

"The Fullness of Jesus Christ"

Colossians 2:8-10

Introduction: Last week in our study of Colossians we stopped on Colossians 2:8 in which Paul gives a warning to the Colossians concerning the heretics that were trying to penetrate the church at Colossae and at Laodicea.

I. The Warning

Part 2

Notice Colossians 2:8

The warning here can be seen in two ways. To spoil the Colossians would be to rob them of the spiritual blessings which they had in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ and our enemy longs to steal away as many of these blessings as he possibly can. Another way to see this verse is to understand that our enemy wants to carry us away with some kind of false teaching because when that happens it makes us ineffective for the Lord.

Paul gives three ways in which false teachers can deceive others.

1. Philosophy

The philosophy spoken of here is a reference to human/worldly wisdom. The philosophers of Paul's day were always searching for the answers to life but in their search, they had excluded God and they were looking to man's wisdom. There are three main questions that would have been discussed that human wisdom cannot answer. Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? Apart from God these questions cannot be answered correctly. Then there were also many other questions about life which they tried to answer in their own wisdom. Notice what James says concerning the wisdom of the world.

James 3:13-17

¹³ *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

¹⁴ *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*

¹⁵ *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

¹⁶ *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

¹⁷ *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

Man's wisdom at its greatest level cannot find a way to God.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸ *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

¹⁹ *For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

²⁰ *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

²¹ *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

²² *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:*

²³ *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*

²⁴ *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

²⁵ *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

2. Vain deceit.

Let us keep in mind that the heresy that had come in was Gnosticism and in that teaching they taught that the possession of knowledge was the only requirement for salvation. They also believed that all matter was evil. This then led to another heresy known as Anomianism which promoted an immoral lifestyle. They reasoned that since the spirit

was separate from the physical body, no one had responsibility for the actions done in the physical body. Because of their beliefs the Gnostics ignored or downplayed the importance of the historic facts of death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, teaching that these events were not real but simply appeared to be real. Gnostics generally held the view that all the secrets of God were in the mind, or appearing in an immaterial identity. Their teaching then would lead others into an empty spiritual search that would end up as an eternal disaster/vain deceit.

3. Traditions of men.

Paul knew that just because people have believed something and handed it down through the years does not make it true. The question we must always ask is it "according to the Scriptures"? Those who are led away by traditions of men go along a path marked out by the authority of men, from whom it has been handed down. When Jesus walked on the earth, He condemned the Pharisees because they held to the tradition of men and rejected the commands of God.

Mark 7:5-9

⁵ *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?*

⁶ *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

⁷ *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

⁸ *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

⁹ *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

There are many churches today in which there are people who attend and they follow the traditions of the family and they reject the Word of God. It is all about what grandma said or what grandpa said. Whatever they said has been held onto as a family tradition and they will just not let go of it.

4. Rudiments of the world.

The word "rudiments" has a very interesting meaning that really opens this verse up to our understanding. Notice the information from Barclay on this word.

"It means the elemental spirits of the world, and especially the spirits of the stars and planets. There are still people today who take astrology seriously. They wear signs of the zodiac charms and read newspaper columns which tell what is forecast for them in the stars. But it is almost impossible for us to realize how dominated the ancient world was by the idea of the influence of the elemental spirits and the stars. Astrology was then, as someone has said, the queen of the sciences. Even men so great as Julius Caesar and Augustus, so cynical as Tiberius, so level-headed as Vespasian would take no step without consulting the stars. Alexander the Great believed implicitly in the influence of the stars. Men and women believed that their whole lives were fixed by them. If a man was born under a fortunate star all was well; if he was born under an unlucky star, he could not look for happiness; if any undertaking was to have a chance of success, the stars must be observed. Men were the slaves of the stars. There was one possibility of escape. If men knew the right passwords and the right formulae, they might escape from this fatalistic influence of the stars; and a great part of the secret teaching of Gnosticism and of kindred faiths and philosophies was knowledge which claimed to give the devotee escape from the power of the stars; and in all probability that was what the false teachers of Colossae were offering. They were saying, "Jesus Christ is all very well, he can do much for you; but he cannot enable you to escape from your subjection to the stars. We alone have the secret knowledge which can enable you to do that."

So, we can understand that the heretics played upon the fear of the people. Anytime something tragic happened the heretics could convince the people it was because they did not have the secret knowledge to be free thus luring them into their teaching.

Notice Colossians 2:9

Now Paul pulls their attention back to Jesus. In Him is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This verse speaks against the Gnostics by declaring the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. He was fully God and fully man. In Him is all the fullness. These other means taught by the Gnostics left their followers completely empty. But in Jesus Christ a person can experience the full abundant life.

John 10:7-10

⁷ *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

⁸ *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

⁹ *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

¹⁰ *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Notice Colossians 2:10

Paul now declares that in Christ the believer is complete. There is nothing to be added to our standing in Christ. Paul's main idea here is that believers have come to completion, a state of having no deficiency. To be sure we are all "works in progress" but Paul's point is that in contrast to empty philosophy, believers are filled with the One in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! The point is that we have all we need for this life we are living on this earth.

Notice the words of J Vernon McGee.

"You "are complete in him." "Complete" is a nautical term, and it could be translated in this very vivid way: You are ready for the voyage of life in Him. Isn't that a wonderful way of saying it? You are ready for the voyage of life in Christ, and whatever you need for the voyage of life you will find in Him. This is where we say that Christ is the answer. What is your question? What is it you need today? Are you carried away by human philosophy? Then turn to Christ. Are you carried away by enticing words? Are you carried away by the systems and traditions of men? Turn to Christ.

2 Peter 1:3-8

³ *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

⁴ *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

⁵ *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;*

⁶ *And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;*

⁷ *And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

⁸ *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Conclusion:

Spiritually speaking there is nothing that we lack for our journey.