nd is the by product of the first – Love each other

D) Jesus our Bride groom says to us – **His Bride to be – LOVE ME !!!**

So these false teachers in Colossae were ignoring the reality of our Connection to Christ – and that He is the only Mediator that we Need.

A) **A good test of any teaching is this – Does it hook you into Jesus or is it hooking you into some other prophet - / guru / spirit guide**

B) do they **strengthen your relationship with God, or do they make you more dependent on the prophet/ the Guru / the Medium**

C) **False teachers want you dependent on their prayers, their prophecies, their miracles, their ministry, whatever it might be.**

1) But True Teachers and ministers want you dependent upon Jesus Christ, everything that they do is designed to strengthen your relationship with Him.

D) **So don't let anyone, rob you by telling you that you are unworthy or not spiritual enough to have that type of relationship w/ God**

1) This is what Jesus came to do, bring you back into fellowship with the Father. - **His great joy is to connect you personally with God.**

E) Well the last element of false teaching that Paul addresses here is Asceticism. **Listen to what Paul says in verses 20-23{ Read**

The bottom line to asceticism is the issue of how are we going to be changed.

A) **How are we going to become more spiritual, more Christ like, will it be from the outside in, or from the inside out.**

B) Let me explain, the Essenes, which was the religious group that was practicing this form of spirituality in Colossae

1) would say that receiving Jesus as your Lord and Savior was good, but if you wanted to take that to the next level,

C) you had to basically kill your flesh, your carnal nature, so that the real spiritual you, could be realized.

D) The way to do this was **to deny the flesh not just of the luxuries of life, but even of some of the necessities of life,**

1) **And then to punish the flesh by putting it through horrible hardships.**

E) And so they came up with lists of stuff that you couldn't eat, and couldn't drink and activities that you couldn't do. & things that you couldn't own

1) **Which would deprive the flesh and punish the flesh with the hope that the heart and the**

will and the nature would be changed in the process.

They also had lists of stuff that you had to do if you were really spiritual, like fasting & all night prayer sessions & vows of silence, & vows of poverty, or vows of chastity. { Even for those who were married

A) Doing these things **was supposed to guarantee that you would become more spiritual.**

B) These were all outward things that were supposed to have an inward effect on your life

{ So Asceticism says Deprive the Flesh

1) But in reality Asceticism feeds the flesh – by Starving it

C) **It feeds our Pride** – It says look how spiritual I am look at all that I am doing – Look at how I am Depriving MYSELF

1) Cosby – So stupid – great family time

D) Paul says the Problem with this mentality is that it provides no real power against the indulgence of the Flesh –

NLT *But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.*

See I can say that I am never going to eat Chocolate Brownies w/ Ice Cream again - But the Problem is I still want to

A) **Soup plantation – I am in trouble – Christmas party – I am in trouble - I want to – You know what Chances are – I will**

B) **Almost - Every time I announce – DIET** – My wife Bakes – I have no will power – Even when I do – It is frustrating because I want it

1) **Not watching Cosby – I wanted to be – Laughing – I am wondering what is going on - Trying to read my Bible -**

C) Our sinful nature is that way – Yearns for things – We can avoid them

1) **But it is a far greater thing – when we don't desire those things anymore - That is what God does –**

D) I know people who used to drink like a Faucet – always drinking –

1) Now they don't even desire it – not a temptation – Be around it – not freaking out

E) Asceticism is impotent – because it doesn't Change the inside – and so nothing permanent is going to happen on the outside.

Commenting on the futility of asceticism, the great nineteenth century Scottish preacher Alexander McClaren wrote, *"Any asceticism is a great deal more to men's taste than abandoning self. They will rather stick hooks in their backs and do the 'swinging poojah' than give up their sins and yield up their wills. There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us and that is the power of the indwelling Christ. Ascetic religion is godless, for its practitioners essentially worship themselves.*

Now I want to be clear here, **I'm not saying that discipline is not good and that spiritual habits and routines are not productive.**

A) **They are. The question is the motivation!!!!**

B) **Are you doing these things because you feel like you have to in order to please God / trying to EARN HIS FAVOR**

1) or are you doing them because you love God and know that you are already in HIS FAVOR – NOT YOUR PERFORMANCE – JESUS

C) The answer to that question is so critical. - **On the one side** you are trying to add something that what God has done,

1) God began the work, you are going to complete it or at least maintain it, with your good works – **by Depriving your Flesh**

D) **On the other side**, you know that Jesus has done it all and you are going enjoy it and live in it and be motivated by it.

Think of it this way: , trying to become more spiritual by outward disciplines would be like you going out and buying a Van Gogh painting, A) After you bring it home- you think, this could use a

little more color and a little more detail, so you take out your finger paints

B) Now would anyone in their right mind do that ? No, you don't do that.

1) Because **When Van Gogh was done, he was done, and what he created is a master piece. SO Don't mess with it.**

C) Well In the same way, **the salvation that Jesus accomplished for you is a master piece, & there is nothing that can be added to it.**

1) In fact **anything you try to add to will just mess it up, so don't.**

D) **Just enjoy it, just live in it, just hold fast to the Head, let Him do the work inside you that will motivate you to love and good works.**

It is Understanding that as a Christian you are free from the rules and regulations of this world, you are literally dead to them,

A) **they are no longer the controlling force in your life.** { Free

B) The only restriction **that God has placed on your life is to stay away from the things that are sinful,**

1) Because that which **is sinful will cut you off from the life of God.**

C) And really **that is the key - *The key is holding fast to the Head***, the key is abiding in Christ, letting His life flow in you.

1) If you do you will have all that you need for life and godliness, your life will be complete in Him.

D) And notice this, **end of v.19 when you are holding fast to Jesus, you *will grow with an increase that is from God.***

1) **Here's what that means**, we will grow according to God's time table, in the areas that He really wants us to grow in.

D) Can I tell you this, God's timetable is not always our timetable,

1) **and God's idea of where we need to grow do not always match up with our ideas of where we need to grow.**

Here is our timetable, we want it now, we want the instant fix, the instant healing, the instant blessing.

A) Pray for me & let's be done w/ this. That is not always the way God works.

B) **Often times God needs to lay the foundation before He can build the house. But We just want the house.**

1) But the house without the foundation will eventually crumble and fall.

C) So God will do the work, line upon line, precept upon precept, in His time.

1) He will lay the foundation **so that when the blessings comes**, when the **miracle comes**, when the **provision comes**, it will produce lasting fruit.

D) **As we hold fast to Jesus, we will grow with the increase that comes from God.**

1) **That is the growth that you want and the growth that you need.**

So the answer to the Vain Philosophies of Man- In Christ is the Fullness of God found and Available

The answer to legalism is the **continual realization of the grace of Christ.**

The answer to mysticism is an understanding of how profoundly we are **related to Christ.** – We have a Mediator

The answer to asceticism is the reckoning that we have died, been buried, and are resurrected with Christ.

So Hold on to Jesus – Stay close to Jesus – Draw near – Love HIM