

Jesus is the Foundation of Our Faith (Col. 2:16-23)

Topics Covered:

1. Christ fulfills all our “religious service”
2. We must Beware of False Religion
3. How to Identify False Religion

NOTE: Many people have used this section to justify sinful behavior. This is not what Paul is saying. He is showing us that keeping religious rules will never bring righteousness before God. True Christianity understands that we are completely without goodness and even the good things we think we have done are “filthy rags” before God. If we come to Christ in Faith, knowing He alone is our righteousness, then we must continue to live in Christ by faith, knowing that our religious service is not “adding” anything to our salvation.

I. Christ is the Fulfillment of Our Faith (16-19)

A. Christ has Fulfilled Our Religious Service (16-17)

1. Do not be judged by religious observances (16)

- a. Your Righteousness is not found in What you consume
 - not about what you eat
 - not about what you drink
- b. Your Righteousness is not found in religious ritual
 - not about observing holy days
 - “some fight for Saturday Sabbath”
 - “some worship on Sunday”
 - the only requirement is fellowship with the saints and worshipping together – some churches have service on sat. night, others on sun. afternoon. Believers are free to worship. – **this doesn’t mean free to “not” worship. It does not mean believers are free to disobey by not assembling together (Heb. 10:25). Paul is saying that observing religious rites is not what makes you righteous.**
 - not about religious feasts or monthly observances
 - “the Jews were required to keep feasts”
 - “new moon” is a monthly observance or it could speak of pagan religious rites

2. Jesus has Fulfilled our Religious Observances (17)

- a. Doesn’t mean we are “free to sin” all we want
- b. It means our righteousness before God comes from Him not from the observance of religious rules and rituals
- c. The Sabbaths, feasts, new moon rituals and religious

In Class we will discuss the OT laws – why some are binding and some no longer are.

observances were pointing toward Christ
- they were pictures of what Christ would do
- After the reality has come – the picture is not as valuable as the reality

EXAMPLE: the Passover feast pointed to Christ's saving Work on the cross. Each year a lamb was slain And the blood "covered" those who feasted. Now That Christ has come, there is no need for the Symbol anymore.

B. Beware of False Religion (18-19)

1. False Religion Deprives us of Our Freedom in Christ (18a)

a. Religious people will try to steal your "reward"

- the reward is freedom and rest in Christ – not your actual salvation
- He did all that is necessary to make us righteous
- Freedom is our understanding of His sacrifice
- The Father requires nothing more than His payment

Religion will always make something more than Christ necessary for righteousness

b. Religious People require "voluntary humility" to be Righteous

- Literally this is speaking of those "delighting in humility" – believing their humble life earns or maintains righteousness
- They see their religious acts (giving up this, or not doing that) as adding to their righteousness before God.
- They do not believe Jesus is enough, they must add their own "rules" (in v. 22 we will see that these are man made rules, not from God)

c. Religious People devote themselves to everything but Christ

- "worshiping angels" – spiritual beings of all kinds were worshiped in pagan cultures, in some Jewish circles angels themselves were worshipped.
- evidently, the people in Colossae were being told that Christ was a "good start" but the really good religious People who are holy before God are going further than Christ in their religion.

"the word "worship" in this verse is not the normal word used for denoting a loving adoration. It is normally translated "religion" in the KJV

APPLICATION: There are many Christian fads and programs that say they have the answer to your need. Whatever you are

struggling with, there is a book or teaching that says it can help. The reality is that Christ is the answer. When you start thinking there is some "next step" beyond Christ in Christianity, you have departed from the faith.

2. What Does False Religion Look Like? (18b-19)

a. It is a religion based on "visions"

- **"intruding into things which he has not seen"**
- the false teachers were giving them "truth" based on visions they supposedly had. Of course they had not seen anything and were "intruding" into the area God's word alone owns.
- **No vision, revelation, or idea that is not based in God's Word is from God. God may communicate through Circumstances, people, and ideas – but He will never Contradict His Word – Ever!**

b. It is a self-important religion

- **"vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind"**
- A sure sign that one has a false religion is that their happiness is the goal.
- false religion is all about the individual
- **True religion is about Christ – He is the center, the most important. It's about Him not you.**

c. It is a religion that doesn't cling to Christ (19)

- **"not holding the Head"**
- False religion does not cling to Christ for its righteousness.
- False religion tries to make its own goodness
- False Religion doesn't trust Christ alone

d. It is a religion that doesn't grow with the body

- False religion is not attached to the body
- False religion feels no responsibility to the local fellowship
- False religion is not growing in the body
This is the growth God causes in Christ's Body.
It is not growing alone – it is growing Together

We will stop here next Sun. and continue the following Sunday

Topics Covered:

1. We must fight to keep Christ in the center
2. Religion cannot bring righteousness though it may seem right

II. Christ is the Focus of Our Faith (20-23)

A. Let Nothing Replace Christ as Your Righteousness (20)

1. You have died with Christ
 - a. Remember Colossians 2:13-15 – At the cross, we died with Christ. Our punishment was given to him, His righteousness was given to us.
 2. You Need Not Submit to the World's Plan
 - a. The world would have you trust anything but Christ
 - b. The world would have you trust good things
 - c. How do you know what you trust?
 - What do you need to have joy?
 - What can you not live without?
 - What do you worry about the most?
 - What chronically makes you angry?
 - d. These could be the things you have put your hope in
 3. Living like the world includes everything Paul has said so far
 - a. Living according to your own thoughts rather than the word
 - b. Living apart from the body of Christ
 - c. Living apart from Christ as your only righteousness
 - d. Living a “me-centered” life
- B. Religious Works Cannot Bring Righteousness (21-23)
1. Man Believes His Works Bring Righteousness (21-22)
 - a. Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch
 - they believed these rules would make them righteous
 - they believed these rules would keep them righteous
 - They believed Christ wasn't enough
 - b. Their rules were the doctrines of men, not God
 - c. Man has many ways to work for righteousness
 2. Man's Rules Seem Wise
 - a. Man's rules have the appearance of wisdom
 - b. Man's rules actually worship his own will
 - they do not give glory to God
 - they give glory to man in his obedience
 - c. Man's rules give him a false humility
 - they have a shew of humility
 - they obey humbly but they take pride in their obedience
 - They are proud they “neglect the body”
 - proud they don't taste
 - proud they don't touch
 3. Man's Rules Actually Demonstrate Sinful Pride
 - a. Their actions are completely without honor before God
 - They are not good – they are evil
 - seeking works righteousness is evil
 - b. Their actions actually satisfy the flesh
 - doing works to earn merit is not holy
 - doing works to earn righteousness is pride

When a person believes he can “do good” in order to earn God’s approval and favor, he is actually bribing God with sinful goods. None of our work is holy. It is all tainted with sin, therefore it is unacceptable to God. Only through Christ can our lives be seen as holy before God. Thinking anything else is sin.