

Commentary on Colossians Chapter 2 by Chuck Smith 5.12.24

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May memory verse Romans 6:8 (NKJV)

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

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Paul had never visited Colosse. He had heard of the church from Epaphras, who was the minister there, who had told Paul of the love that these people had for Jesus Christ and of the faith. But he also told him of certain heresies that were trying to infiltrate the church. And so, Paul is writing to warn them against these heresies. And so in verse one of chapter two, he said,

For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh ([Col 2:1](#));

Paul is talking about this inner conflict that he had for them, a love that he had for them. The desire that he had to actually meet them and to see them. And though having not seen them, yet he is greatly concerned for them. He's concerned because of these heresies that were spreading like a plague through the church. And I don't know why it is, but it seems that lies or heresies fly on the wings of eagle and the truth goes on the back of a turtle. Heresies can spread so rapidly around the world. And it seems like people have a penchant towards heresy and are so reluctant to follow the truth. And as it was in Paul's day, so it is today. We find how that these heresies that sweep across our country actually sweep across the world. And people get caught up in them all over the world. And this caused Paul tremendous inner conflict, a great concern, a great burden.

Paul's prayer or desire for those who he had never actually met face to face, was...

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ ([Col 2:2](#));

Now, one of the heresies that was being promulgated there in Colosse was the Gnostic heresy. The people took their name to signify their pretended superior knowledge.

Now, the word Gnostic means to know. The Gnostics pretended that they had higher knowledge of mysterious things. And the Gnostics used to love to talk of the mysteries. And you had to really be initiated into their little club to be able to

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understand these mysteries, and they were always prating on this term, "the mysteries." And so Paul picks up their term, and his desire is that they might come to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and the Father and of Christ, which he told us in the previous chapter was, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" ([Colossians 1:27](#)). Now their hearts might be comforted. Secondly, that they might be knit together in love. What a wonderful thing when a church is just tied together in the love of Jesus Christ. And then, that they might experience the riches of full assurance.

It's sad really that a lot of people struggle most of their Christian life with a lack of real assurance of their salvation. For years I wasn't really sure if I was saved or not, and I was going down to the altar every Sunday night to sort of confirm my salvation. But that's a tough way to live. What a blessing it is to have the full assurance. That's the purpose for which John wrote his little epistle, "These things write I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" ([1 John 5:13](#)). And what a blessing when you have that full assurance as we sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." And this full assurance is what Paul was wanting them to experience.

Now, how can I have full assurance? Only as I come by faith, trusting in the grace and the mercy of God, through Christ. If I am depending upon my efforts and my works to make me righteous, I can never have full assurance. So anybody who has this legal relationship with God or work relationship with God does by its very nature lack the full assurance of his salvation. It is not until you've really have come to that understanding of the grace of God and our position in Christ that you can really enjoy the full assurance. Paul's desire is that they might have this full assurance and the understanding and the acknowledgment of the real mystery. It's not some effort that I might put out to be righteous, but the real mystery is that it is Christ in me. That's my hope of glory, that work of Jesus Christ in me. And then, of course, because they were talking always about this superior wisdom and understanding and knowledge, Paul declares,

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. [It's all tied up in Jesus Christ.] And this I say, [Paul said,] lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ ([Col 2:3-5](#)).

So Paul said, "I'm not really there physically, but I'm there spiritually." We've got to many people that attend church that way, there in the spirit but not in the flesh, not in the body. "Oh, I was with you in my spirit, brother." Oh great, you know, if the whole church was like that, we'd have nobody here. We'd have to close our doors. There'd be no sense of existing. But Paul said,

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I am beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him ([Col 2:5-6](#)):

Now, here to me is an interesting thing. Usually, people are pointed back to their roots. As you've received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. Most of those who have some false doctrine or heresy to promote do not seek to promote it upon the unevangelized, but they seek to promote it upon the church. Very few heresies are evangelistic. They don't prey on the sinners; they prey on the saints. They don't go to the beach to proclaim their ideas. They go to the church, and they try to infiltrate within the church. And then give, "Well, I received this new revelation." Or, "Have you heard this new prophet of God and some new understanding or new revelation?" And that is why they are usually pointed back to their roots, because those who are evangelical, those who are really out bringing the lost to Jesus Christ are usually prompted by the truth of the gospel.

Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, and abounding therein with thanksgiving ([Col 2:7](#)).

So again, back to your roots. Your roots were in Christ Jesus. You were taught to believe and trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, for the forgiveness of your sins. Now, don't try to improve by your works upon that righteousness which God has imparted to you through your faith.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ ([Col 2:8](#)).

And so the twofold warning: those that would beguile you with their enticing words away from the roots in Christ Jesus, and then those who through philosophy, the vain deceit which are after the traditions of men. For Christ is the center of our experience and

For in him dwelleth all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily ([Col 2:9](#)).

He's everything; He's all. And in Him dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Now, one of the things, of course, the Gnostics were denying was the deity of Jesus Christ or the incarnation that God came in a human form. Paul is affirming that truth.

And ye are complete in him ([Col 2:10](#)),

Oh, God, help us to realize that you are complete in Him. Your righteousness is complete; your salvation is complete. You cannot add to it. You are complete in Him. How many times in my endeavors to please God would I promise God that I was going to be better. I would make so many promises to God. "Lord, I'm going to pray

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more. Lord, I'm going to read the Bible more. Lord, I'm going to improve upon that righteousness. I'm going to be better; I'm going to be more righteous this week." And I was endeavoring by my efforts, by my works, to be accepted by God and to be righteous before God. And that was a struggle. Oh, would to God that I had someone teaching me in those days that I was complete in Jesus Christ, to just trust in Him and rely upon Him that I am complete; there's nothing that I can add. If you're complete, you can't add to that. You're complete in Him.

Which is the head of all principality and power ([Col 2:10](#)):

Now, the head there is used in the same sense as it is used in first Corinthians seven, as authority. So, Jesus has authority over all the principalities and powers. And we have told you before that principalities and powers are rankings of spirits.

Now, in the beginning, when God created the universe and then God first created angelic beings, millions of them, hundreds of millions of angelic beings. These angelic beings that God had created were in different ranks and orders. There were the cherubim, there were the seraphim, there were the principalities and powers and authorities and dominions, the various rankings of spirit beings. And when Satan, who was one of the highest ranking of spirit beings in God's creation, when he rebelled against God, there is an indication in the book of Revelation that a third of the angels joined in his rebellion. Which means that God created them as free moral beings, even as He created us as free moral agents, making our own choices. And so, those that chose to go with Satan were probably equally out of each the various ranks. So principalities and powers can refer to the fallen angels, or it can refer to those that are still in obedience unto God. Regardless, Jesus has authority over them all. Naturally, those that are still obedient to God in that ranking, He rules over them, but also those that have rebelled against Him are still under His authority.

It is always wrong to think of Satan as opposite of God, not even close. You can make no comparison between Satan and God as far as opposites or even alike. For God, again, is infinite, eternal, omnipotent and Satan is a created being. And so, if you want to look for an opposite of Satan, you should look at Michael or at Gabriel, those angels which remain true to God who have a high ranking or the highest ranking among angels. But never think of Satan as an opposite of God, because you're accrediting him with far more power than he actually has, far more authority than he actually has. He moves within restricted boundaries. God sets the limits of his work. So, all of the principalities and powers are under the authority of Jesus Christ. He is the head or the authority over all principality and power.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ([Col 2:11](#)):

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Now, there were those, and he's dealing now in this area, he's moved from Gnostics to the Judaisers, those who were teaching that in order to be righteous, faith in Christ was not sufficient. That's good, it's important, it's necessary, but it's not enough. In order for you to be saved, you must also adhere to the law. So you've got to be circumcised and you've got to also keep the law. Faith in Jesus is not enough. That's why Paul said, "You are complete in Him." It is enough. And you have been circumcised, but not the physical circumcision that the law required, but your circumcision is a true circumcision through Jesus Christ. You've renounced the life of the flesh. And here was the tragic error of the Jews that they were counting really on the physical experience and not upon the spiritual. So, though they had physically been circumcised, they were still walking after the flesh. And Paul said that totally negates the physical ritual. The idea is to cut off the life of the flesh, not to live after the flesh. So, Paul said if the Gentiles have turned away from the life of the flesh and are living after the Spirit, even though they may not have had the physical right of circumcision, it is accounted as circumcision, because God is looking at the heart of man. And so Paul here affirms the same truth. The true circumcision is that of the spirit within my heart, when I turn away from the life of the flesh to live after the Spirit through the faith and power of Jesus Christ. I have been circumcised in God's eyes, that is, I have been set apart to live after the Spirit before God. And that's what God counts.

The tragic thing about rituals, physical rituals, is that too often people begin to substitute the ritual for the reality. In the ritual of baptism, how many people today are falsely trusting in the ritual of baptism for the reality? The ritual of baptism, as Paul is going to point out here, actually, is death to the old life of the flesh that I might be in the risen Christ, living after the Spirit, and that's what it means. Now, if I have been sprinkled when I was a child, or I've been dunked as an adult and I am still living in the old life, I'm still living after the things of the old life, then the physical ritual means nothing. But, if I, by the Spirit, am living and walking after the Spirit, the new life in Christ. It may be that I was converted out in the Sahara Desert and there wasn't enough water to dunk me, but that doesn't negate my salvation or the new life that I am living in Jesus Christ, because it's of the Spirit. As Peter said, "Now doth baptism save but not the putting off of the filth of the flesh" ([1 Peter 3:21](#)). It isn't the ritual, but it is a heart, the conscience towards God of living and walking really after the Spirit. So, you were...

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiving you all trespasses ([Col 2:12-13](#));

Now Paul ties together these two rituals that both symbolize much the same thing. To the Jew, the ritual was circumcision, which was to be the symbol that I'm going to live after the Spirit not after the flesh. To the Christian, baptism signifies the same

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thing, the new life after the Spirit, the old life after the flesh, dominated by the flesh is dead. It's buried, and now I'm going to live a new life after the Spirit. And both of the rituals symbolize the same thing. To the Jew it was circumcision; to the Christian it was baptism. Thus, the truth applies to both; it is not the physical right that does it, it is what has happened in my heart and in reality in my life. So, being dead in your sins, the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. In Ephesians, chapter two, it is the correlating verse here, "And you, having been made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins; for in times past you walked according to the course of this world" ([Ephesians 2:1,2](#)).

So, the thing I love there, though, having forgiven you all trespasses. Your whole past has been blotted out through your faith in Jesus Christ. Every trespass, every sin has been blotted out as a result of your faith in Him. Not only that, the law which these people were trying to push upon the Colossians, this very...the ordinances of the law, the observances of the Sabbath days, the dietary laws, the types of meat that you can eat, and the various traditions of the Jews as far as the dietary laws, he said that Jesus...

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ([Col 2:14](#));

So, Christ is the end of the law to those that believe. The law could never make you righteous. The law could only condemn you. It was contrary to you. It was condemning you. Now, Jesus has blotted out these handwritings of ordinances which were against us. Thus, I am not under law. I am not under a righteousness that is affected by rules and regulations. My righteousness has nothing to do with my actions. My righteousness has to do with my faith. Now, my faith will produce actions. And if I say I have faith and yet my works are not in correspondence with it, then I am making a false boast of faith. But the works always must follow and be the result of faith. And that means that I do not depend upon my works as a righteous basis in my standing before God.

I don't say, "Well, I'm righteous because I pray so many times a day. I'm more righteous than you, because I read my Bible and you don't." No, I'm not righteous because of what I have done. I am righteous because God has imputed righteousness to my account because I am believing and trusting in Jesus Christ completely. Now, because I am believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, I do want to know Him. And so, I do read the word. Because I do trust in Him and love Him, I do communicate with Him and want to keep in constant communication and in constant fellowship with Him. But that doesn't make me righteous. That is only the result of the fact that I am righteous through my faith in Jesus. It's important that we distinguish that, vitally important that we distinguish that. Because it is so easy for us to relate our righteousness to our activities and to our works. Now, when I do that,

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then I am always putting myself in the position of judging others who aren't doing as much as I am doing. And see, that makes me a little better. That makes me a little more righteous and it also puts me in the position of sort of judging, "Well, you know, they just really don't have it." So it's a dangerous place to be. God doesn't want me to be there.

But when my righteousness is just through my faith in Christ, I can't boast in my righteousness, nor can I boast in the works that I'm doing. And if you come across someone who is boasting in their efforts, boasting in their sacrifices, boasting in their works, you have a classic example of what I'm dealing with. You see, because God has made righteousness something that He imputes to me through my faith, it totally eliminates boasting, except in Jesus. So, when you get people who are just always talking about how good Jesus is and how wonderful Jesus is and, "Oh, I don't know what I'd do without the Lord. The Lord is so good, He's so blessed me." Then you know that person has really come to a real understanding of what it is to have the righteousness through the faith in Jesus Christ. Cause he's not telling about himself, but he's boasting in the Lord and what the Lord has done.

So, Jesus brought an end to the rule that the law had over man. Nailed it to His cross, that's the end of the law. It was a schoolmaster until the time of Christ. When Christ came, law was no more valid. It was up to that point, but He was the end of the law to those who believe. So that no man can be made righteous by keeping the law. You can only be righteous through believing in Jesus Christ.

And having spoiled the principalities and the powers, [Now, we read that he had authority over these principalities and powers, and now we're told that he spoiled them or He defeated them and] he made a show of them openly [through the cross] triumphing over them in it [or in the cross] ([Col 2:15](#)).

So, the cross of Jesus Christ is the place where victory over Satan was complete. Now, Satan so often has the tables turned on him; he's not omniscient, he doesn't know all things, and he falls into the trap so many times. God just turns the tables on him. As with Joseph and his brothers who conspired to sell him as a slave to Egypt. You know, to send him down to Egypt and being sold as a slave. And later, when Joseph came to the Pharaoh and interpreted the dream and was placed by the Pharaoh as the head over Egypt. And then his brothers came down to by grain and all. And when they finally realized that it was their brother who they betrayed who they were dealing with, they had great fear, and they said, "Oh man, we've had it. This guy's going to get us." He said, "Now look, don't be afraid that I'm going to take vengeance on you guys. I know that you meant it for evil, but God intended it for good." And so often God will take those evil intents of Satan, and turn them around for good. See, he's always getting the tables turned on him and you'd think he'd get discouraged after a while. He follows this plot along and thinks, "Ah ha, I've got it all

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set up." And then flip, God turns the tables, and instead of coming out on top, he comes out on the bottom.

Haman, determined he was going to destroy the Jews, was going to get rid of them once and for all. And after this mortifying experience where the very man who prompted all of his anger against the Jews, he was forced by the King to give him a position of honor. Had to go through the streets in front of him in a chariot and say, "This is the man that the King wants to honor." Oh, how the Lord turns the tables on old Haman. And so, he built the gallows, ninety feet high so that the whole city could see Mordecai hanging, I mean, going to kill all the Jews but I've got a special spot for this Mordecai. I'll let him swing from a ninety foot gallow where everybody will see it. And he got hung on his own gallow; so often happens that way.

Satan, bringing Jesus to the cross, raising up the people against Him, but it was at the cross where Jesus defeated him. For the law had a claim on us because we had violated the law and thus, we had to die. Satan had a claim on us because we had served Satan, and the wages of serving Satan is death, but Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law. He redeemed us from the power of Satan. He purchased us. Where? At the cross. There He paid the price, because He died in our place. And so, He spoiled the principalities and powers. He triumphed over them there in the cross. The cross is the open display of the victory of Jesus.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days ([Col 2:16](#)):

Now, these were all things under the law. They weren't to eat certain kind of meats. They were to prepare the meat in special ways that they did eat. They had certain holy days. They had the Sabbath of the new moons. And then they had the Sabbath days. And Paul is saying, "Don't let anybody judge you in these things." They no longer apply to me in my relationship with God. My relationship with God is not enhanced by my keeping a particular diet. I can't by diet make myself more righteous. "Oh, you eat pork? Oh, shame on you. I would never eat pork." And as though that would make me more righteous, you see. So, today we find people that are judging us in meat, or in drink, or in respect to a holy day or Sabbath days.

Now, these holy days, these Sabbath days, these offerings that were made, were all a shadow of things to come. They weren't reality. They were only a shadow. They were foreshadowing things to come. The real substance is Jesus, the body; the substance is of Christ. These things only foreshadowed. So, the Sabbath day was only a foreshadowing of the rest that we have in Jesus Christ. He is our Sabbath; He is our rest. So it really makes no difference if we gather on Sunday, the first day of the week to worship Him or we would gather on a Saturday to worship Him, immaterial. The idea of the Sabbath day was to show God's rest for His people, but that was only the foreshadowing of the real rest that we have in and through Jesus

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Christ. So, all of these things within the law only foreshadowed what was accomplished by Jesus. And the law is important for us to study only to understand completely what Jesus has done for us in His sacrifice for our sins.

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility in the worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind ([Col 2:18](#)),

Now, there are those who would say, "Well, now, you don't want to bother God with all your little things. Or God may not be interested in listening to you, so it might be wise... There's this particular saint who lived in this area, and it might be wiser if you would pray to him to intercede for you. Because surely God loves him. He was such a holy man, and God loves him, and he'll listen to him. So you pray to the saint and have the saint intercede, because you really shouldn't come to God with that yourself. You know, you're sort of on the outs, and so get someone who's on the in, and let him intercede for you." Let no man beguile you of the reward in voluntary humility, the worshipping of angels or the worshipping of the saints. As they intrude into those things which they have not seen. It's all just a part of the vanity of a puffed up mind.

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by the joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God ([Col 2:19](#)).

We can each of us hold onto Jesus Christ and receive our strength and our nourishment directly from Him. "There is only one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). And Mary cannot mediate for you, nor can any of the saints mediate for you. Nor can any of the angels mediate for you. One God and one mediator, and Jesus Christ is that mediator. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man can come to the Father but by me" ([John 14:6](#)). You can't come to the Father through the saints. And of course, you take it one more step: go to Mary to talk to her son to talk to her father. But know you can come directly to the Father through Jesus Christ who is our mediator. "Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy in the time of need" ([Hebrews 4:16](#)). I don't have to go through a chain of command. Jesus has opened the door directly to God's throne for you and for me. We've become the children of God. And one thing about children, they have access always to the Father.

Interesting, you know, because of our schedule it's just not easy to see everybody. And a lot of times people come in and we're so piled high with work that it's hard to take time to see them, but you know, there's the little kids around here that come and knock on the door and say, "Grandpa!" And immediately the door is opened and there's always, it seems, time. They have access because of relationship. And that's

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the neat thing about God, your relationship, there's always access. The door is always open. You can come always. So, this is a false humility. Don't let anybody beguile you as to the advantages of it. There are no advantages to it.

Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and the doctrines of men? ([Col 2:20-22](#))

Now, this life of asceticism which the Gnostics lived as though it made them more spiritual. You know, if you want to really be spiritual then you'd better go find a little eight by eight cubicle and lock yourself in, and lock the world out, and just sit there and read your Bible all day long and sing hymns unto God, and live within that cubicle. Oh, then you'll be very holy and very righteous. No. These things may... Fast all the time. Don't eat this! Don't eat that! Don't touch this! Don't touch that!

These may show some wisdom in discipline of the body and in humility as you are disciplining or neglecting the body. But in reality, they do not honor God but they only glorify the flesh or satisfy the flesh. In other words, my flesh might be very satisfied in a thirty-day fast, that now I've really proved that I have mastered over my body and all, but really, then I am glorying in what I have done and it doesn't really honor God. Maybe some wisdom in the discipline, but it only brings satisfaction to the flesh; it doesn't honor God.