

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Scriptures for Today: Colossians 2:16-23 – *warnings of the dangers of counterfeit Christianity*

Today's Message:

"Fake Religion"



INTRODUCTION

Last week, we had a warning and a blessing. The Bible teaches we must beware and guard ourselves from a clear and present danger. Yet, there is very good news for us – we have victory in Jesus Christ! Today, we will finish the chapter with three attempts made through man-made religion to prevent believers from resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ and the truth that we are complete in Him. False religion is an attempt to bind Christians who have been made free in Christ. These believers were being lied to by wolves in sheep's clothing. This was the help God sent to them... and to us! Amen.

LEARNING TOGETHER

❖ The Text Colossians 2:16-23

A. Religious Ritualism – a religion of rules instead of relationship (16-17)

1. Believers were being **pressured** to maintain religious rituals to _____ spirituality.

W1828 "Let"

To permit or suffer; to allow.

- **Colossians 2:16** – Let NO MAN **therefore judge you** IN MEAT, or IN DRINK, or IN RESPECT of an HOLYDAY, or of the NEW MOON, or of the SABBATH DAYS:

WARNING #1

Do **not** allow religious people to deceive you!

2:17 – Which are a SHADOW of **things to come**; but the body is of Christ.

"Judge you" Condemn; rule against; pressuring by fear and manipulation tactics

"In meat, or in drink" Legalistic diets; claiming certain food/drink affects spiritual status

"An holyday... new moon... sabbath days" Obligation-driven; failure affects spiritual status

"A shadow of things to come" The Jewish laws and observances pointed to Jesus Christ!

Comparing Scriptures

- **Hebrews 10:1** – For **the law** having a SHADOW of good things to come...
- **Romans 10:3** – For they **being ignorant of God's righteousness**... establish their own...
- **Romans 14:3-6** – **Let not** him that eateth DESPISE HIM that eateth not... JUDGE HIM...
- **Galatians 3:3** – ... having BEGUN in the Spirit, **are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**
- **Galatians 4:9-11** – ...TURN ye **again**...weak and beggarly elements... to be in BONDAGE?

Key Truth

- Christ is **the substance**, not the shadow. The OT law and rituals pointed to Him; salvation is found in a true relationship with Christ, not religious performance.

Important Note

Legalism or Ritualism is any attempt to earn or keep God's favor by external rules rather than by faith in the finished work of Christ.

Galatians 2:12

For before that **certain came from James**, he did EAT WITH THE GENTILES: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, **FEARING THEM** ...

We can all fall into a spiritual trap when we begin to equate spirituality or holiness with outward observances – diet, dress, unbiblical church traditions, etc – rather than inward obedience and grace through faith in Christ. **We are complete in Him!**

B. Religious Mysticism – a religion of experience instead of Christ (18-19)

2. False teachers were exalting feelings, angels, visions _____ Christ and His words.

Modern Mysticism

Modern forms:

- Angel obsession
- Vision and dreams
- Emotional worship
- New age meditation
- Spiritual elitism

- **Colossians 2:18** – Let NO MAN **beguile you of your reward**

in a VOLUNTARY HUMILITY

and WORSHIPPING OF ANGELS,

intruding into those things which HE HATH **NOT** SEEN,

VAINLY PUFFED UP by his FLESHLY MIND,

“not” is only in KJV!

WARNING #2

Do **not** allow religious people to deceive you!

2:19 – And **not holding the Head**, from which all THE BODY... having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

2 Timothy 3:5

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

“Beguile you of your reward” Deceive to deprive of blessings by spiritual elitism

“Voluntary humility” Self-chosen; pretending holiness or lowliness; a form of godliness

“Worshipping of angels” Exalting spirits and mediators; unbiblical spiritual devotion/desire

“Intruding... he hath **not** seen” Claiming visions not seen; mystical experiences over Bible

“Vainly puffed up... fleshly mind” Arrogantly inflated; carnal pride disguised as spirituality

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in **lowliness of mind** let each esteem other better than themselves.

Comparing Scriptures

- **Matthew 6:1-2** – Take heed that ye **do not your alms before men to be seen of them...**
- **Mark 7:7-9** – ...in vain...worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**
- **Luke 18:11-12** – ...God, I thank thee, **that I am not as other men are... as this publican.**
- **Ephesians 4:15-16** – ...**grow up into him in all things**, which is the HEAD, even Christ...

Key Truth

- True spirituality comes from “the Head” – holding on to Christ and His _____!

C. Religious Asceticism – a religion of denial instead of devotion to Christ (20-23)

3. False teachers taught that severe self-denial or physical _____ led to holiness.

“Asceticism”

Harsh treatment of the flesh.

- **Colossians 2:20** – Wherefore **if ye be dead with Christ** from the rudiments of the world, WHY, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

2:21 – (**Touch not; taste not; handle not;**

2:22 – Which all are to perish with the using;)

after the **commandments and doctrines of men?**

2:23 – Which things have indeed A SHEW OF WISDOM in WILL WORSHIP, and HUMILITY, and NEGLECTING of **the body;** not in any HONOUR to the satisfying of the flesh.

WARNING #3

Do **not** allow religious people to deceive you!

Modern Asceticism

Modern forms:

- Self-punishment
- Man-made self-denial lists
- Fasting for self
- Vows of poverty or isolation
- Ignoring physical or emotional needs
- Avoiding harmless life pleasures

“Touch not... taste not... handle not...” Avoid/abstain; self-imposed rules on earthly things

“Will worship... humility... neglecting of the body” Self-denial, extreme modesty rules

“Not in any honour... satisfying of the flesh” Extreme spiritual pride; self-righteousness;

Comparing Scriptures

- **Romans 12:1-2** – ...a living sacrifice... **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...**
- **1 Timothy 4:8** – Bodily exercise profiteh little: but **godliness is profitable unto all things**
- **1 Peter 5:5-6** – ... and **be clothed with humility:** for God resisteth the proud...

Counterfeit Type	Human Effort	Scripture Rebuke	The word of God – Sufficiency of Christ!
Ritualism/Legalism	Trust in forms	Galatians 5:1	... the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...
Mysticism	Trust in feelings	Romans 10:17	... faith cometh by hearing... the word of God
Asceticism	Trust in self-denial	Romans 10:4	For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness...

All three of these fake religious systems replace Christ’s sufficiency with human effort (the flesh).