



Completed or Cheated?

Colossians 2:1-10

BIBLE PASSAGE

Colossians 2:1-10 (NKJV - New King James Version)

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.

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.

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.

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;

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

INTRO

Have you ever bought into something that you really believed was going to enhance your life only to find that it ripped you off?

- Perhaps you saw an ad for a piece of clothing that was 90% off, and it looked perfect on the model. You ordered it only to find that it doesn't look the same or fit the same in person and then ripped because of how cheap it was when you tried to take it off.
- Maybe you signed up for that subscription that promised to change your life and deliver everything you need, only to find that 75% of what they sent you, you can't use and ended up spending more than you would have if you just gone to the store.

These are silly examples, but the fact is sometimes marketing is so good that really bad products or ideas can be presented like the best thing you'll ever find.

The title of this morning's message is "Completed or Cheated?"

Spiritually speaking, there is a way for a human being to become complete, mature, satisfied, and whole regarding their internal identity and mental and spiritual well-being. There are also a lot of things that promise to make you that way, but end up cheating you rather than completing you. That's what Paul discusses in the first half of chapter 2.

CHART

I have another chart for you. I love the way Paul thinks. AS he communicates, you can frequently see parallel ideas coming together, and when we see it in front of you, it's eye-opening. We can really see what's at stake when we decide that we know better than God and decide that Jesus is not enough.

Here, we have a presentation of **Paul (who represents the truth of the gospel as appointed by God) and false teachers** who present cancerous ideas and philosophies. Each one presents a prescription for what you need to become complete as a human being. Ultimately, depending on which track you take, you will become a **complete person or a cheated person**.

PAUL: To become a complete person, you need encouragement and mutual love as you grow in your understanding of Jesus Christ. As you grow, you must do so, being steadfast in the faith, rooted and grounded in the truth, and abounding in it with Thanksgiving. As you pursue this track, you also need to have a healthy caution of the things that seek to rip you off. By living this way, you will tap into the storehouse of all the riches of knowledge and wisdom that are found in knowing Christ, and because Christ is the fullness of the person of God in the flesh, you will become a whole and complete person when you live as though Jesus Christ is sufficient for you.

FALSE TEACHERS: The path of imitation truth has its own destination: to be cheated (vs. 8) from what God truly wants for you. This path begins with deceptive and persuasive words aimed at attacking the Word of God and the person of Christ. These will come in 4 packages: philosophies, empty deceit, traditions of men, and demonic principles of the world. When embraced, the end of the road is not completion but rather being cheated.

1 The Conflict of Paul

BIBLE PASSAGE

Colossians 2:1-3 (NKJV - New King James Version)

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.

APPLICATION

Great conflict – A sporting term. It's the term **Agon** where we derive the English word **agonize**. It was a term frequently used to describe conflict or warfare. The same word in 2 Timothy 4 - I have fought the good fight.

- Paul sees wolves leading the church astray and wants to fight for them to protect them. As we saw in the last chapter, he was willing to agonize, even through great suffering for the church's sake.
- Considering he says plainly that they have not seen his face in the flesh, his labor is for people that he didn't even personally know!
 - On a totally unrelated side note, this verse has changed how I've viewed modern satellite campuses. I used to really struggle with campuses that had video teaching. Now we have one, and I wrestled through the potential pitfalls. But this verse helped me understand that God has gifted and called some people to reach others with the truth, even if they've not "seen them in the flesh." Yes, every gathering of believers needs pastoral care, which is why elders and pastors should be among every local gathering. But sometimes God, for whatever reason He sees fit, calls someone to reach and teach people that they don't know personally. Paul used ink and parchment, we use cameras and screens!
- Conflict:
 - **Physical conflict** - Paul was imprisoned due to his love and commitment to the church.
 - **Spiritual conflict** - Paul agonized in prayer, study, and communication in order to help people be established in the truth.

In Acts 20, we see Paul leaving the church in Ephesus. There were tears and hugs, and he gave them a final exhortation that reflected the heart of a man who loved those people. "I did not shun to declare to you the whole counsel of God."

If Paul wasn't willing to agonize in spiritual warfare and agonize through physical trials for people, we would not have half the Bible today, and the Christian faith wouldn't have spread through the world!

APPLICATION

What was Paul laboring for? To what end? Last week, we saw that, ultimately, it was "to present every man perfect in Christ." But what does that look like on an even more practical level?

It has to do with the heart. The heart is the inner man. Paul says, "That their hearts may be..." The effect of the gospel and the truth is that it works in us, not just on us. Paul says there are three things he agonizes for regarding the heart:

1. **Encouraged** - Encouraged – **parakaleo – to be strengthened**. It also comes from the Greek word for Holy Spirit, which is *parakletos* – to come alongside of.
 1. Part of the job of a pastor is to come alongside people and help them develop strong hearts, strong walks, strong families, strong relationships, and a strong witness for Christ. The only discouraging a pastor should be doing is discouraging you to wrong. Even then, he accomplishes that by encouraging you to do right.
 2. Let's define quickly what Paul is NOT saying when he uses the word encouraged.
 3. He is not saying that you should tell everyone what he or she wants to hear so they go away feeling good about themselves. In fact, in other places, he forbids that kind of ministry. EXAMPLE: Turn to your neighbor and say, "You're the best looking person I've seen today." True encouragement ALWAYS comes from the truth. You can go away convicted and still encouraged. You can go away humbled and still encouraged.
 4. I find some doctrines out there so discouraging:

You are not well and rich because you haven't tapped into your faith yet.

 - How discouraging. Here I am, doing everything possible to try to get God to respond to my faith, and He's not... there's something wrong with me. Encouragement creates an atmosphere of hope even the most difficult and darkest times. The fruit of true encouragement is that you become more like Jesus. You are strengthened to love Him and serve Him.
2. **United in love** - Paul also desires that Christians experience spiritual unity from the heart, bound in love. The phrase, "knit together" means to be of one substance. That the love of God is causing us all to be of one mind, showing humility, forgiving one another, and not allowing our petty preferences, offences, and opinions keep us from walking together in the truth of Jesus.

QUOTE

“ We cannot pursue knowledge of God in willful, unloving isolation, rejecting fellowship with others.

Kent Hughes, Hughes, R. K. (1989). Colossians and Philemon: the supremacy of Christ (p. 55). Crossway Books.

APPLICATION

3. Full assurance of understanding- Paul labored so that our hearts could understand the mystery of the gospel (God made flesh, bridging the gap, delivering us from darkness, bringing us into His kingdom, and dwelling within us).

1. The truth, when delivered to us, helps us understand God's will in Christ. It gives us full assurance in a world and life that is full of surprises.

Paul fights the gnostic idea that wisdom and knowledge were hidden in the pursuit of mystical practices and a journey into the divine. No, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are wrapped up in the person of Jesus.

1. Do you want God's wisdom, seek to understand the gospel.
2. Do you want God's knowledge? Seek to understand and know Jesus.

2 The Cunning of Decievers

BIBLE PASSAGE**Colossians 2:4 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

BIBLE PASSAGE**Colossians 2:8 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

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.

APPLICATION

Paul recognized something that many in today's "tolerant and non-judgmental" culture want to avoid (I say that tongue in cheek because most of the tolerant and non-judgmental people are the ones who can't tolerate and love to judge Bible-believing Christians): There are people that parade themselves around with the title of Christian and pastor who have no anchor in Christ and are propagators of false doctrine and dangerous ideas that are cheating people from what they have in Jesus.

[Act 20:27-31 NKJV] 27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

[Eph 4:14 NKJV] 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of

deceitful plotting,

In Paul's day there were countless attacks, as there are today, on the faith.

- Judiazers were adding man-made rules and traditions to the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice.
- Gnostics were bringing in mystic practices, minimizing the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and offering alternate paths to attain secret knowledge and divine consciousness.
- Heathens were tempting Christians back to their former lifestyles and bombarding the church with cultural pressure.

Today, we have different versions of more of the same.

- We have modern religionists who want to weigh believers down with unbearable rules and regulations, demanding adherence to their church, their rules, and their authority.
- The modern gnostics of the age want to pull the roots of the Christian up from the moorings of God's word, inviting them into spiritual experiences, mystical practices, and syncretism (the mixing of modern cultural normalcies, humanistic ideas, and Christian spirituality).
- And we still live in a hedonistic world that normalizes sinful lifestyles, desensitizes people's consciences to evil, calls evil good and good evil, and pursues the love of self and the love of pleasure over the love of God.

What happens to the church when they, over years and years, allow all these influences to be more definitive and authoritative than the Word of God?

- Pastors become weak, cowardly people pleasers.
- Churches concede Biblical truth to popular, culturally accepted ideas.
- Instead of bold, clear preaching, we have nuanced, vague philosophizing and storytelling.
- Instead of Christians whose mission is centered on Christ and the gospel, you have people who are warriors for demonically influenced ideas.

How These Compromises Crept into the Church

1. THROUGH PERSUASIVE WORDS (COLOSSIANS 2:4)

1. Through Persuasive Words (*Colossians 2:4*)

- Many leaders began shifting their language to be more palatable to the world, slowly diluting doctrine.
- Persuasive indicates that something about the speech is enticing and convincing. False doctrine doesn't typically come in the package of "the stupidest thing you ever heard." It's convincing. It quotes scripture. It's attractive, much like the words, "Did God truly say?"
- Always remember, **"Persuasive doesn't always mean true."**
- In the name of "nuance," we have exchanged clarity for ambiguity.

ILLUSTRATION

Years ago, a Junior Higher won first prize at a Science Fair by showing how conditioned people are to believe anything labeled "science." In his project he urged folks to sign a petition demanding strict controls on the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for numerous reasons... It leads to excessive sweating, it's a major component in acid rain, it causes severe burns in its gaseous state, it triggers erosion, it decreases the effectiveness of automobile brakes, it's found in cancerous tumors. People were alarmed, 86% of folks supported the ban... Only one person realized "dihydrogen monoxide" is another name for water!

ILLUSTRATION

A striking example of the dangers of theological drift can be seen in the journey of Brian Zahnd, a once biblically-grounded pastor who, by his own admission, abandoned his previous theological convictions after immersing himself in philosophy, mysticism, and progressive theological works. In an interview with Preston Sprinkle, he describes his transformation by saying, *"I was embarrassingly ignorant of the good stuff... I didn't know where the good theology was, so I just started reading philosophy, Church Fathers, and the great Western literary canon."*

While study can be valuable, the danger arises when theology is shaped more by external influences than by Scripture itself. Over time, Zahnd has publicly rejected key biblical doctrines, such as the atoning sacrifice of Christ as absorbing the wrath of God, saying, *"The cross is not where Jesus saves us from God; the cross is where Jesus reveals God as Savior."* He denies the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ, which directly contradicts

Isaiah 53:5, where it says, “*He was pierced for our transgressions... the punishment that brought us peace was on him.*” Furthermore, he has embraced a view of hell that downplays divine judgment, aligning more with mystical Catholic traditions than biblical exposition.

His journey is a cautionary tale, illustrating what happens when theological study is not grounded in **the whole counsel of God’s Word (Acts 20:27)**. If we are not careful, we too can drift into theological trends that sound appealing but ultimately lead us away from the gospel.

QUOTE

“ This has something uncomfortably trenchant to say to Christian leaders. Did not many owe their first knowledge of Christ to evangelical truth? Yet how many now say that they have “grown out” of such simplicities. But to grow beyond the saving truths as we were faithfully taught them is not to grow up in a way that can please God or profit the church. Such fancied superiority in knowledge calls for honest self-examination to see if true loyalty to Christ remains.

RC Lucas - Saint Helen's Church London

2. THROUGH TRADITIONS OF MEN (COLOSSIANS 2:8)

2. Through Traditions of Men (*Colossians 2:8*)

- Just as the Pharisees replaced God’s law with human rules, today’s church has replaced gospel imperatives with secular activism, progressive theology, and cultural trends.
- Instead of being shaped by the unchanging Word of God, many churches have adapted their beliefs to the winds of social acceptability.
- Today, it's called "wokeness."
 - To progressives, the term "woke" indicates "being socially aware, compassionate, and actively working to correct injustices in society."

- The Bible does call Christians to "be awake" to truth and righteousness, but unfortunately, many Christians have traded being spiritually awake to being culturally woke.

WOKENESS

Men's philosophies and traditions have always sought to redefine truth apart from Christ. This is not a new problem—it is the ancient tactic of undermining God's authority by introducing subtle yet destructive alternatives to biblical truth.

How Wokeness Mimics but Corrupts the Gospel

One of the most insidious ways modern culture has crept into the church is through ideologies framed as "compassionate, just, moral, tolerant and inclusive, but detached from Christ's sufficiency. Satan is a copycat. He's always mimicking truth, portraying himself as an angel of light, but underneath the facade, he always lacks the substance of truth and intends to lead people away from Christ's sufficiency.

And the enemy is loud and a bully regarding his version of truth that has leached into the culture.

- **Our own Chris Adamo speaks of this extensively in His book "Rules for Defeating Radicals." The leftist agenda is to be so boisterously loud in asserting their moral superiority that the other side is intimidated and bullied into silence, cowardice, and inaction.**

I don't have time to do a lecture on wokeness today, but consider just a few areas:

1. Social Justice vs. Biblical Justice

- The Bible often speaks about justice (Micah 6:8, Isaiah 1:17, Proverbs 31:8-9), but biblical justice is rooted in God's righteous standards, not human opinion, emotion, or preference.
- Wokeness often replaces this with Marxist-inspired class struggle, reducing people to groups of oppressors and oppressed, rather than sinners in need of salvation.
 - Woke social justice has no desire to unite people but divide them based on their class of oppression. They will have "justice" against systemic white

privilege but will ignore the slaughter of millions of living human persons in the womb.

- Their justice is based on revenge, resentment, and deinstitutionalization, not personal repentance and authentic reconciliation. Instead of pointing to the power of the cross as the great equalizer of all mankind (Galatians 3:28), modern social justice seeks to redistribute power through a human framework of equality.

2. Inclusivity vs. Repentance

- Jesus calls all to Himself. Through repentance and faith, he is willing to accept anyone from any background, but He does not affirm all lifestyles. His message was always, “Come as you are, but do not stay as you are.”
- Today’s compromised church has exchanged **grace-filled transformation for affirmation without accountability.**
- Whether it's homosexuality or transgenderism or sexual perversion, the pursuit of carnal pleasures, or greed and self-seeking, many pulpits avoid calling sin what it is for fear of offending modern sensibilities, yet Christ's call is always to die to self and live to God, not to embrace self as god.

3. Self-Realization vs. Self-Denial

- The world tells us to “live your truth,” but Jesus says, "I am the truth." (John 14:6) "Pick up your cross and follow me."
- Many churches have absorbed the cultural obsession with self-help, mental health, and self-love while downplaying sin, repentance, and holiness.
- Paul reminds us that “you are complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10), meaning we don’t need to add cultural fads to the gospel to find out who we really are and what we really need.

3. THROUGH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD (COLOSSIANS 2:8)

3. Through the Basic Principles of the World (*Colossians 2:8*)

- The “basic principles” Paul warns about are the fallen, godless ideologies that humans gravitate toward apart from divine revelation.
- But most Bible scholars agree that the implication of "Basic Principles" refers to demonically sourced ideals that take their root in the world.
 - The ESV translates **"Basic principles" well: the "elemental spirits"** of the world.

- In other words, Satan wants to fill the void within people. Satan wants to be the one to define morality, present solutions, and direct the populace. He does this through demonic activity.
- **[1Ti 4:1 NIV] 1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.**

Trust me, Satanic ideas, philosophies, and teachings aren't always dressed up in a satanic Bible with human sacrifices and blatant immorality. Sometimes they are disguised in packages that are attractive to the human. Time won't allow me to give an exhaustive list of demonic principles that have invaded our entertainment, educational system, and even everyday pursuits.

However, a trend that seems to have become a Christian fad is very concerning to me. I'm hesitant to address it because I know I will get emails, have conversations, and potentially have people leave the church. But it's prevalent and deceptive enough that I am compelled to discuss it.

Look in any Christian magazine, popular Christian media and websites, and Christian bookstores, any you will find ads, devotionals, and materials on utilizing the enneagram to better discover who you are.

ENNEAGRAM

Some consider the Enneagram (an image of 9) a personality test. It asserts that there are 9 personality types within humanity, and by taking a test, you can discover who you really are at your core, discover who others are at their core, and make adjustments to become the best you that you can be.

However, the Enneagram was not designed to be a lighthearted test that spits out your personality type; it is considered a **self-discovery tool**. At surface level, it can seem like a harmless exploration that can make one giggle at. But many people don't stop to ask the very important questions:

1.) How did the enneagram come to be, and what baseline does it use to determine personality types?

2.) Why does the enneagram exist, and what is its intended purpose by those who created it?

3.) Finally, as a Christian, do I really need a secular, potentially demonic personality test to know myself?

At the end of the day, we discover that the enneagram is not a test built on research to help identify traits; it's a framework designed to define human nature and build an identity for a person.

HISTORY

The enneagram as we know it was popularized and formalized in the 60s and 70s by a Bolivian philosopher named **Oscar Ichazo**. Oscar traveled Asia, studying various schools of mystic knowledge in order to gain greater inner knowledge from the ages of the best path to self-discovery.

- Oscar went to Argentina, where he started the Arica School based on transcendental meditation and attaining higher states of consciousness.
- He published books and provided courses on how to use the enneagram to attain to higher spiritual plains and awaken the divinity within you. You know what that sounds like? **GNOTICISM!**

Ichazo writes, "**The enneagram process... becomes a study of the entire structure of the psyche in order to clarify ourselves and then, with meditation and ritual, to prepare to enter the Higher States innate in ourselves.**"

Some might argue, "Well, that's not the enneagram I took; it didn't even talk about spiritual things." Maybe, but the 9 types have always been part of the enneagram and were derived from ancient spiritual beliefs and practices.

- The Three goals of this "Arica school of knowledge"
 - **What is humankind?**
 - **What is the Supreme Good of humanity?**
 - **What is the Truth that gives meaning and value to human life?**
- Now, can anyone else tell me if there is something else that seeks to answer those three questions, and actually answers them with the greatest source of truth? **THE GOSPEL as conveyed in THE WORD OF GOD!**
 - **What is humankind?** - sinners by nature who are separated from God and naturally depraved in their minds.

- **What is the supreme good of humanity? -** We were created for fellowship with God, to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.
- **What is the Truth that gives meaning and value to human life?** That Jesus came into the world to save sinners, reconcile us to God, conform us into the image of Jesus Christ, and offer us eternal life with Him forever.

Tyler Zach (who has a thorough article that suggests that the enneagram is a helpful and redeemable tool) - The Enneagram is also helpful because it makes general sins specific to us. One pastor said that the Enneagram is useful for "sniper sanctification." In other words, God can use the Enneagram to place crosshairs on some of the root sins in our lives and help us understand why we do or don't do certain things.

- **SIDENOTE:** I suppose God could use anything to reveal sin. He could probably use Mormonism to reveal sin, but we shouldn't go read the Book of Mormon to get to know our sin better.
- You know what else makes for great "sniper sanctification" and helps s understand why we do or don;t do certain things? The Holy spirit and the Word of God!

There is a difference between a tool that is derived from the word of God that we use to better apply God's word to us and a framework developed outside of God's Word that we then try to force into biblical guidelines. People are now marketing Christian devotionals based on your enneagram number! Could you imagine Paul writing to the Colossians, ***"Now if you're a 5 listen carefully..."***

STAR

The **9-sided star** of the Enneagram sets out to be a symbol of what makes a person whole of complete. In mysticism, the 9 sided star represents the 9 major world religions. Likewise, the enneagram seeks to draw off ideas of multiple religions and spiritual thoughts to try and define the complexities of the human personality.

But this symbol is really a rip-off of better truths the Bible provides.

Think about it. Are there nine attributes in the Bible describing the kind of people God wants us to become?

- **Love**
- **Joy**
- **Peace**
- **Patience**

- **Kindness**
- **Goodness**
- **Gentleness**
- **Faithfulness**
- **Self-control**

If we are analyzing ourselves, let's look at those things and say, "How can I become more like Jesus," not, "How can I better discover myself."

APPLICATION

My intent is not to be overly critical of things that people have found helpful, but I will not apologize for saying that the truest answer to who we are and what we need as human beings is found in Jesus and Jesus alone. You are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. If you are constantly ignoring the spiritual disciplines of studying and meditating on scripture, spending time in prayer, and understanding Christ, but you are chasing after 30-minute online tests to try and figure out what's going on with you, you have it backward. Jesus will change your life. The goal of the Christian life isn't to become the best you; it's to be conformed to the image of Christ through the renewing of your mind.

3 The Call for the Christian

BIBLE PASSAGE

Colossians 2:5-7 (NKJV - New King James Version)

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.

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.

APPLICATION

Paul was not talking about astral projection or some sort of spirit travel. Paul was not onboard Spirit airlines on an invisible trip to Colossae!

- His reference is to the fact that in Christ, the hearts of believers are linked together. Paul's spirit rejoiced as though he was right there with them when heard from Epaphras that they were standing strong in their faith. But he still felt the need to both warn them and exhort them to continue.
- Why? It's not about how you start your race, but how you continue, persevere and finish your race.

EXHORTATION:

- We need to walk in Christ the same way we received Him: In faith and trust in the sufficiency of Jesus.
- When you received Christ, you laid down your pride. You didn't need to look to other things in the world to find what you need because when you found Jesus, you found everything. That's why you received Him.
- And that's how we must continue.

ILLUSTRATION

In 1986, the **Chernobyl nuclear disaster** caused radioactive contamination that seeped into the soil. Trees in the area absorbed these toxins and became **deformed, weak, and unable to grow properly**. Some forests in the area still suffer from radiation poisoning, where trees appear healthy but are hollow inside. One study revealed the **rings in the trees** marked the year of the disaster and that cell death and deformity regularly occurred after the nuclear fallout. One researcher noted that the younger trees were affected the most.

Because of this introduction of toxic radiation, trees that were designed to thrive and grow in a healthy environment were cheated of the opportunity to become healthy and strong.

ILLUSTRATION

In Kansas City, Missouri, two suspended walkways inside the **Hyatt Regency Hotel collapsed**, resulting in 114 deaths and 216 injuries. The disaster was traced back to a last-minute design change: the original single-rod support system was altered to a double-rod system without proper evaluation. The steel company had an issue manufacturing the designed rods and made a last-minute suggestion about a different design. This modification significantly reduced the walkways' load-bearing capacity, leading to their failure during a crowded event.

APPLICATION

Why these two analogies?

Paul paints a picture of what happens to a life that isn't firmly rooted, like a tree, in the soil of Jesus Christ or firmly grounded, like a well-planned building, in the truth of the gospel. They collapse and become an incomplete, broken version of what they could have been.

You see, like a tree or a building, the Christian life will only be as complete, mature, and healthy as what the heart and mind are rooted in and grounded upon. The Colossians were holding fast, but things were beginning to buckle regarding their faith, hope, and assurance due to the infiltration of ideas, philosophies, and deceptions aimed at shaking the foundation and pulling up the roots of the young believers, both in Colossae and Laodicea.

Paul wants them to be a picture of Psalm 1: **[Psa 1:1-3 NKJV] 1 Blessed [is] the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.**

He wants them to be a fulfillment of Jesus' words: **[Mat 7:24-25 NKJV] 24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.**

As you have been taught - you don't need new teachers when the one you already have is sufficient.

- Paul delivered inspired truth directly from the Holy Spirit to them. What they needed was not a new teacher who would give them a new revelation but to stick to what they already knew to be true.

Abounding in it with Thanksgiving - Sometimes we forget to be thankful for what we have and replace it with longing for something we don't. Paul says, "don't be deceived into longing for something that some other spiritual person is offering. Abound in what you have and be thankful."

4 The Completion of the Christian

BIBLE PASSAGE

Colossians 2:9-10 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

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

ILLUSTRATION

Decades ago, a woman in London was browsing a local car boot sale—a kind of flea market where people sell secondhand goods. Among the many trinkets and odds and ends, she spotted a ring with a large, sparkling stone. It looked beautiful, but certainly not expensive. The vendor assured her it was just costume jewelry, so she **bought it for £10 (about \$13)** and wore it as a fun accessory for years.

For decades, she went about her daily life, wearing the ring casually—while shopping, cleaning, or running errands—never thinking twice about it. To her, it was nothing more than a cheap, pretty piece of jewelry.

One day, a jeweler happened to notice the ring on her finger and suggested she get it appraised. Amused but curious, she agreed. The results shocked her. The "costume jewelry" was, in fact, a 26-carat diamond—an extraordinarily rare gem. At an auction, it sold for an astonishing **£656,750 (nearly \$850,000)!**

ILLUSTRATION

Less than one month before C. S. Lewis died, he wrote this letter to a little girl:

Dear Ruth ... Many thanks for your kind letter, and it was very good of you to write and tell me that you like my books; and what a very good letter you write for your age! If you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you, and I hope you may always do so.