

Alive In Christ

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 July 2023

Preacher: Michael Kingston

[0 : 00] Tonight we're going to be in Colossians, and we're going to be looking at chapter 2, verses 6-15.

If you can, would you please stand with me as we read God's Word. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, 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.

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and this uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[1 : 29] This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them. May God add a blessing to the reading of this word. You may be seated.

So, tonight, as we look at Colossians, we're going to be talking about false teaching. That's what Paul is trying to combat here.

But before we dive into that, I want to share kind of a little bit of a story that I found about nobody likes to be lied to, right? And we know that lying is a sin, and most people kind of see it that way, that it's not socially acceptable and potentially harmful.

Now, some people are smart enough to believe that they can spot a liar and have no worries about being duped. But current research on this subject plainly shows that they are not giving credit to man's master ability to distort and deceive.

Now, researchers list a surprising 102 possible nonverbal cues that are alleged to expose a liar. I had no idea that there was 102 possible nonverbal cues.

[2 : 44] My wife gives me nonverbal cues all the time, and I completely miss them. No, she's not a liar, but she gives me a lot of nonverbal cues that I miss.

Now, the most prominent ones are averted gaze, blinking, talking louder, shrugging, shifting posture, and movement of the heads, hands, arms, and legs.

So, if you see me making some exaggerated gestures up here, I'm not lying, I promise. Now, numerous studies have found people to be overconfident in their perception of judgment.

A study at a Texas Christian university revealed that no student volunteers were only able to pick true from false statements better than 54% of the time, just slightly above chance.

Now, even experts who are trained in this area are failing. Studies found that police officers know better than 50-50 in recognizing true and false statements told during recorded outbursts by emotional family members who were later found to have committed horrific crimes.

[3 : 52] And psychologist Ronald Fisher, who actually trains FBI agents, warns that good liars are good liars. Now, liars do feel more nervous, but that's more of an internal feeling that they have, as opposed to how they behave as observed by others.

And a lot of us like to think that we wouldn't be duped, that we can spot a liar. But in reality, we actually have a really hard time doing so.

And that is what false teachers do. They lie and they deceive. Now, this brings me to the main point of my sermon this morning, or this evening, I should say.

And that is that we be on guard against false teaching and remember who we are and what Christ has done for us. That we be on guard against false teaching and remember who we are and what Christ has done for us.

So, tonight we're going to look at four main ideas. Those being our walk in Christ, being cautious of false teaching, remembering who Christ was, and remembering what Christ did for us.

[5 : 04] So, the first point that we come to is our walk in Christ. Colossians 6, 6 and 7 says, Paul wants to remind these people that they had actually received Christ.

That they are Christians, right? And that's who Paul is writing to. He's writing to Christians. And he wants to remind them, right? They had received Christ.

They were saved. He then tells them to walk in Christ. Now, this kind of takes them back to what he kind of said earlier in Colossians in verse 1, 10.

So, as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. He wants them to walk in a way that is worthy of the Lord. He's reminding them of what their job was supposed to be, right? Do we walk in a manner that is worthy of Jesus?

[6 : 19] Do we live our lives in such a way that we bear fruit and increase in our knowledge of God? Now, for me, when I was called to the ministry in high school, I was around 16, 17 years old, and I was actually at a church camp.

And that year, God was calling me to the ministry. And when I first got back, I was actually really passionate about wanting to bear fruit and increase in my knowledge of God, to walk in a worthy manner.

But as I got older, when I was, you know, 18 and looking at college and what the plan was and where I was going to go, I pulled away from that call.

I thought I knew better about what was best for me. And I was completely wrong. I actually spent a miserable year and a half at Missouri State in Springfield, where after a year and a half of being there, my GPA was a 1.6.

Yeah, it was bad. While I was at Missouri State, though, I met my wonderful wife, Heather. And throughout us dating and getting to know each other, as we got closer and closer, she suggested that I pursue Midwestern.

[7 : 56] It was the school that her grandpa had gone to. And so I applied to Midwestern, got in the undergrad program there. At the time, it didn't have a name when I first started there.

Later became, it's now Spurgeon College. But it was there that I kind of started falling back into that worthy walk, right, of what God was calling me to do, about living a life that was worthy of his calling.

And I thrived there for a while. But as I got more and more involved in my job, I started pulling away again.

And when we actually moved to Bartlesville, it's been almost, what, four years now, three years, something like that, God brought us here to Highland Park.

And after that first year, I started getting involved in the youth ministry. And we went to Falls Creek. And while at Falls Creek, God reminded me of my calling and what I should be doing.

[9 : 07] And I've gotten back to what God has called me to do, to walk in a manner that was worthy of him.

Not that I'm perfect at this by any means. Just ask my wife. She can tell you I'm not. But I still struggle with my calling, right? What does it look like? What am I supposed to do?

And continuing to walk in a worthy manner. Now, in these verses, Paul wanted them and us to see that once we are believers, we just can't leave it at that.

That we must live out our faith in a way that honors Jesus. And Paul kind of, in these verses, expresses their Christian conduct and our Christian conduct in four ways, right?

That we're rooted in Christ, we're built up in Christ, we're being established in the faith, faith and abounding in thanksgiving. Now, all of this takes them back to what Paul, to what, sorry, what Epaphras originally taught them while they were there.

[10 : 14] And Paul uses this language to remind the Christians of the strong faith that is rooted and built up in Christ. That they are established in their faith through the belief in Jesus.

And it's because of the grace of God that he's shown them that they abound in thanksgiving because of this. Now, we should have the same response.

We should be abundantly thankful for what Christ has done for us, what he continues to do for us, and what he promises to do for us in the future. That brings me to my next point, to be cautious of false teaching.

Now, having told the Colossians where their faith lies, he goes on to talk about false teachers. In doing this, Paul wants them to watch out for the ungodliness that will sneak into the church.

And this is something that we see throughout the history of the church. Pick up a church history book, you're going to see ungodliness sneak into the church.

[11 : 17] And I use that word sneak because that's what Satan does. He doesn't typically frontal assault the church. He sneaks in, slowly, gradually.

He uses deceit and trickery to make a church fall. And again, like I said, it begins gradually, and then over time, we gradually fall away from the teachings of God.

We no longer hold to what Paul tells us, just the three verses before, right? What are we rooted in? What are we built up in?

We forget those things, right? The false teacher that was in Colossae was a very real threat to the church there. Paul writes in Colossians 2.8, see that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ.

Now, Nick, at the very beginning of this sermon series, made it abundantly clear that the false teaching that's going on in Colossae is not Gnosticism. No matter how much we want it to be and whatever everybody else says, it is not Gnosticism that is going on here.

[12 : 36] Nick talked about how it's a combination of Greek philosophy and mysticism combined with Jewish practices. And these people in Colossae were starting to fall victim to Satan and what he was doing in the church there.

Paul is giving them a very explicit warning that this is happening and to be on guard for what is going on. Paul doesn't want the church here to end up in slavery of falsehood.

But once we buy into that false teaching, teaching that doesn't come from God, we can get derailed and fall off track. God had a plan in place for them and for us.

He wants us to stay the course. False teaching can and will lead us down a path that we don't want to go. And when we get off track, we ruin our witness.

Not just personally, but as a church. And just like a derailed train, once it's off, it continues to be off track.

[13 : 47] A lot of people, you've probably all seen a train wreck where a train has gotten derailed and fallen off track. It's not a pretty sight. It's pretty horrible.

But that train will continue being off track until someone rides that train and sets it back on track.

They come in with a giant crane and pick it up and set it back on the track.

Paul's trying to keep the Colossians on track here. He's trying to keep that train on track. And he wants them to do this by testing everything that they hear and see against what God has told them and what the gospel is.

And this is our guide to staying on track as well. That we test everything that we see and hear against the teaching of God and if it doesn't line up, we discard it and keep focused on Christ and the teaching that God has given us.

That brings us to our third point. Remembering who Jesus is. So the Colossians up to this point, right, Paul's reminding them of who they are, right, that they're Christians, that they're believers.

[15 : 04] And next he tells them, be wary of false teachers, right, be on the guard, be on the lookout. And he gives them two ways here, right, that we're going to look at about how he combats this false teaching.

And the first one, like I said, is remembering who Jesus is. and that's the best thing about what Paul is saying is that the solution is simple.

The solution is to focus on Jesus Christ. Now, the church has everything that we need in him. We don't have to have some special words or any extra rituals or anything like that to add on to what Christ has already done for us.

All that we need is found in Jesus. this. And Paul's answer to the false teaching that was going on was to remind the Colossians again of who Christ was.

Colossians 2, 9, and 10 says, For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority. Again, we see this calling back to what something that he said earlier in Colossians.

[16:20] Colossians 1, 19 says, For in him all the fullness of God pleased to dwell. This calling back is to remind them of who Jesus was, right?

He spends a good section of what we would call chapter 1 talking about the preeminence of Christ, of why he is so important, right?

And what he's trying to remind them of is that he is God come down to earth, right? That we see this hypostatic union, right? Of Jesus as fully God and fully man.

Now, Paul tells them that they have been filled in him, right? That they don't need anything else to fill them. That Christ gives them all that they need.

And we are the exact same. We don't need anything else to fill us. As Christians, everything we need is found in the person of who Christ is and what he has done for us.

[17:27] Now, the next section of the verse says that we see that Paul tells them that Christ is the head of all rule and authority.

He is reminding them of the supremacy of Christ, that he is above all. Matthew 28, 18 says, Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Ephesians 1, 21-22 says, For above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come, and he put all things under his feet and gave them as a head over all things to the church.

And when we look at these verses and what Paul is saying here in Colossae is that we see that Christ is the one that has all the power and authority.

And this was to tell the Colossians that whatever false teacher had come in, whatever they were hearing from this person, right, and whatever they were trying to teach them, that Christ is above all of it.

[18:40] Whatever false teaching they were hearing, whatever Jewish traditional practices he was trying to bring in, that Christ was above all of that.

That Christ is the authority about what they were learning and about what they were believing in. And this is also true of us.

His authority and power supersedes anything that we will hear or be taught by others that come our way. The Bible is our ultimate authority on who Christ is and what he has come to do for us.

We are to hold on to the truth of who Christ says that he is because he has been given the authority over everything. He is the one who has the authority to say who he is and what he is.

The last thing that we are going to look at is we remember what Jesus did for us or for you.

Colossians 2 11 through 15 says in him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ having been buried with him in this powerful working of God who raised him from the dead and you who are dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross he disarmed the rulers and the authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them now here again Paul's giving us his second reason how we can combat the that is going on by remembering what

[20:37] Christ has done for them what he has done for us so let's kind of break this down there's a lot kind of going on here but we're going to kind of break this down a little bit so Colossians 2 11 says that in him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of flesh coming in right he's talking about how we need to combat this circumcision right and again this goes back to what Nick was talking about with that idea of the Jewish traditions and this is one that the early church wrestled with a lot they the idea of keeping these Jewish customs!

before they were saved and then after they were saved this idea that they had to become Jewish before they could become saved but that's not the case right but circumcision was so important to Jews right that it became almost a byword for the law now Paul is trying to get them to realize that when Christ comes he is the fulfillment of the law right Paul is saying that what circumcision did physically before belief in Christ does spiritually now we no longer have to worry about circumcision because we have Christ Paul is saying that knowing Christ is what matters not the physical circumcision

Colossians 2:12 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 now Paul again is talking about the baptism that we believe in right and Paul is actually trying to link these two ideas right the Old Testament idea of circumcision and the New Testament idea of baptism and what I mean by that and what Paul is trying to get at is that they are both outward signs of the belief of the relationship between God and mankind there's no special anything about circumcision or us being baptized other than it's that outward showing of us as Christians now just like

Christ died and was raised again baptism is that outward showing of dying to the old self and being made new and there's kind of a lot going on in the second half of this verse right and the first thing that we see is that baptism is important for every Christian believer it's important because following through with what God has told us what Christ has told us to do right after our salvation we get baptized publicly so that people can see it as an outward sign of our salvation the second is that we see salvation through faith in Christ our salvation comes through our faith in Christ the third is that we see faith is through the power of God and nothing that we can do at all and fourth we see that Christ died and was raised from the dead he wasn't just asleep in the tomb he didn't just pass out he really died and

God raised him from the dead now I do want to stop here and explain this a little bit more this is the truth of the gospel the first step in salvation is knowing that we've done wrong that we are at center at odds against God then we must place our faith in Christ believing that he died for our sins and that God raised him from the dead and if you're lost tonight and don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior talk to me talk to one of the pastors after the sermon we would love to tell you who Jesus is and what he has done for you these next couple of verses are some of my favorite and some of the most I feel more powerful verses of what Paul is talking about here Colossians 2:13 and 14 says and you who are dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh

[25 : 35] God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands thus he set aside nailing it to the cross so we kind of break down these verses right we kind of first see the condition that the colossi are in right the condition that we were in before we knew Christ they were dead in their trespasses Paul says a similar thing in Romans 6:23 the first part of that for the wages of sin is death and then again we see in the first part of Ephesians 2:5 that even when we were dead in our trespasses right he's telling them they're dead right they're sinners there's no hope right but when we look at the last half of those verses right talks about what

Christ did for them right but something else that we need to take note of here is that he calls them uncircumcised in the flesh these people were clearly Gentiles they were the outsiders right they didn't practice circumcision now Paul's kind of throwing it in their face here right not only are you sinners but you're not even God's chosen people you're completely on the out but despite all of this God chose to intervene he made them alive in him through the forgiveness of their sins he has given them new life Paul uses a metaphor here to get this point across in verse 14 he tells them that their debt has been canceled that sit against them with its legal demands now the church at Colossae would have understood this to more than likely mean a financial debt and in that time people could be arrested for their financial debts and they would have seen this as a canceling of that debt that stood against them with all of its legal demands they wouldn't have any legal consequences for that financial debt right this translates over to us right as Christians that as a believer we no longer live under the fear of the enslavement of sin we no longer have to fear the debt right we no longer have to fear the legal demand that was once ours next he says that he set this debt aside and then nailed it to a cross now this idea of this setting aside is different from the metaphor of canceling their debt and

I put it this way you know someone could be pardoned but they may not be welcomed right so if a prisoner right he committed a crime he went to jail but then the president signs a pardon saying you know I'm forgiving of your your sins right your sentence is commuted right but are we going to welcome that person right we knew they committed a sin right we know they committed a crime they did something wrong right but what Paul is saying here is that their sin has put out of God's sight it's no longer a barrier between them and God that they have a living relationship with him God then nails it to the cross powerful language here the Colossians would have definitely understood the idea of crucifixion knowing that

Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins knowing the horrible death that dying on the cross is and not only was crucifixion just a horrible way to die but it's also the sign of ultimate rejection so when God nails the sin to the cross he's not only killing it he completely rejects it this last verse Colossians 2:15 he disarmed the rulers and the authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them now part of what Paul is saying here is that these rulers and authorities are not necessarily the political authorities he's actually talking about spiritual authorities here and we see this kind of used in the same language that

[30 : 53] Paul uses in Ephesians 6:12 for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers and against the authorities and against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places he's pointing out that the spiritual warfare that is going on here he's showing that God has put them to open shame that Christ has put them to open shame and how did he do that well he triumphed over them through his death on a cross and its resurrection he shows his power that brings victory over spiritual beings in closing we must be on guard of the false teaching that we see in the world we know that the enemy is prowling around like a lion seeking to destroy us we also know that Christ has already defeated the enemy through his death and resurrection

Christ has won and we have the assurance that we are made alive in him Satan seeks only to distract us from our goal Charles Spurgeon once said when you desire to be most alive to God you will generally find sin most alive to repel you as Christians when we want to live our life in Christ we are going to find sin most alive to repel us we will be faced with it daily we must trust Christ in his word and this brings me to my main point of application tonight we must be alive in Christ laboring for the gospel until he calls us home if we would live for Christ and labor for the gospel daily imagine how different this world would look would we see the things that are going on in the world today would we see a world that would turn to

Christ and accept him as their Lord and Savior what are you going to start doing today to help you live for Christ and labor for the gospel let's pray dear heavenly father we thank you for this evening Lord thank you for sending your son to die on a cross for us God thank you for Paul for writing these letters to us Lord to give us a better understanding of what you want from us God to be on guard for false teaching Lord to remember who you are and what you've done for us God just be with us as we leave here from tonight in your sense we pray Amen