

COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

REVIEW...

- **COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:7 – THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH...**
 - Paul rejoiced in the mystery of the church – that Jesus dwells in our hearts...
 - As a result of knowing the mystery – Paul preached / warned / and taught others...
 - Knowing the mystery brought maturity to the church...
- **COLOSSIANS 2:8-15 – BEWARE OF WORLDLY WISDOM...**
 - Paul warned the church to beware the wisdom that comes from this world...
 - Philosophy – the love of knowledge – thinking the answers are in education...
 - The pursuit of wealth – that will only leave us empty and unsatisfied...
 - The traditions of men – living in fear – following superstitions
 - Instead the church was to follow Godly wisdom...
 - The wisdom of God is found in knowing Jesus Christ – we will only be content in Him!
 - Jesus gives us a new start / new life – because we have been forgiven!

FALSE TEACHINGS – TRUSTING IN RELIGION... (3 THINGS)

- **BEWARE OF RELIGION...**
 - There were those in the church who said the only way to grow in Jesus – religion...
 - The more they did for God - the more they would grow in God...
 - The more they read their Bible / went to church / prayed / gave...
 - The more God would accept them / bless them / love them!
 - But there are only two things that can come from trusting in religion...
 - **If we manage to keep all the man made rules - we feel like we have boasting rights...**
 - **If we fail to keep the rules - and do not do as well as others – condemnation...**
 - **So Paul warned the church about the danger of trusting in religion!**
- **1ST – DO NOT BE JUDGED... VS. 16-17**
 - Do not let anyone judge you about your convictions...
 - Not all believers in Jesus have the same convictions – what we can or cannot do...
 - Paul gives us 2 examples of these ‘grey’ areas in a Christian’s life – food / Sabbath...
 - These were critical issues in Paul’s day – he was reaching out to a gentile church...
 - **The gentiles did not worry about eating meat / they did not honor the Sabbath day**
 - **Where as the Jews – who represented the 1st church in Jerusalem – did both!**
 - The Old Testament vs. New Testament on eating meat...
 - According to the Law there were 2 kinds of food – clean / unclean – **Leviticus 11...**
 - But Jesus elaborated on the command in **Matthew 15:11**
 - It is not what goes in that makes you unclean – it is what comes out of your heart...
 - **Whatever you eat – it just goes into your stomach – then into the CR...**
 - **No matter what you eat – it all ends up in the same place – obviously...**
 - **So you are not a better person if you do not eat pork – or worse if you do...**
 - **I Timothy 4:4 – “Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused.”**

- The Old Testament vs. New Testament on what day to worship God...
 - According to the Law the Sabbath was required – 4th commandment - **Exodus 20:8**
 - In **Numbers 15:32** a man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day...
 - The punishment for his crime was to be stoned to death by the people!
 - But the real purpose of the Sabbath was to point us to Jesus – **Romans 14:6**
 - If you see the shadow of your best friend - you do not run up and hug the shadow...
 - But the shadow does tell you your friend is close...
 - The Sabbath was a shadow of Jesus – He is where we find true rest...
 - So whether you worship on a Saturday / Sunday – it is all about Jesus!
- o In these 'grey' areas of our Christian walk we should not be judgmental of each other...
 - Those who are the 'weaker' saints – bound by more rules – do not eat / certain days...
 - Weak not in their faith – but in their understanding of the word - **I Corinthians 8:7**
 - Should not criticize those who have more freedom in their walk in Christ...
 - This is where most people tend to struggle – be judgmental of others...
 - If we think we cannot see movies / cannot listen to secular music / no tattoos...
 - If we have a rule we believe we must follow – and someone else do not...
 - Then we tend to think we are better Christians – more righteous than they are!
 - You cannot force someone to follow your rules...
 - If I tell you that you should not gamble – I have given you a law...
 - The problem is I have not changed your heart – you still want to see movies...
 - So I have set you up for failure – you will watch a movie – then feel like a failure...
 - If instead I tell you to go to the Lord – ask Him if you should see a movie...
 - God will tell you – and if He says no He will change your heart so you do not want to!
 - God does not just give you the Law - He gives you the ability to live up to the Law!
- o Those who have more freedom - eat what they want / worship every day...
 - These 'stronger' brothers should not look down upon those who have more rules...
 - This tends to be the easier position to take – having more freedom in Jesus...
 - If someone follows more rules than we do – 'God bless them' – we do not mind...
 - So long as they do not force their rules onto us!
 - It is true that things are not sin – but to the one who thinks they are wrong...
 - We might know that pork is nothing / cards are nothing / movies are nothing...
 - But to a brother who thinks they are evil – to him they are sin - **Romans 14:23**...
 - So be considerate of the convictions of your brother in Christ – **I Corinthians 8:9**...
 - If eating pork stumbles your brother – do not eat in front of him...
 - If watching a movie stumbles him – then do not watch the movie in front of him...
 - If playing with cards stumbles – then do not put out the deck when he comes by...
 - Respect the convictions of others - do your best not to offend their rules...
 - We need patience - to be able to overlook the little differences we may have...
 - Then they will be open to what you have to say - be willing to watch your lives...
 - You can show them a better way - a relationship with Jesus that changes the heart!

- o There were those who wanted to 'cheat' the church out of their reward...
 - Cheated – only here in the NT – picture of a referee giving a 'bad call'...
 - Like when a basketball ref makes a bad call that costs a team the win...
 - There are those who want to try to cheat us out of our reward in Jesus...
 - They try and get us to look somewhere else than to Jesus for our salvation!
- o Paul gives four ways in which we can be cheated...
 - 1st – If we delight in humility – the idea being false humility...
 - Pride can be tricky – it is not always easy to see – but it always sets us up for a fall...
 - Pride can be – I think I know it all / I am never wrong / I do not need correction
 - Pride can also be – thinking I am nothing / huya-huya / pride means its all about me
 - Whether it is arrogance / or 'false' humility – if I am the focus it is pride...
 - **Proverbs 16:18** – “Pride goes before destruction, an arrogant spirit before a fall.”
 - 2nd – We are cheated if we worship angels...
 - Trusting and praying to someone else other than God to help us get to heaven...
 - The idea of praying to saints to help get you into heaven...
 - Men or women who lives such pious lives they have 'extra good works'...
 - So after they die they become a mediator between a holy God and us...
 - An attractive idea because it seems like they can relate us – they are sinners too...
 - And it allows us to put someone between us and the conviction of God!
 - But it is a FALSE teaching – that will cheat us out of the reward of heaven!
 - **I Timothy 2:5** – “For *there* one Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus...”
 - 3rd – We are cheated if we have pride...
 - People who claim to have 'visions' – believe they had 'special revelations' from God
 - Who try to impress others by their 'super spiritual' status with God...
 - But for all their boasting – it is just pride that is cheating them of the reward!
 - Just because you carry around a big Bible - does not mean you are safe...
 - Just because you can quote a 1000 verses - does not mean you are forgiven...
 - It is only a relationship with Jesus that brings salvation!
 - 4th – We are cheated if we miss Jesus...
 - We are the body of Christ – He is the head over us all – holds us all together...
 - So long as you still have your head – your body can function / grow...
 - But if you cut the head off a person – the rest of the body is going to die...
 - In the same way the only way we are going to grow in faith – is through Jesus!
- 3RD – DO NOT BE ENSLAVED... VS. 20-23
 - o Paul warns about the rules of this world – speaking of religion...
 - Most people prefer 'religion' and 'tradition' to a relationship with Jesus...
 - Religion is a great way to justify sin - it gives me an excuse to disobey God...
 - I can do what I want from Monday - Saturday / so long as I go to church on Sunday...
 - I am all right with God so long as I give my 10% to the church...
 - As long as I was baptized - and am a member of the church - God is ok with me...
 - As though man made rules can somehow wipe away the sin in a heart far from God!
 - Religion is familiar – part of our identity...
 - We live in a community where many are very hardened towards the Gospel...

- Because they have been indoctrinated in a lifetime of traditions and superstitions...
 - And they are proud and think 'religion' is enough to get them into heaven...
 - When you dare to challenge those beliefs - you immediately come under fire...
- o Since we have died with Jesus – why do we go back to religion...
- We go back to the rules – do not touch / do not taste / do not handle...
 - The problem with these rules – they are not from God...
 - They are man's ideas about how to be good enough to be accepted by God...
 - Religion is man's attempt to reach up to a perfect God in heaven...
 - Religion always falls short – cause we can never be 'good enough' to earn heaven!
 - Rules – religion - can never really change someone...
 - Rules are a fence that tries to keep people safe from temptations/sin...
 - They seem to be a good idea - and most people (*and churches*) take this approach...
 - Here is the danger - they can only control your actions - not change your heart...
 - In the end people might think their rules make them strong in the Lord...
 - When in reality their rules make them 'weak' - taking their eyes off of Jesus...
 - They trust in their rules - rather than looking to and depending on the Lord!
 - The church is most well known today for their 'religion'...
 - Do not drink / do not smoke / do not go to discos / do not have tattoos...
 - And when the world looks at the church - and sees all of these rules...
 - Most of which the very people who make the rules - do not even keep...
 - The world walks away from Jesus - saying who would want that!
 - God does not tell us we are to be know by our rules - but by our love - **John 13:35**
 - The only way to exact lasting change is a relationship with Jesus...
 - When you got married - you likely changed a lot of your life 'habits'...
 - Not because there was a rule - but for the love of your wife you wanted to!
 - Rules do not make the difference - it is the relationship that changes the heart...
 - It is God that changes our hearts so we no longer want go the wrong way!
 - If you see someone struggling with their walk – do not give them rules...
 - Instead tell them the truth - IN LOVE - don't let them go on in their sin...
 - Give them Jesus - point them back to the one who can change their heart!