

Sermon Notes on Col. 2:16-23, Trinity XVII

1. In vs. 4 Paul warns: "Let no one mislead you by nice-sounding arguments." False teachers come to us with honey-sweet words, promising us something better than God gives.
2. Vss. 6-7 warn us to believe and live in the Christ of Whom we have learned. We are rooted and built up in Him. We need nothing else.
3. In vss. 8-10 Paul warns us not to listen to the tricky and meaningless words of those who follow only human traditions and earthly ceremonies which are devoid of Christ. In the body of Christ lives the whole divinity of God. In Him you are complete. You need nothing more than Christ.
4. In vss. 11-12 we are told that our baptism is our spiritual circumcision. In this baptism we were buried and raised with Christ through the faith which God Himself produced in us. God raised Christ from the dead and gave us, who were dead, saving faith.
5. In vss. 13-15 Paul tells us that when we were spiritually dead in our sins and sinful flesh Christ made us alive by forgiving us all our sins. When He died on the cross He wiped out the Law's demands which were against us. Furthermore, He stripped Satan and his angels of all their powers. He publicly triumphed over all evil powers. Do we need more than this Christ and His Gospel? Decidedly not.
6. Vss. 16-23 could be entitled: "Let no one rob you of your freedom in Christ." It reminds us of Gal. 5:1-13: "Stand fast in your Christian liberty." Christ has freed us from the Law of God with its accusations of guilt. Our text is speaking of false rules which supposedly made people better. No law or rules, either divine or human, make us better. The only cure for these false teachings is the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Him you are complete.
7. Vss. 16 and 18 contain two prohibitions. We translate each with the intended sense: "Don't let anyone tell you that you get better by what you do or don't eat or drink or by what special days you celebrate." Vs. 17 tells us plainly that these OT ceremonies foreshadowed Christ who fulfilled and abolished them. Also the OT believers were justified only by faith in the coming Christ. Now the second prohibition: "Don't let anyone tell you that he is holier because of his false angelic humility and who is puffed up with the visions he claims he has had. He is falsely puffed up by his sinful mind." Then in vs. 19 he tells us that such a false teacher does not cling to Christ, the Head, who causes the whole body, the church, to prosper and grow in its increase to God. You need only Christ.
8. Vss. 20-23 ask us: "Why are giving in to these false ideas?" He begins by saying: "With Christ you have died to the elements of the world." Rom. 10:4 says: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Therefore, don't let people tell you what you can or cannot touch, taste or handle. All these things are consumed and pass away. They become mere manure. They don't make you righteous. Evidently these false teachers treated their bodies harshly in the name of religion but it was only false wisdom, false worship, false humility. A self-conscious or advertised humility is only arrogance. These man-made rules only make the flesh sin more, not less. All you need is a living faith in Christ Jesus. Nothing more.
9. If you will trace the history of false teachings you will find that the heresy which plagues the church from generation to generation in different forms is work-righteousness. The Pharisees thought they were better because of their many rules. The Judaizers insisted that the Gentiles could not be saved without being circumcized. The false teachers at Colosse prescribed false humility, visions and rules. The Roman Catholic Church says that faith AND works save. Modern day charismatics insist on special gifts like speaking in tongues or a baptism in the Holy Spirit. ALL YOU NEED IS CHRIST CRUCIFIED FOR YOU.

Sermon Outline on Col. 2:16-23, Trinity XVII

Theme: LET NO ONE ROB YOU OF YOUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Introduction: When Christ finished His saving work for us He said:

"Come for all things are now ready." But false teachers come in every generation telling us that we need something in addition to Christ to be saved. To be saved by grace through faith means that God freely gives us everything in Christ. Nothing need be added.

I-How False Teachers Try To Rob Us Of Our Freedom

A-They claim that their rules will make us better. The Pharisee in the Temple (Lk. 18) is typical of these false teachers. He thought that his self-imposed rules made him better than others. In our text we have people who claimed that the OT rules about eating and drinking and rules about special days make people better. That is not what these OT ceremonies were about. In our text we have people who told Christians "Do not touch. Do not taste. Do not handle." They told the people that they must avoid certain foods and drinks in order to be better. But that is not the reason for which God gave food and drink. In our text we have people who claimed that harsh treatment of the body makes a person better. Luther tried that and learned that it was foolishness. Self-mutilation never made anyone any better.

B-They claim that their own attitudes make them acceptable to God. Our text speaks of people who have false humility and an attitude of angelic worship. It speaks of people who claim to have special visions and thus are puffed up in their fleshly minds. But Paul says that this is anything but Christianity. It is pagan. Do not let false philosophies, tricky words or human traditions lead you away from Christ Who died for you.

II-What Your Freedom In Christ Is And Means

A-In the body of the human Christ dwells all the Godhead. In this God-man you are complete. When you were baptized you were buried with this God-man and raised from your spiritual death. God has already freed you from all laws. See vs. 9-12.

B-In this Christ you have the forgiveness of sin and victory over ~~cross~~ all the powers of Satan. See vs. 13-15. On the Christ wiped out the law and your sins. He stripped Satan and all evil power of their might. He even publicly triumphed over Satan.

C-Christ is the fulfillment of all OT ceremonies and shadows. Vs. 16. Circumcision was God's covenant of grace with OT believers. It was fulfilled in baptism in Christ. The Sabbath Day was an OT reminder of rest in Christ and eternal rest in heaven. There is no longer a Sabbath Day. Christ is our Sabbath and Passover.

D-Christ, the Head, nourishes His body, the church. Vs. 19. He does this through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and observe it. His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God. You were born of incorruptible seed, the Word of God. The forgiveness of sins is the constant diet of the Christian. Through this forgiveness comes the blessing of God. Through this forgiveness the believer is assured of life with God forever in heaven.

Conclusion: Satan is at work in every generation trying to lead people away from Christ by telling them that they need something in addition to the Gospel in order to be saved. Beware of his tricks.