

Colossians Pt. 4

Col 2:6-23

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8-27-23

Vocabulary Review:

Gospel: Story, Identity, Kingdom

Christ: Anointed one, King

Faith: Allegiance; our standing with the king. I align myself with Jesus; I trust him.

Homework: Memorize Col 2:6,7

Col 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, **7** rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

You received the good news about the king; your identity is that you acknowledge him as lord.

Rooted and built up: as people who have our allegiance in Christ, we are called to strengthen our faith the way we were taught to stand, and to **overflow with thankfulness** as people who follow the king.

We've been talking about **Jesus PLUS: (Jesus +)** and **PLUS Jesus (+Jesus)**

Jesus+ PLUS is like Chocolate Chip cookies: sometimes additional ingredients can be added like nuts, butterscotch, and oatmeal. But some things don't go with them like pineapple or salt instead of sugar. ***This is like the gospel:*** you might give me a chocolate chip cookie with oatmeal and I refuse to eat it because I think oats don't belong in the cookie. In the first century, you didn't become a Christian, you became Jewish. There was no distinguishing between them. At that time, they believed that once you became Jewish, you had to become circumcised, follow the food laws, and practice religious festivals. These are things that you might put on top of Jesus (Jesus PLUS). Paul says not to add things on top of Jesus. ***It's not Jesus plus the Sabbath, the religious festivals, circumcision, etc.***

+Jesus (PLUS Jesus): This is like chili. You go to someones' house and they put kidney beans in their chili and you like it and try to duplicate it. Then you serve it to others and they try to imitate yours. This recipe continues with various veggies, meats, etc. ***This is also like the Gospel:*** We grab onto different things to put in our chili: this happened in the first century. People throw the things they liked about Jesus into their existing beliefs: They started with Artemis and added Jesus to create a new flavor, a new religion, that they liked.

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.**9** For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10** and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

This is like the chili analogy above: you have different philosophies and gods and you want to add Jesus in: these are taking you captive by telling you how to live in the world. **But this is not Jesus!**

Notice where it says **THE DEITY**. What does this mean? The Greek word here doesn't mean the fullness of God of the Old Testament (even though this is true) but this word is only used once in the NT (when a word is used only once, it's called hapax legomena). It means **WHAT IS DIVINE: all that is divine**. In Christ, all that is divine lives in bodily form. Don't try to make him divine: Jesus IS divine. All that is worth knowing is in Christ and he has given it to you. He is over everything.

Col 2:11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by^[c] Christ, **12** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.**13** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you^[d] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

This what is true and good: in the fullness of the divine (everything worth knowing) is Christ and you are in Christ: you were baptized, raised up, circumcised (a mark that you are part of the family.) However, this is not a physical circumcision any longer: it is you being raised up by Christ. Of course, this is not done by humans but by God. You were dead and God has made you alive. **This is the ROOT, Jesus without Plusses!**

You didn't do anything to achieve your salvation: God made you alive and triumphed over them by the cross.

Col 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **17** These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. **18** Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. **19** They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Let go of all this stuff: It's all in Jesus. The divine is in Jesus and you have been made alive in Jesus: He is the center; therefore, don't let anyone judge you regarding these things. Decide whether you are saved and have been made alive in Christ. Don't let anyone throw stuff on top of what you have: none of these things makes you stand before Christ. All extras are a shadow of what is to come. We stand because God has made us alive. Anyone who says otherwise has lost connection with the head: they are receiving life in another way.

20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: **21** "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? **22** These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. **23** Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence

Pauls wonders why you would put yourself under rules because the rules don't give you life: they are just a harsh treatment of the body that doesn't help. It's a self-imposed worship (Richard Foster calls it "will worship") and a worship of the self which breeds a false humility. ***We don't do this: Christ does it .***

What do we do with this? So what?

The chili analogy is a springboard for two questions to think about:

1. **Is Christ the center in my life or just part of the soup?** Is he just the onions on top of the chili?? What do you turn to first when you are angry or frustrated or trying to figure out a problem or make a decision? Do you turn to

social media and influencers? Food, exercise, drugs, alcohol, philosophies, “right” ways of thinking, teachers like Jordan Peterson, our politics, our possessions, our family, our spouse, our kids? Each of these makes our soup taste good but is Jesus the first thing you turn to? Is he the center or just part of the soup like something I add in as a daily practice to make me feel better about myself.

2. **Is Christ enough?** What saves you? This is geared around the things we do as Christians. What do we add to Jesus to make us feel OK about our lives? These can be good things! Some examples include going to church, dressing modestly, maintaining a quiet time, doing Christian activities, looking good, cutting our hair, living soberly, having a clean house, a style of worship, a playlist, a band. Some of these practices of serving in the church become about us instead of the community. These are good but they can become rules. A good way to find out is to ask this question: When am I mad about another person doing something or not doing something? Is Christ enough?

After these two questions, we wonder: **how should we live?** The heading for next week is **Rules for Holy Living**. But this week, I want you to ask Is Christ the center? What is saving me? Do I have rules that end up breaking relationships with other people?

Let's go back to the memory verse:

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, **7** rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

The roots this passage is talking about might be like a mesquite tree. Have you ever tried to dig up a mesquite tree? When they are young, you can just pluck them out. But a week later, there is another stem growing. To really dig up this tree, you have to go into HARD dirt with a pick ax and dig it up. This takes a big hole to get the root out. We are called to this tactic so that even in the dried places, we are rooted into Jesus, to be built up in him. We need to acknowledge there are competitors to our faith: There are many many things that are pulling us to step away from Jesus.

Homework: Practice thankfulness: We are invited to be overflowing with thankfulness. In the midst of everything, we are called to be thankful. **This week, every time you pray, You address Jesus and then say THANK YOU!** It doesn't have to be deep

and significant. You can thank Him for anything that comes to mind: the sky, my job, my community, trees, flowers, etc. Overflowing starts by saying thank you for one thing.

Questions:

How do we balance the disciplines with this?

The problem is when we make the disciplines laws in our lives: This doesn't mean we shouldn't practice them.

The verse, "don't let anyone judge you;" This sounds like I have control over them? Judging means sentencing with the judgment. If you're in the wrong, you must do something about it. This is saying how you need to get it right. Don't let anyone sentence you.

Don't let anyone guilt you into being unaligned with Christ: As a rule follower, I need to not make up the rules vs. having a broken and contrite spirit. Without this, there is no joy.

This connects with the plumb line, the center of the target. This is an invitation to NOT make myself the center and make Jesus the center. This takes humility: the spiritual disciplines help me hold onto him as the center.

Sometimes we think we NEED the sour cream and the cheese on the chili to make us feel good. I remember when I just ate chicken and rice but now I appreciate any little addition. It does not taste more delicious but the rest of life is more full when Jesus is at the center.

What do we invite our community to judge us about? We will talk about this next week.

