

Sermon: Jesus is Enough (Part 4, Colossians 2:6-19)

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. Tell of a time when you were very excited about starting something new, only to see the excitement fade with time?
2. Give a brief description of when you first became a follower of Christ. If you are not a follower, what questions do you have that hold you back from this decision?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Paul warns about an individual being taken 'captive/kidnapped' (v 8). Captive to what? Kidnapped from what? Why is this an important warning to heed?
2. In Part 3, Pastor Henry spoke about two deceptions:
 1. Religion of Special knowledge and 2. Religion of special behaviorsWhen might a follower of Christ be most vulnerable to these deceptions? What are the danger signs of these two deceptions?
3. In this message, Pastor Henry speaks about a third deception: 'The Religion of special experiences.' Name some that the Apostle Paul refers to (v.18). What are some 'experiences' that you have witnessed? What precautions would serve a Christ-follower when confronted by 'the religion of special experiences'?
4. List five examples that show the truth of Jesus' declaration that 'He is Enough.' (Matt 12:39-40; John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Col 2:9-15)

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Which of the three 'deceptions' are most seductive for you? Why?
2. What resources / people do you have around you to encourage/ support you when you are in a spiritual slump?
3. How can the group members pray for you this week as you refine your focus on Christ?
4. What steps do you need to take to fulfill 1 Peter 3:15?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Colossians 2:6-17

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹²having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. ¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. ¹⁸Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. ¹⁹They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Matthew 12:39-40

³⁹He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

John 14:6

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

Sermon Study Summary

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the believers at Colossae in response to a personal visit from Epaphras who had come to tell Paul of the growth in faith of the believers as well as troubling evidence of false prophets spreading heresies and deceptions among the church. After warm greetings, encouragement, acknowledgement of the faith of the church and the believers and a prayer for them, Paul speaks to the supremacy of Jesus the Son: that He is the image of the invisible God, that in Him all things were created, that He holds all things together, that all things are reconciled in Him, that in Him we are presented as holy, without blemish and without fault, as we continue in our faith. And Paul advises us that, 'Just as we received Christ Jesus as Lord, to continue to live our lives in Him,' (2:6) and do not let yourself be taken captive or kidnapped (v.8). The great danger with deceptions is that we end up putting our ultimate trust in the wrong things, or even allowing good things to distract us. Paul encourages us to keep our focus on Jesus as the centre of our lives because anything we put ahead of Jesus will become the source of our greatest fears, worries, frustrations and disappointments.

In Part three, Pastor Henry examined two heresies promoted by some in the church at Colossae. According to them, Jesus' message was good, but a subtle teaching suggested that maybe something more was needed. The focus of freedom and spiritual growth in Jesus was shifted away by a "religion of special knowledge" and a "religion of special behaviours." Lack of 'special knowledge' implied that believers were naïve and thereby chipped away at their confidence and trust in Christ alone. Today, this often happens on college campuses and in the media where highly 'educated' people take issue with the Christian faith with the goal to weaken faith in God while not having anything better to offer. All believers need to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). We also need to be careful that we do not grow proud of our knowledge and try to impress or intimidate or discourage spiritual growth in other Christians. The "religion of special behaviours" speaks to legalism, the attempt to earn God's favour through our own efforts rather than by developing a growing, vibrant and ongoing relationship with Jesus. Man-made rules fade away (v.22); don't let them rob you of your freedom in Christ. The Old Testament laws are signs or shadows to prepare us for the coming of Christ; do not let them keep you from what Jesus accomplished for you through His death on the cross and His resurrection.

A third deception that can kill our spiritual growth and freedom in Christ is the "religion of special experiences" (v.18). Some in the church at Colossae claimed to have had visions or special revelations from God and were becoming prideful and pre-occupied with them. They used these special experiences both to impress others with their spirituality and to manipulate them to get what they wanted. Paul says that we are not to let people like these disqualify, intimidate or convince us of their greater spirituality or a 'special' relationship with God based on certain 'spiritual' experiences.

An important aspect of being a Christ-follower is our passion about listening to God and hearing His promptings or still, small voice. But we must also be cautious. **Firstly**, beware of pride: when God speaks to us, we must be careful to listen in humility and not to use His word to manipulate others. If you sense God telling you to do something, and it does not contradict the teaching or spirit of Scripture, wonderful – go do it. If you believe God has given you a word for someone else, test it with the Lord; then being careful not to inflate or embellish, always say something like "I sense the Lord wants me to share this you – but I could be mistaken – so please take this to the Lord in prayer – ensure that it aligns with Scripture – and that you receive confirmation from the Lord on this." If you find any sense of pride in sharing a spiritual experience or wanting to impress others, Paul says in v.19 that you have lost the connection with Jesus: your pride is on centre stage and Jesus has been pushed to the sidelines. **Secondly**, do not seek spiritual revelations for the wrong reason. While we do believe that we serve a God who still heals and does miracles, we should neither seek spiritual experiences for their own sake nor because others have them. Do not presume that God wants the same for you. Moses had the experience of a burning bush that was not consumed. Certainly God can do it again, but God is creative and He knows and provides for us individually: something different or small or delightful! **Thirdly**, Paul refers to those who practice the worship of angels, a practice alive today. The Bible tells us that angels are real, but we are disregarding the clear teaching of the Bible when we pray to God through any intercessor other than Jesus (John 14:6 & 1Tim.2:5). Again Paul's concern here, and his warning to us, is that we do NOT let anything take our focus off Jesus. Stay focused on Jesus, keep Him at the Centre of your life, do not let anyone, or anything, distract you from that. Do not seek experiences – SEEK THE LORD! Do not crave what Jesus can do for you more than Jesus Himself - Seek His desire for you to grow in character, faith and trust in Him. Do not seek signs – the only sign you need, and has already been given, is His resurrection from the grave.