

The Sufficiency of Christ

Colossians 2:8-15

This message was preached on Sunday, February 12, 2012. Please go to <http://www.treasuregod.org/resources/sermons> to hear this message and download the transcript of the message. Send your group a reminder email asking them to listen to the message one time before they come to your group. That'll help with discussion!

- I. **Please read and pray through these notes prior to group** in order to tailor the teaching time for your members.
 - a. Please adjust the teaching time for your group and realize that these notes are intended to spark discussion and lead the group to go deeper into the message from last week. Leaders! This is not an opportunity for your group to critique the message or the content, but to provide for discussion and to probe deeper into the biblical content.
 - b. The underlined questions are there to help you in your discussion. Again, this guide is just that – a guide – so don't see the length of this guide as a marker for how long your group discussion should be. Part of the reason we are making copies available for couples in your group is to aid in home study. I wouldn't take more than 30-45 minutes for the discussion time!
 - c. There are three parts to this study guide:
 - i. Embark – an activity to get things going
 - ii. Explore – introductory details that get you ready for the discussion portion of the session...
 - iii. Engage – HOW this impacts my life and what I can do about it...

II. Embark

- a. Starter... You'll need a roll of toilet paper for this starter... There are two parts to this starter...

- i. Pass around a roll of toilet paper to the group and ask them to take what they need. No further explanation.
- ii. When done. Tell the group that as they go around the room, each person must tell a fact or something about themselves for each square of TP they took.

b. Open your meeting with prayer.

III. Explore

- a. **Read** Colossians 2:8-15
- b. *“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*
- c. There were three main points to the message...
 - i. We are under Christ’s authority (v.9-10)
 - ii. We are a new people in Christ. (v. 11-12)
 - iii. We are free in Christ. (v. 13-15)
- d. Greg made several points that are worth restating.
 - i. Paul is not against philosophy. He’s against empty, deceitful, human systems that are “according to human tradition...”

- ii. There was a heresy in the Colossian church that said, “To be spiritual, to be saved, you had to eat and drink certain things, recognize certain days and festivals, and not touch certain things.” (alcohol, marriage, sex, certain meats)
- iii. The main issue for the heretics was, to please God, you need more than Jesus. You need more rules, more boundaries, more laws, more work, more effort, more limits, more DO’s and DON’T’s. What are some ways (or items) we try to add something to Jesus to get our salvation? (Jesus + _____ = salvation)
- iv. Many sermons say, “DO MORE! BE BETTER!” Paul called that demonic, empty, human centered, and enslaving.
- v. The quote from John Gertsner said, “The thing that really separates us from God is not so much our sin, but our damnable good works.” How do our good works keep us from God sometimes?
- vi. Greg says, “I’d rather us ask, ‘If I do this, will it magnify Christ more? Will I get more of Him? Will it please Him? Will I love Him and trust Him more or less?’” Where do we ultimately arrive in our striving to please God with those questions?
- vii. How does the Gospel help us to stay away from legalistic, man-centered philosophy? (It keeps you boasting and bragging in the Cross, in what Christ did, not in what you can do.)

IV. Engage

- a. Tonight, we’re going to divide the passage into two parts.
 - i. The first part will deal with the insufficiency of philosophy and the sufficiency of Christ (v. 8-10).
 - ii. The second part will focus on the achievements of Christ (v. 11-15).
- b. Part One

- i. Francis Schaeffer was once quoted to say, “man cannot begin with himself and arrive at ultimate reality.”
- ii. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.”
- iii. Truth cannot be discovered by experimentation or using logical arguments. “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard (experimentation), nor the heart of man imagined (logical arguments), what God has prepared for those who love Him.”
- iv. Philosophy, though useful, is no substitute for Jesus Christ.
- v. How are people being led astray in our day by philosophy? How are churches being led astray by philosophical arguments?
- vi. Paul is concerned that those who’ve been transferred into Christ’s Kingdom may become enslaved again.
 1. He voiced this concern in Galatians 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.”
 2. Jesus voice His own concerns for false teachers and philosophies in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves...” and in Matthew 16:6, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
 3. Paul also wrote to the Philippians, “Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision.” (Phil. 3:2)
 4. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:1, “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being

carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”

5. What are ways that those who are believers in Christ can become enslaved again?
6. For extra investigation on what different cults and world religions believe go to <http://www.4truth.net/>. There is some really good downloadable information here.
7. How can you be careful that “no one takes you captive?”
8. Think about it: You have a dear friend (or family member) who has recently told you they no longer believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven. How would you respond to that person?
9. Paul lists “human tradition” as something for the Colossian church to be aware of. Just because people have believed something for generations doesn’t necessarily make it true. Tradition can serve to propagate error. How can traditions of men sometimes lead to being taken captive or enslaved?
10. Paul cautions the Colossians against “the elementary principles, (or spirits) of the world...”
 - a. He is speaking about the infantile teachings of the immature religions of that day that were based on childish thoughts.
 - b. Paul wrote of the depth of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 1:18-21, “The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.” Where is the wise man? Where is the

scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

- c. There are times when people are led astray by very elementary teachings that are “too good to be true.” Have you seen anyone fall into that trap? How can you respond when you meet people who are enticed by even an immature view of Christ?

vii. Christ’s Majesty is the centerpiece of Paul’s next step.

1. Contrasted with the empty philosophies and weak enticements of the world, Jesus is seen in His full majesty.
2. Paul says that, “All the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form...” The word “dwells” means “to settle down and be at home.”
3. How important is the Deity of Christ to you? How has it changed your life?
4. Because of the fall of man, we are all incomplete. When Jesus arrives into our lives, we are made complete. John 1:16 reminds us of that, “for of His fullness we have all received...”
5. The Colossian heretics said that followers of Christ needed Jesus + something else to equal salvation. Paul is refuting their claim that Jesus + anything is needed.
6. How is that heresy still being propagated today?
(Jesus+ _____ =Salvation)
7. We have a choice. Will we follow human wisdom or simply bow at the feet of the incomparable Christ?

c. Part Two

- i. Paul spoke of the completeness of Christ (or being “filled in Him...”) in verse 10. In verses 11-15 he goes on to talk further of what it means to have the completeness of Christ in our lives.
 1. When Jesus healed someone, He made them completely healthy. (Matthew 9:22; Matthew 15:28; Luke 7:10; John 7:23; Matthew 15:31) He also performs that complete work in the lives of those who submit to Him spiritually.
 2. There are three aspects of His complete work in the lives of believers in this text: complete redemption, complete forgiveness and complete victory.
- ii. Complete Redemption (11-12)
 1. The Colossian heretics were teaching a similar philosophy that the Galatian Judaizers that Paul would encounter in Galatia were advancing. “Circumcision is necessary for salvation.” (Jesus + Circumcision= Salvation)
 2. Circumcision illustrated that man needed cleansing at the deepest level of his being. (MacArthur) From the beginning, circumcision was used symbolically to illustrate the great need man had for cleansing of his heart. (Deut. 10:16, 30:6)
 3. When Christ enters our lives and assumes control, He cleanses us at our deepest level. That’s why Paul wrote, “... in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands...” (spiritual) No longer would the symbolic be enough.
 4. How has Christ changed (or cleansed you) your life at the deepest level of who you are?

5. Some have tried to replace circumcision with baptism (as quoted in this passage) thinking that some rite had to be present for salvation to take place. Why is this approach wrong, too?
6. When we are transformed, we are only transformed through “faith in the powerful working of God...”. Why are so many people still drawn to Jesus + _____ = Salvation?

iii. Complete Forgiveness (13-14)

1. In verses 13-14 Paul discusses the same truth from 11-12 from a different angle.
2. Here Paul focuses on the fact that forgiveness is not possible with human effort.
3. What does Paul mean by “... you were dead in your transgressions...”? (dominated by the world, the flesh and Satanic forces, and without eternal life)
4. Paul lists what “HE” made possible: “He made you alive together... forgiven us all our transgressions... canceled out the certificate of debt...” When you see that list of what Jesus made possible what is your response?
5. Psalm 32:1 says, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!” When you realize your sin is forever forgiven how do you feel? Can you repay that work that was done for you? (NO! Remember grounding imperatives in indicatives? “Because of what Jesus did for me, I will love Him.” NOT “If I obey, God will accept me...”)
6. What are the features of God’s forgiveness?
 - a. It is not earned. It is a free gift. (Romans 3:24, Titus 3:4-7, Ephesians 2:8-9)

- b. It is complete. (Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:20, 1 John 2:12)
 - c. It is eager. (Ezekiel 18:23, Psalm 86:5)
 - d. It is certain. (Acts 26:18)
 - e. It is unequalled. (Micah 7:18)
 - f. It is motivating. (Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 18:23-35)
7. When Paul used the word “cancel” he was using the phrase “to wipe off” like erasing a white board. John MacArthur explains, “Ancient documents were commonly written either on papyrus, a paperlike material made from the bulrush plant, or vellum, which was made from an animal’s hide. The ink used then had no acid in it and did not soak into the writing material. Since the ink remained on the surface, it could be wiped off if the scribe wanted to reuse the material. Paul says here that God has wiped off our certificate of debt, **having nailed it to the cross**. Not a trace of it remains to be held against us. Our forgiveness is complete.”
8. How should we be motivated by what God has done in forgiving us?

iv. Complete Victory

- 1. Paul says that Jesus literally “stripped” Satan and his demons.
- 2. The metaphor here is of a triumphant Roman general, leading his humiliated prisoners through the cheering crowds of Romans in the capital city.
- 3. Jesus has halted Satan’s efforts to stymie God’s redemptive work and stripped Satan of his power. (Hebrews 2:14)

4. When you consider how Jesus stripped Satan and humiliated him what are some feelings (or words) that rise up in you?
5. The cross is the answer to the heresy at Colossae. What Paul is saying is that Jesus+Nothing=Everything!
6. May we be like Paul when he said, “May it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)
7. Take a few moments and write the names of two friends, family members, or neighbors who have not yet trusted Jesus as Savior.

Pray that they would not be led to anything but the Truth of Jesus Christ and would come to know Him as Savior.