

Agape Baptist Church - September 3, 2017

Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing *Colossians 2:16-23*

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

- *Therefore* ties this passage to **Colossians 2:13-15**
 - o **Life-Truth:** A person's belief system (Doctrine) quietly informs how they order their life.
- Paul exhorts the Colossian Christians: Believe Christ has secured your innocence, and live from that reality!
 - o *In-Context:* Let no one burden your conscience as it relates to gray areas of religious practice.
 - o Rather "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding".
 - o **Further reading:** Romans 14:1-15:3
- Note that Paul *does not* forbid Christian disciplines.
 - o The danger is losing touch with the substance while holding strong affection for the shadows.

Questions for going deeper: Have I thought through my religious practices? What are the beliefs that drive what I do?

¹⁸ Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

- *Disqualify* implies a negative verdict from an athletic contest official.
 - **Further reading:** 1 Cor 9:24-27
- Your race is initiated by Christ, sustained by Christ, and rewarded by Christ. Do not look elsewhere!

...Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith... Hebrews 12:1-2

“All those who draw us aside from the simplicity of Christ cheat us out of the prize of our high calling. For we recede from Christ, when we transfer the smallest part of what belongs to him to any others, whether they be angels or men” Calvin

- The false teachers of Colossians may have come from *among* the church: They did not reject Christ, but failed to embrace His sufficiency.
 - **Further reading:** 1 Timothy 2:5, John 1:18
 - They delighted in their outward acts of humility, were fascinated by angels, and taught based on visions.

- **Life-Truth:** We must not rely on or promote any method for spiritual growth that is not completely rooted in and dependent upon Christ.

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

- The physical world has some bearing on the Christian, but only Jesus can reorder the heart.
 - **Further reading:** 1 Cor 6:12-20, Mark 7:15
- Personal conviction stemming from reflection on the realities of Christ is a beautiful part of the Christian life.
 - Personal convictions used to measure the spiritual health of others is both divisive and harmful.

Question for going deeper: Do I trust (and take pride in) in religious activities for spiritual development? Or do I embrace religious activities as a way of holding fast to Jesus?