

Introduction

In our study of Colossians, we have seen how Paul confronted many false doctrines that had been brought into the churches. One of the false doctrines pertained to the deity of Christ. A second false doctrine, related to the first, was Christ's ability to reconcile people to God. In chapter one, Paul gave a very clear argument for the deity of Christ. Jesus is God the creator, and Jesus is Pre-eminent. Paul wrote that the fullness of deity dwelt in Christ. In defending the deity of Christ, Paul also defended Christ's ability to reconcile us to Himself. Because Jesus is God, He is able to reconcile us.

Another false doctrine related to the requirements of believers. The Judaizers were teaching people that they had to keep the Law. In order to be saved, they had to be circumcised, keep the Sabbaths, and observe the new moons and festivals. In our text today, Paul is going to revisit the deity of Christ. He is going to look at the finished work of Christ. He is also going to exhort us not to be taken captive by these false teachings.

Two weeks ago we looked at Paul's three encouragements to the Colossians and Laodiceans. He encouraged them by telling them that he was with them. He was contending for them. Although he was absent from them in the flesh, he tells them that he is with them in the spirit. It is very encouraging to know that someone is with you and for you, and by your side in the midst of trials or battles.

Paul's second encouragement is for them to be rooted and established in their faith. When someone is rooted and established in the faith, they are not easily deceived or led astray. When someone is rooted and established in their faith, they have stability and can withstand the storms in life. We looked at how we get rooted and established in our faith. We must spend time in the word of God. We must spend time in prayer. We must spend time in fellowship. We must practice good spiritual disciplines in our lives.

Paul's third encouragement was to walk in Christ the same way we received Christ, which is by faith. James tells us that there should be works or evidence in our lives of our faith. However, our salvation is secured by faith, not works. We cannot earn our salvation. We cannot earn a better position with Christ through our works. There are rewards for our faithful service, but our standing with God was purchased by the pure blood of Christ, not our works. We received our righteousness by faith, and now we are to live by faith.

This is all a lead-in to our text today, where he tells us to see to it that no one takes us captive.

(Col 2:8-10) "See to it that no one takes you captive..."

Paul's main thrust of our text today is for us not to be taken captive. Another way to say this is that God wants us to have freedom. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, who were facing the same attacks on the gospel, he tells them, "it was for freedom that Christ has set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." This is the same message he is conveying to the Colossians. See to it that no one takes you captive. See to it that you do not lose your freedom.

(Gal 5:1) "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

07 Colossians 2:8-23 Do Not Be Taken Captive

God does not want people in any kind of bondage. He does not want us in bondage to sin, people, money, drugs, alcohol, pornography, or anything else. He wants us free. The bondage that Paul is primarily talking about is the Law. Paul wants the Colossians to be free from the Law. He tells them to see to it that no one takes them captive.

There are a couple of terms in that statement that I want us to take a quick look at. The first word is blepo (Strong's G991), which means to beware, watch, be careful, look, seek, take care, or to take heed. The NASB translates this as "see to it..." The KJV translates this as beware. In either case, as Christians, we must be alert, watchful, and careful about being led captive. It is easy for men to become enslaved and God wants us to be careful to protect our freedom.

We have a great example in Acts 17:11 of a church that saw to it that they were not taken captive. It says, "now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." The Bereans listened to the preaching of the word, and then went home and examined the Scriptures for themselves to see if what was preached was accurate. They took their responsibility to see to it that no one takes you captive very seriously, and we should also take it seriously. I try to list all the references in my handouts so that you can go back and review the Scriptures that have been used. I want to help you in your responsibility of examining the Scriptures to see if these things are so.

(Acts 17:11) "...these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

The second term that I want to take a quick look at is the word captive. Paul tells us to see to it that no one takes us captive. The Greek word is sulagogeō (Strong's G4812), which means to carry off as spoil or booty. When two opposing armies would go to battle, the winning army would take the opponents and all their belongings as spoil. The losing soldiers would be killed or made into slaves. They would be taken captive. Paul is telling the Colossians not to be taken captive. It brings more focus on the spiritual battle that we are in. It is a battle for our freedom. We must be watchful, look carefully, be on guard, and see to it that we are not taken captive in the battle that we are in.

He shares four different ways that we can be deceived. Then, he shares with them the keys to avoid being deceived and taken captive. Paul tells us that we must know the position of Christ. We must know the work of Christ. Finally, we must be careful to whom or what we submit to. That is what we will be looking at this morning.

See to it that you are not taken captive

1. Understand the Position of Christ
2. Understand the Work of Christ
3. Be Careful about Submitting

1. UNDERSTAND THE POSITION OF CHRIST. (Col 2:8-10)

(Col 2:8-10) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. {9} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;"

Paul mentions four different ways that we can be taken captive, and that we must be particularly on guard about. **The first area to be on guard against is philosophies.** The word philosophy comes from philos, which means to love, and sophia, which means wisdom. It literally means to have a love of wisdom. This warning against being taken captive is not about the love of God's wisdom. We should all have a love for God's wisdom. We should all seek God's wisdom. We should seek God's wisdom like hidden treasure or silver. We should seek His wisdom daily. God's wisdom brings life and freedom. The wisdom that can take us captive is worldly wisdom.

(Col 2:8) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Look at how James makes a distinction between worldly and Godly wisdom.

(James 3:13-17) "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. {14} But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. {15} This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. {16} For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. {17} But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy."

Godly wisdom results in good behavior and gentleness. In Colossians 2:23, Paul speaks about worldly wisdom. He says these matters have the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. God's wisdom produces good behavior.

(Col 2:23) "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence."

James gives other characteristics of Godly wisdom. He said it is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, and without hypocrisy.

On the other hand, worldly wisdom is described as earthly, natural, and demonic. He is speaking of the source of this worldly wisdom. James says where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. He is speaking of the fruit of this worldly wisdom. God wants us to be fruit inspectors. We need to look at the fruit in the lives of people who are sharing things with us.

The second area that we can be taken captive is with empty deception. Notice that God's wisdom is pure. There is no deceit or deception in God's wisdom. In worldly wisdom, there is deceit. Things are not straight forward, and are portrayed differently than what they really are. Why? There is a motive to deceive. If you do not feel someone is being straight forward with you, be on guard.

The third way we can be taken captive is through traditions of men. Traditions can be good things. Paul told the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold to the traditions which they were taught by him, by word of mouth or by letter. There are some good Biblical traditions. Taking communion is a one of the sacraments that we observe. It is a good tradition.

(2 Thess 2:15) So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”

The traditions that we must be careful about are traditions that men have devised. The Pharisees had come up with thousands of traditions that were not in the Scriptures. Jesus was constantly dealing with the Pharisees about their traditions. In one instance, the Pharisees came to Jesus asking why they were breaking the tradition of the elders about washing their hands. Jesus replied to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?” He went on to tell them that they invalidated the word of God for the sake of their traditions. He concludes by calling them hypocrites. If you recall James teaching, he said that one of the fruits of false wisdom was hypocrisy. The fruit of the Pharisees was hypocrisy.

(Matt 15:1-7) “Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God, he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. "You hypocrites...”

The fourth area that we can be lead astray is with the elementary principles of the world. Again, James says this worldly wisdom is earthly, natural and demonic. These are worldly principles that do not result in godly behavior. They have the appearance of wisdom, but their fruit is bad.

Paul tells us that the first key is to understand the position of Christ. In verse nine, he says that the fullness of deity dwells in Christ. Jesus was God. **The fullness of Deity dwells in Christ in bodily form.** We call that the incarnate God, the God in the flesh. Isaiah called Jesus, Immanuel, which means God with us. Jesus was God. Anyone that teaches anything different than this about Christ is deceiving you. The cults and false religions do not teach the deity of Christ. The Mormons teach that Jesus is a god, but not God. The Jehovah’s witnesses teach that Jesus is the Son of God, but not God. The Moslems teach that Jesus was a prophet, but not God. The deity of Christ is one of the first and most important key to discerning false religions and cults.

(Col 2:9-10) “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;”

God does not want us deceived, deluded, or led astray. We must know the truth to prevent ourselves from being deceived. One of the reasons that the apostles wrote their letters was to protect us from deception. Paul wrote, “I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.” John wrote, “these things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

(Col 2:4) “I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.”

(1 John 2:26) “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

Later on in 1 John, he wrote, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone into the world. Notice that the test he gives is whether they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Those that do not confess that God came to us in the flesh, in the form of Jesus Christ, are not from God. The deity of Christ is one of the central truths that we must look at so that we are not deceived. We must know the truth about Christ, and we must know the truth about the teachings of Christ. We must also exercise discernment and test every spirit. Why? Because God does not want us deceived or led astray.

(1 John 4:1-3) “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. {2} By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; {3} and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

Paul’s second point about the position of Christ is that He is the head over all rule and authority. Jesus is pre-eminent. He is first in all things, and He is head over all things.

(Col 2:9-10) “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, {10} and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;”

If you recall the message a few weeks ago about why Jesus was able to reconcile us to God, Paul said, “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is in the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” Paul is saying that Jesus is pre-imminent. In chapter two, he is merely reminding them of what He has already told them in chapter one.

(Col 1:17-18) “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. {18} He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”

2. UNDERSTAND THE WORK OF CHRIST...

The second key to avoid being taken captive is to understand the work of Christ. There are seven specific things that Christ has done for believers. We will re-read verses ten through fifteen and then go through the work of Christ.

(Col 2:10-15) “and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; {11} and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; {12} having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. {13} When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, {14} having canceled 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 cross. {15} When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

A. Christ has made us complete in Him.

The first work that Paul mentions is Christ has made us complete in Him. There is no further action necessary on our part to be made complete. There are no additional sacrifices to make us complete. The one-time payment for our sins by the Lamb of God was sufficient. We cannot earn our salvation; it is a gift of God. We simply have to receive Christ into our lives by faith. We are made complete in Christ when we are born again. We are not mature in Christ, but we are complete in Him.

B. Christ has circumcised us with a circumcision made without hands.

The second work Paul mentions is that Christ has circumcised us with a circumcision made without hands. When we receive Christ, He circumcises our hearts. We do not have to be physically circumcised to be saved. The Judaizers wanted them to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul made it very clear that it was only by faith in Christ. He said, “neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” Here, Paul makes it very clear that we have already been circumcised, but it is a spiritual circumcision, not a physical one.

(Gal 6:15) “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

C. We have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised up with Him through faith.

Third, Paul says we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised up with Him through faith. Our old nature has been put to death, and we have been raised up as a new creation. This is what baptism is about. It is a picture of our being buried with Christ and then raised up with Him as a new creation. After we have received Christ, we should get baptized at the first opportunity that we have. The Ethiopian eunuch believed, and then said to Phillip, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” There was water available and an opportunity to be baptized, so he wanted to get baptized. Phillip tells him the requirement for baptism is that you must believe in your heart. The reason that we do not do infant baptisms is a person must believe in his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Baptism is just a picture of the spiritual birth that has taken place. We have been buried with Christ and then raised up as a new creation.

(Acts 8:36-38) “As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" {37} [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] {38} And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.”

D. Christ has made us alive together with Him.

Fourth, Paul says that Christ has made us alive together with Him. Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly. He has made us alive with Him. We do not have to worry about whether we have eternal life. John said, “he who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life. These things we have written to you so that you may know that you have eternal life.” We do not have to wonder about our salvation. If we have Christ, we have been made alive with Him, and we have eternal life.

(1 John 5:12-13) “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

E. Christ has forgiven us of all of our transgressions.

The fifth work is that Christ has forgiven us of all of our transgressions. All of our sins, past, present, and future have been forgiven. He has paid the price in full for all our sins.

F. Christ has canceled out the certificate of debt.

Sixth, Paul says that Christ has canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us. When we stand before the Judge, there is no certificate of debt for our sin remaining. Christ has canceled it out. When He was on the cross, Jesus said, “it is finished.” He had paid in full and the certificate of debt had been canceled on the cross.

G. Christ has disarmed the rulers and authorities.

Seventh, Paul says that Christ has disarmed the rulers and authorities. Furthermore, Christ has made a public display of them. Christ reclaimed and took back all that was lost at the garden of Eden. This phrase of disarming and making a public display was a familiar concept to the Colossians. When the Roman army conquered an opponent, they would take away all their weapons. Then, they would march them around as a public display. Sometimes, they made the conquered king a servant or slave. Sometimes, they would crucify them publicly for the people to see. They were made a public display.

3. BE CAREFUL ABOUT SUBMITTING...

God does not want us to be taken captive or spoil. We must know Christ. We must know who He is and His position. He is God. Second, we must know the finished work of Christ. The third key to use to keep us from being taken captive is to be very careful about who or what we submit to. This key has applications for those considering marriage, a new job, joining a church, or other decision that involves submitting yourself to an authority.

In our culture, people have a hard time submitting. In the 60's, our American culture became very disillusioned with the Vietnam War and other things. We questioned our authorities and rebelled. Also, at that time there was a movement in the churches where strong control was exercised. Church members reacted to the control and did not want to submit to spiritual authorities. As a culture, both in the church and in the secular world, we have a hard time submitting to authorities.

Submission is not an option as a believer. The Scriptures plainly teach that we are to submit to kings and those in authority. Scripture plainly teaches that we are to obey and submit to our leaders in the church. Most Americans do not need much encouragement to be leery about submission; they are already leery and cautious. Most Americans need encouragement to submit to their authorities.

I grew up in the Middle East. That culture has been one that follows blindly. What we are seeing in the Middle East right now is what happened to us in the 1960's. The Moslem world is questioning the control and rule over them. They want freedom, and they are protesting in the streets.

In Brazil, they recently had hundreds of thousands take to the streets. They are protesting against the corruption in their government. South America has been a place that has been easily led and manipulated, but now they are growing very cautious.

I bring up these world events because people are tired of being held captive. They want their freedom, and they are questioning those that they have been submitted to. In this passage, Paul encourages us to question who and what we are submitted to. But, Paul wants to keep us from being taken captive. This is preventative medicine, not remedial medicine.

A. Do not submit to anyone who acts as our judge.

The first admonition of Paul is not to submit to anyone who acts as our judge in regard to food, drink, festivals, new moons, or the Sabbath. Only God is our judge. Let's pick it up in verse 16.

(Col 2:16-19) "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— {17} things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

I want to make a few comments about this. First, Christ has freed us from the law. The Lord told Peter in a vision that all foods were clean. Paul told the Corinthians that they were free to eat meat, but that they were to be careful about causing a brother to stumble. We have been set free to eat all foods. We are free from drink offerings. We are free from having to celebrate the various Jewish festivals. We are free from the burnt offerings at the new moon. Paul is referring back to Numbers 29, where Moses wrote about the burnt offerings of the new moon, the grain offerings, and drink offerings. Christ has offered Himself as a one-time sacrifice, and all these offerings are no longer necessary.

(Num 29:6) "besides the burnt offering of the new moon and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD."

A second comment about this is not about our freedom to eat or drink whatever we want, but about the wisdom of eating or drinking. Though we are free to eat all things, not everything is healthy for us to eat. As we look at the health statistics, it is very easy to see that we should avoid eating a lot of certain foods. We need to exercise discipline and wisdom in our eating habits. The same would go for alcoholic beverages. We are free to have wine or alcohol. Others are not to judge you, and you are not to be judged by them. However, the statistics are not good regarding alcohol. Four out of ten people that drink socially become alcoholics. Scripture tells us not to be drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but to be filled with the Spirit. We have freedom to drink, but we should exercise discipline and wisdom in our drinking habits. Be extremely careful in this area.

Having spent several years as a prison chaplain, I know the devastating results of this drug. Ninety-five percent of all incarcerated people are there for drug and alcohol related charges. Even though we have freedom, we should be careful not to cause our brother to stumble. You may be free to have wine with your meal, but what if your guest was an alcoholic at one time in his life. Do you want to put that stumbling block in front of him? You are free, but exercise discipline and wisdom in these matters.

Paul also mentions the Sabbath. There were Judaizers in the early church that were sticklers about keeping the Sabbath. The Pharisees had developed many laws regarding the Sabbath. We looked at Matthew 15 earlier today and how the Pharisees questioned Jesus about their laws about washing. In Matthew 12, they questioned Jesus about breaking the Sabbath.

(Matt 12:1-8) “At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. {2} But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." {3} But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, {4} how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? {5} "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? {6} "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. {7} "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent. {8} "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus tells the Pharisees that if they understood that God desires compassion and not a sacrifice, they would not have condemned the innocent. Jesus considered His disciples innocent. He was not allowing the Pharisees to judge the disciples about what they did on the Sabbath. In the parallel account, found in Mark 2, Jesus concludes that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made as a day of rest for man. It was not meant to put people into bondage. Jesus healed on the Sabbath. He walked around with His disciples on the Sabbath. His disciples picked grain, considered harvesting or working, on the Sabbath.

(Mark 2:27-28) “Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. {28} "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

When we first began our church, there was a man who came to our meetings, which we had on Saturday evenings. He was okay with meeting on Saturday. However, when we began to meet on Sundays, he said I was teaching false doctrine because we had to meet on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. When he brought another man, and both of them began speaking bitterly and with judgement, I asked them not to come back. I did not want him judging us about keeping the Sabbath, the feasts, and other Jewish laws. We have been set free from the Law and we are not to allow anyone to judge us on these matters.

(Col 2:16-19) “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— {17} things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Paul continues by saying these things are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Hebrews 4 speaks of the Sabbath rest. It is clearly referring to our salvation. He says that we who have believed have entered that rest. The work of Christ is done and He is resting. When we receive Christ, we enter into that rest. He concludes that it remains for some to enter his rest. Our job here on earth is to let people know about God’s plan of salvation for their lives. It is to help persuade people to enter God’s rest.

(Heb 4:3-6) “For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. {4} For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; {5} and again in this passage, "They shall not enter My rest." {6} Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,”

B. Do not submit to anyone who...

We are not to submit to those who act as our judges. Next, **we are not to submit to those who defraud us of our prize.** Our prize is Christ. Our prize is our relationship and fellowship with God. We are not to submit to those who draw us away from holding fast to the head. How do some draw us away? First, they draw us away by delighting in self-abasement. Notice that the key word is self. When we focus on things that we must do, rather than what Christ has already done, we get drawn away from Christ. We are to hold fast to Christ, and not on what we have done for Christ.

(Col 2:18-19) “Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, {19} and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.”

The second way they can draw us away is in the worship of angels. Angels are messengers and are not to be worshipped. I have been praying for the Lord to send angels to fight and to protect our church. There is a spiritual battle going on. Colt mentioned angels when he was here, confirming what I have been sensing and praying. But, we do not worship angels. We worship God.

The third way they lead us astray is through visions that they have seen. We want to see visions. We believe that God speaks to us today through dreams and visions. However, visions need to be tested. Visions need to line up with God’s word. If a vision does not line up with the principles of God’s word, we need to discard them. If a vision does not line up with the ways of God, we need to discard it. If a vision does not bear witness with our spirit, we need to discard it. If a vision draws us away from Christ, we need to discard it. Anyone who teaches things that draw us to themselves and away from Christ is to be avoided. Good teachers point people to Christ, and not to themselves.

When the Corinthians were divided over Paul and Apollos, he tells them that they are just servants that the Lord had given opportunity. Paul planted and Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. He says that he is not anything, but it is God who is important. God is the one that causes the growth.

(1 Cor 3:5-7) “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. {6} I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. {7} So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.”

Notice how Paul ends this thought. He says that the “entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.” It is God that causes growth. We are not to be deceived and hold fast to men. Good teachers, pure teachers will point you to Christ and not to themselves. They understand that growth comes from God, not them.

(Col 2:19) “and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.”

C. Do not submit to decrees such as: (Col 2:20-23)

The third area that Paul says that we must be careful about submitting to is the teachings of men. He says, “if you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why... do you submit yourself to decrees such as, do not handle, do not taste, do not touch?”

(Col 2:20-22) “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, {21} "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" {22} (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?”

I am a teacher and I would like to spend a few minutes talking about teachers. Teachers like to categorize things and present Scripture in a systematic way. As some of these systems get popular, like the teachings of John Calvin, Jacob Hermann (Armenius), John McArthur, or others, people hold on to these teachings and teach these teachings of men. We must be very careful about focusing on the teachings of men. I try not to emphasize the teachings of men, but the Word of God. These systems or teachings of men can be helpful, but we must hold fast to the Word of God.

Teachers like to give applications of the word. James tells us to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers of the word, who delude themselves. In our attempt to give you practical applications, we sometimes tell people not to do this or that. The Pharisees did that. They came up with thousands of applications of the Sabbath. You could not walk more than a certain distance or it would be considered work. You could not heal on the Sabbath or it was work.

Their applications probably had good intentions, but they turned into the law. People accepted these applications as the law. Earlier we looked Matthew 15 where the Pharisees questioned Jesus about the washing of hands. Then, we looked at Matthew 12 where the Pharisees questioned Jesus about His disciples picking grain and eating it on the Sabbath. These were not the commands of God, but the commands and teachings of men. Jesus made that distinction to them. He told the Pharisees that they had invalidated the word of God for the sake of their traditions. We need to be very careful about making our personal applications the equivalent of the word of God.

(Matt 15:3-7) “And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God, he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. "You hypocrites...”

Let me bring it closer to home for you. I have seen the devastating effects of drugs and alcohol. I saw what marijuana did to people. They lost their drive, and became passive. They lost their sharpness. They lost their inhibitions and most of them moved on to other more dangerous drugs. One of my teammates in high school was an All-American running back, and he became a vegetable. It all started with marijuana.

I have seen the effects of cocaine, crack, meth, heroin, and other drugs. I have worked with people in churches and with people in prison. I have seen how difficult it is to break their addictions. One man told me how simply seeing a coke brought powerful urges to shoot up, because he used to boil his cocaine in a coke can. It was very difficult for him to get free.

I have seen the devastating effects of alcohol. I have seen so many people incarcerated because of alcohol. I have seen so many marriages and families ruined by alcoholism. And just like drug addicts, and alcohol is a drug, they have a hard time getting free from alcohol. Experts tell us that four out of ten people who drink socially will become alcoholics.

I do not drink. I do not take drugs. I do not encourage people to drink or to take drugs. I think that it is a dangerous thing to do. And, I think it can be a stumbling block for many others. I encourage most people not to handle, taste, or touch alcohol or drugs. I do not think it is wise to mess with drugs and alcohol. But, Scripture does not forbid you to drink alcohol. Solomon and Paul both give good applications for alcohol. Jesus made wine for a wedding, and I believe He also drank wine.

Personally, I have made a commitment not to drink. My personal conviction and application should not be forced on you. Each of you has a responsibility to live your life with conviction. I am not to command you not to drink, and I am not to judge you if you drink. We must be very careful that we do not make our applications a law for others.

In this passage, Paul tells us three things about these laws. First, they are elementary principles of the world. The foods we eat and things we drink are destined to perish with use. Second, we are not of this world; we are citizens of heaven. Third, these things have the appearance of wisdom, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Our teachings and applications need to help us become more conformed to the image of Christ. Our teachings and applications have to bring us into more relationship and fellowship with Christ. They must help us hold fast to God. Any teaching that does not help us in our fleshly indulgence may appear like good religion, but we must be careful about submitting to it.

(Col 2:23) “These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

Conclusion

God wants you and I free. He wants us to stay free. Therefore, we are to see to it that we are not taken captive. We are not to be taken captive through philosophies, deception, traditions of men, or elementary principles of the world. He wants us to see to it, to be on guard, to be watchful and careful about being taken captive. We must know Christ’s position. We must know His work. Finally, we must be careful about who or what we submit to. Just as there were false teachers and prophets in the early church, they are still around today. We must be careful about anyone who draws you to them and away from Christ. Good teachers point us to Christ. Good teachers understand that it is His church, and we are just servants who have been given the opportunity to serve. We must be careful about the teachings and commandments that we submit ourselves to following. We must hold fast to the word of God, not the teachings and traditions of men. Good teachings help us grow in our relationship and fellowship with God, and encourage us to hold fast to Him. Let’s pray.

Introduction (Col 2:8-23, Gal 5:1, Acts 17:11)**1. Understand the _____ of Christ. (Col 2:8-10)**

- The first area to be on guard against is _____. (Col 2:8, James 3:13-17, Col 2:23)
- The second area that we can be taken captive is with _____. (Col 2:8)
- The third area we can be taken captive is through _____ of _____. (2 Thess 2:15, 1 Tim 4:13, matt 15:1-7)
- The fourth area that we can be led astray is with the _____ of the world. (Col 2:8-10)
- The _____ of _____ dwells in Christ in bodily form.
- God does not want us to be _____, _____, or _____. (Col 2:4, 1 John 2:26, 1 John 4:13, Luke 9:18-20, Col 2:9-10, Col 1:17-18)

2. Understand the _____ of Christ. (Col 2:10-15)

- A. Christ has made us _____ in Him.
- B. Christ has _____ us with a _____ made without hands. (Gal 6:15)
- C. We have been buried with Him in _____ and raised up with Him through faith. (Acts 8:36-38)
- D. Christ has made us _____ together with Him. (1 John 5:12-13)
- E. Christ has _____ us of all our transgressions.
- F. Christ has _____ out the certificate of debt.
- G. Christ has _____ the rulers and authorities.

3. Be careful about _____. (Col 2:16-23)

- A. Do not submit to anyone who acts as our _____. (Col 2:16-19, Num 29:6, Matt 12:1-8, Mark 2:27-28, Heb 4:3-6)
- B. Do not submit to anyone who _____ us of our prize. (Col 2:18-19, 1 Cor 3:5-7)
- C. Do not submit to _____...(Col 2:20-23, Matt 15:3-7)

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