

Its all about Jesus: The Deception of religion and the deliverance of the Savior

(Colossians 2:1-10)

Introduction

Religion = the belief in and worship of a superhuman power. A particular system of faith. A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance

2Tim. 3:1 But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, 4 traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!

Oh today that we may remove the shackles of the world, the deception of religion, and trappings of faux morality and life in the power and deliverance of our Savior Jesus Christ!

Do not be deceived (2:4//8)

- **Often we do not know we are being deceived until it's too late. What does deception look like?**
 - Scams
- **Be Careful when it sounds too good to be true (2:4)**
 - Sometimes things sound good
 - Sometimes things sound good to our ears
 - Often what is good for our ears is destructive to our soul
 - Our lense is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Is what you are hearing pushing into the grace of Jesus? Does the church, pastor, philosophy, strategy push you into God's Word?
- **Don't be cheated**
- Philosophies
 - Broad word used to describe all sorts of groups, tendencies, and points of view and thus had become a catch all term (Lohse).

- Paying too much attention to fine-sounding arguments can deceive us about religious and spiritual truth (Moo).
 - Often religious life is a system of convenience. Convenience does not result in life change.
 - Convenience leads to chameleon behavior.
- Belief that does not have impact on one's behavior is useless. Faith = practice (NIV).
 - If you are only concerned about behavior change and not heart change you are following an empty hollow hope.
 - Hollow/empty = vessels that contain nothing.
 - We gravitate towards things that make us FEEL good. Listen to our music? Emotional, rhythmic, almost as if we are pushing people into a frenzy to make an emotional response
 - Why choose an empty religious experience when Jesus offers eternal life?
 - Just because I have a bible in my house does not mean I have it in my heart.
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- There are times in our life where the fine sounding argument is not external but internal
 - Have you convinced yourself you are a Christ follower?
 - Have you convinced yourself certain behavior is acceptable?
 - Have you convinced yourself that you love other?
- Do not be deceived... instead know the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Do not have the appearance of godliness but deny its power. Find deliverance in Jesus Christ today!

Be Delivered (2:10)

- What does deliverance look like?
- What you think of Christ, your conception of him is everything (Hughes).
- We cannot pursue knowledge of God in willful, unloving isolation, rejecting fellowship with others (Hughes).
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The more you hear the voice of the Lord the more you recognize His voice and leading. The more you listen to Christ the less you listen to other competing voices.

- To receive Christ in this verse is not only a matter of believing in his person, it also involved a commitment to the apostolic teaching about Christ and his significance (Moo).
- How do we walk

- Rooted – horticulture
 - (perfect tense) expresses the continuing results of an action completed in the past.
 - We do not need religious exercises or observances as if such things were spiritual vitamin supplements that can correct some salvation deficiency (Garland).
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- Built up – construction
 - Implies we are still under construction and not yet finished
- Established – validate, confirm, guarantee
 - Strengthened in the faith or strengthened by your faith.
- Taught – to the traditions Christians have received – Word of God
- Overwhelming thanksgiving
 - As green leaves are a sign of a healthy tree so too thanksgiving is a sign of a healthy soul.
- They recognize Jesus Christ as THE Lord not a divine superhero or lesser household god or a member of a pantheon of lords. Since they are bound to him as Lord, they are also bound to be obedient to him (Garland).

Conclusion

- Story related by DL Moody:
 - One morning my sister's boy said something naughty one morning and the father's son said "Sammy" go and ask your mothers forgiveness or I will put you in bed. Sammy refused and was put to bed. At noon the father came home expecting Sammy to be playing round the house but was in bed refusing to ask forgiveness. The same thing at night.

- That night as Sammy stayed in bed both mom and dad went in to coax him to forgive to no avail. Neither parent slept that night expecting a knock on the door. It was for the good of the boy that they didn't want to give him his own way.
- Later the next afternoon mom went in to talk to Sammy. After reasoning with him she said Sammy follow my lead and say—mother// for // give// me//. Sammy repeated the words and cried “take me down to papa so I can say it to him
- What a picture of how we are! Just those words “Father, forgive me” said from the heart brings us to God.
- **Are you an enemy of the Cross? Do you need to say today: Father forgive!!!**
- **Are you continuing to stand firm?**
- **By sitting in your seat you are agreeing that you are right with God and do not today need to profess Him as Lord.**
- Do you have a Savior Story?

Why does it Matter?

- We have been justified (made right before the Lord) and accepted
- We receive forgiveness (redeemed)
- We escape God's wrath (reconciled)
- We are adopted in to a new family
- We gain a new identity (New Creation)
- **Believe, Confess, Faith, Baptism**

Notes

Col. 2:1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- This pleonastic phrase again stresses the significance of right “insight” (sunesis) and understanding (epignosis) for the life of the community (Lohse).
- Complete fullness also means “complete certainty”
- Full assurance of understanding
 - Is the result or purpose of both encouraged in heart and united in love (Moo)
 - Paul is piling up words in order to hammer home the truth that Christ, and Christ alone, is the source of every conceivable bit of spiritual knowledge worth having (Moo)
- Mystery of God
 - The understanding of the divine mystery belongs with the recognition of the divine will (1:9). For whoever has recognized Christ as the content of the mystery owes him obedience as his Lord (Lohse).
- All treasures
 - This verse is the Christological high point of the letter. Christ is the one in whom is to be found all that one needs in order to understand spiritual reality and to lead a life peace to God (Moo).

Col. 2:4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- Paying too much attention to fine-sounding arguments can deceive us about religious and spiritual truth (Moo).

Col. 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

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Col. 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

- An urgent warning cry is intended to rouse the community to a state of watch attention: pay attention and be on your guard! (Lohse).
- Blepete → beware/watch what is at stake is to watch carefully, to weigh matters soberly (Lohse).
- Snare→
 - A rare word, that is used in the NT nowhere else – means the capture and the carrying off of booty. This word not only indicates seduction but also points to the evil intent of those who are trying to gain influence over the community (Lohse)
- Philosophies
 - Broad word used to describe all sorts of groups, tendencies, and points of view and thus had become a catch all term (Lohse).
 - Religion is most likely a more suitable translation than a “strict” philosophy
 - Here it is obvious these people wanted to gain recognition by their teaching (Lohse).
- Tradition

10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

- The colossians will have no interest in listening to the false teachers once they realize that they are already filled. (Moo)

- Principality and power refer to spiritual beings, and they did in 1:16 (Moo).
 - Christians need not fear these powers because they are firmly under the control of their own :head the one in whome all the fullness of deity has come to reside (Moo).

Illustrations

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

True religion consists of these two elements: pious doctrines and virtuous actions. Neither does God accept doctrines apart from works, nor are works, when divorced from godly doctrine, accepted by God (Cyril of Jerusalem).

The Bible Belt is an informal region in the southeastern and south-central United States in which socially conservative evangelical Protestantism plays a strong role in society and politics, and Christian church attendance across the denominations is generally higher than the nation's average.

No man can be said to be truly converted to Christ who has not bent his will to Christ. He may give intellectual assent to the claims of Christ and may have had emotional religious experiences; however, he is not truly converted until he has surrendered his will to Christ as Lord, Savior and Master – Billy Graham

Tumble weeds have a single, rather narrow root that turns prattle with age. Their limited root structure results in a a short life, death, and subjection to the will of the winds (Hughes).

Old error in a new dress, is ever error nonetheless – Screwtape

Application

- Belief that does not have impact on one's behavior is useless. Faith = practice (NIV).
- We do not need religious exercises or observances as if such things were spiritual vitamin supplements that can correct some salvation deficiency (Garland).
- Being in Christ transforms the way Christians live.
- The more I listen to the voice of Christ the less I listen to other competing voices.
- Just because I have a bible in my house does not mean I have it in my heart.
- What you think of Christ, your conception of him is everything (Hughes).
- We cannot pursue knowledge of God in willful, unloving isolation, rejecting fellowship with others (Hughes).
- When brotherly love is present and continuing, it facilitates a profound knowledge of Christ
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