

Lesson 9 - Be On Guard

I. Colossians 2:1-23

- A. This chapter reminds us that Christ is all-sufficient since he is God. We need nothing else. As a result, we need to beware of substitutes for Christ, the philosophies of this world, and self-made religion, which are not of Christ, but of the world.
- B. Words and Concepts:
 - 1. **Discipline** - In English, the word "disciple" is derived from the same root as "discipline." The idea is not merely punishment, but training and learning. Exercises in discipline, whether they be self-discipline or external discipline are for the purpose of training and learning.
 - 2. **Philosophy** - This is basically a system of beliefs that stem from a rational investigation and questions of how one should live (ethics), how knowledge is attained (epistemology), what things exist and their natures (metaphysics), and what are the correct principles of reasoning (logic). There were various philosophical systems in existence which were popular (Hedonism, Epicureanism, Cynicism, Gnosticism, Stoicism, Platonism, etc...). However, these philosophical systems were grounded in human speculation rather than revelation from God, and were therefore not of God, which is why it is also called "traditions of men" and the "elementary principles of this world."
 - 3. **Deity/Godhead** - Deity refers to God. Specifically it refers to the quality of Godhood. Similar to referring to one's "humanity" as the quality of being human, or "manhood" as the quality of being a man, so "Deity" is the quality of being God, His "Godhood." Some versions translate this word, "Godhead."
 - 4. **Circumcision** - This was covenant command given by God strictly for Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites (Gen 17:9-14). God indicated that not only was this the covenant, but it was also a sign of the covenant. Any males who were not circumcised were cut off from God's people because they had broken the covenant. The covenant of circumcision was only for the Israelites, not for Christians (Gal 5:1-6). Yet Colossians 2 uses it as a vivid analogy of the "spiritual" circumcision we receive in Christ that identifies us as belonging to God.
 - 5. **Transgression** - This is one of the words used for sin. To "sin" means to fall short or to miss the mark. To "transgress" means to overstep and to do what you are not supposed to do.

6. **Certificate of Debt** - Some translations render this, "written code." This referred to an IOU, a note that acknowledges that obligation of a debtor to pay a debt. Today, we might call it a "bill" or a "judgment." This is a reference to the sin debt that all humanity owed and could not pay. However, Jesus paid the debt at the cross.
7. **Rulers, Authorities** - This is a reference to spiritual powers and principles that are at work under the surface and are often imperceptible by unbelievers. They can be a personal being or underlying principles (usually unexamined) that order the values, laws, institutions, and actions of society. Thus, physical rulers and authorities do not act alone. They are either of God or of Satan. It was these rulers and authorities that condemned Christ to die and crucified him. However, Jesus demonstrates that they were ultimately powerless over him.

II. (v.1-7) Reminder of the Sufficiency of Christ

A. Why is Christ all sufficient?

1. (v.9) "For in Him all the fullness of _____ dwells in bodily form,"
2. What does this say about Jesus?

B. What is Christ sufficient for?

1. (v.2b-3) "...that is Christ Himself, in whom are all the treasures of _____ and _____."
2. (v.10) "and in Him you have been made _____, and He is the head over all rule and authority;"

_____ is complete in Christ.
(insert your name)

3. (v.11) "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made _____ hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
 - a. How did this spiritual circumcision of Christ took place?
(Notice the continuation of the sentence in verse 11 into verse 12, which goes on to describe how this spiritual circumcision took place)

- 1) (v.12) - "...having been buried with Him in _____, in which you were also _____ up with Him through _____ in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."
- 2) (v.13) - "When you were _____ in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you _____ together with Him, having _____ us all our transgressions,"
 - a) Note: Life is not merely existence. The Bible calls eternity in Hell the "second death" (Rev 2:11, 14:11; 20:14) This indicates that life is more than merely existing.
 - b) Note: Death is alienation from God, which came about as a result of sin, which would ultimately lead to an eternity without God, which the Bible calls "Hell." Life is fellowship with God (Jn 17:3), which ultimately leads to eternal fellowship with God, which the Bible calls "eternal life" or simply, "life" (Jn 10:10).
- 3) (v.14) - "having _____ out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the _____."
- 4) (v.15) - "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having _____ over them through Him."
 - b. Note: The circumcision analogy indicates that you have been joined to God in covenant with him.

4. Check all the things that Christ is sufficient for

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Wisdom <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Death <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Forgiveness <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Building wealth	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Payment of your debt <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Defeating your enemies <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Being made alive, life <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Being complete
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III. (v.8) -Warning of Intellectual Challenges to your Faith

A. (v.4) - I say this so that no one will _____ you with persuasive argument.

B. (v.8) - "See to it that no one takes you captive through _____ and empty _____, according to the _____, according to the elementary principles of the _____, rather than according to _____

C. What are these things that can delude us and take us captive in our faith?

1. (v.16-23) Gives a description of what sorts of things can be involved in various philosophies, traditions of men, and deception that can delude and take us captive in our faith. Some characteristics involve setting apart of special high and holy days that the Bible does not, false humility, worship of angels, taking a stand on what someone has seen that is not of the Bible, being puffed up by an unspiritual and fleshly mind, and arbitrary rules on what not to handle, taste, or touch.
2. Problems that leads to this captivity
 - a. (v.19) - "...not holding fast to the _____"
 - 1) 1:18 - Who is the head? _____
 - 2) For some, Jesus is not enough, so they do not hold fast to Him and look elsewhere and to other things, not realizing that it is Christ we are made complete (v.10)
 - b. (v.23) - these matters have the _____ of wisdom in religion.
 - 1) Some philosophies have the appearance of wisdom, but are just the opposite. Examples include such cultural messages as:
 - If our marriage takes such hard work, we must not be right for each other
 - It's their fault that I'm angry
 - You should not judge anyone
 - You need more self esteem
 - Your happiness is the most important thing
 - 2) Some religions are "self-made," they are from man, not from God. Some religions include a belief in a god, such as Islam, or in various gods, such as animism, or perhaps

in no personal god at all, such as humanism or atheism. Some of the false, "self made" religions include messages such as:

- Evil and pain are just illusions
- God is all and all is god.
- We must earn God's favor
- All my problems are caused by my sins
- We are a reincarnation of a former life
- A man is the head of the church and can enact laws from the church not in the Bible

3. Reflection: Identify some "philosophies," "traditions of men," and "elementary principles of this world" that can tempt you to think or act worldly instead of Christianly (some are very subtle and seem benign). Where do you hear or experience these? At work? Among neighbors? Among Family? In books or movies? etc...

D. Other warnings:

1. (Gal 1:6-9) "...there are some who are disturbing you and want to _____ the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an _____ from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed..."
2. (2 Cor 11:12-15) "...For such men are _____ apostles, _____ workers, _____ themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even _____ disguises himself as an angel of light..."
3. (1 Jn 4:1-6) - "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but _____ the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many _____ _____ have gone out into the world."
4. (Acts 20:29-31) - "...savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking _____ things, to _____ the disciples after them. Therefore be on the _____

5. These are some examples of strong warnings against perversions and distortions of true Gospel of Christ. The reality is that there are false religions and false teachings and we need to be grounded in our faith so as not to be deceived and drawn away after them.

IV. The importance of Bible Reading and Spiritual Discipline

- A. (v.5) "...rejoicing to see your good _____ and the _____ of your faith in Christ."
- B. (v.6-7) "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so _____ in Him, having been firmly _____ and now being built up in Him and _____ in your faith, just as you were _____..."
- C. Reflection: What do these verses seem to indicate are some necessities of a solid, growing faith in Christ?

<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read Col 2:1-23 slowly2. Spend some time in prayer. Write down any reflections or thoughts between you and God here:3. Complete any part of the previous lesson that is incomplete.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read Mt 6:25-34 slowly2. What is God communicating to you in this passage? What do you find challenging?3. Prayer: Share your thoughts with God

<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read John 15:18-20 and Matthew 13:1-9, 18-232. Reflect on how God wants to prepare you for challenges to your faith from this passage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read Proverbs 27:17, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, and 1 Pet 5:6-11.2. What is important in your walk with God? Reflect on how this can happen in your life.
3. Prayer: Share your thoughts with God	3. Prayer: Share your thoughts with God

<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday
1. Read James 1:1-8 2. Begin to do the next lesson. Write down any reflections here.	1. Read James 1:8-16 2. Finish the next lesson. Write down any reflections here.
3. Prayer	3. Prayer