If Jesus, Then No One

Colossians 2:11-23 4/5/2025

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:11-23 NKJV] 11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false

humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Intro:



- Pray for Kim Miller
- Missions pledges
- May 14th 6:00
- Grace North 1 year 6:00

As we've been tracking through Colossians, Paul's goal has been to give the believer such a vision of Jesus that we would be utterly resistant to trying to find something or someone else to complete us. I encourage you to go back and review the past sermons if you've missed them as well as the outline slides I've provided for each section. See YouTube.

Coming from chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter two, Paul warns us that there are those who would seek to draw a believer away from their foundation in Christ, cheating them with ideas of completion and wholeness apart from Jesus.

 Paul's desire for Christians is that we be aware of these empty philosophies that accord with the traditions of men and the basic principles of the world, not Christ.

• AS we look at the world through this lens, it becomes more evident that everywhere you look, godless systems under the spiritual control and influence of Satan are seeking to tempt and capture the hearts and minds of people, seeking to be a replacement for Christ; the world's wisdom seekes to replace Gods wisdom. The world's pleasures seek to replace God's presence. The world's methods seek to replace faith and trust in God's promises.

 Everywhere you look, you see God saying "This is Good" and you see Stan tempting "But this is better." Choose Christ, and you will find yourself complete as a person. Choose an alternative, and you will find yourself cheated as a human being.

This morning, we approach the end of chapter 2, where Paul wants to further contrast what we have and who we are in Christ versus what manmade religion and legalistic practices will offer you.

The message's title today is: If Jesus, Then No One.

☑ ILLUSTRATION

We will start with another **outline image** to get a big picture of today's passage.

Paul wants to further contrast what we have in Jesus versus
what we might try to find in man-made religious exercises.
Remember, in Colossae, they were facing errant doctrines from
Judaizers who wanted to add Jewish tradition and law to the
religious requirements of faith in Christ, as well as gnostic
heretics who wanted to subject believers to rituals and
practices outside of Jesus.

• In verses 11-15, Paul lays out several key items that Jesus has accomplished on our behalf. In verses 16-23, he tells us the implications of those things in relation to what man-made religion tries to do to us.

- Jesus has: Circumcised our hearts, buried our old nature, raised us to a new creation, forgiven us of all guilty actions, removed our legal guilt, and defeated our spiritual foes!
 Sounds like great news! Sounds like everything we would ever need!
- Religion tries to: Paul contrasts the transformative work of Christ with the futile efforts of man-made religion. While Jesus offers us liberation and redemption, religion often seeks to judge us in legalism, cheat us based of our reward in Christ, subject us to bondage, and deceive us with counterfeit forms of humility and superficial knowledge that do not lead to true spiritual growth. Instead of embracing the freedom found in Christ, religion imposes burdensome regulations and rituals that only serve to bind us in chains of obligation.

SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:11 NKJV] 11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

APPLICATION

In Him...

This is a key phrase throughout Colossians. It's mentioned 7 times (number of perfection):

- 1:17 IN HIM all things consist
- 1:19 **IN HIM** all the fullness dwells
- 2:6 we are to walk IN HIM.
- 2:7 we are to remain rooted and built up **IN HIM**.
- 2:9 IN HIM dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily
- 2:10 you are complete IN HIM
- 2:11 **IN HIM** you were circumcised.

☆ MAIN POINT

Circumcision in Christ

Is it safe to say this isn't a pleasant picture to try to visualize, especially for the men? Circumcision was first introduced to Abraham by God as a symbol of identification with God. In the ancient Near Eastern context, where physical markers were significant, circumcision served as a poignant reminder of the covenant relationship between God and His people.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 17:10-11 (ESV) [10] This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you. Every male among you shall be circumcised. [11] You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It will be a token of the covenant between me and you.

Talk about a personal reminder! This act went beyond a mere physical sign; it was a deeply spiritual symbol of being set apart and different from the surrounding cultures. Just as the physical mark was made on the body, it signified an inward consecration of one's heart and life to God. This practice highlighted the call for God's people to live distinctively and obediently in a world that often strayed from His ways.

- Under the Mosaic covenant, a child was to be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of inclusion into the national identity of Israel, symbolizing their separation unto God from other nations.
- But as it became more ritualistic, the prophets began to foretell that the heart of circumcision was to be a circumcision of the heart:

☐ SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 4:4 (ESV) [4] Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and take away the foreskins of your heart, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my wrath go out like fire, and burn so that no one can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

And so we see that God intended circumcision to be:

- A mark of covenant
- A symbol of identity
- A foreshadowing of inward transformation.
- Interesting that God would choose a symbol that was hidden.
 Instead of an ear or a finger, it was something that no one else could see, between you and God.

APPLICATION

In the life of the believer, what God desires is not an external marking, but an internal transformation.

I'm no longer defined by the *outward expressions of religion* but by the *inward transformation of my heart* and mind.

- My human heart was as hard as stone, deceitfully wicked and sinful in all of its intentions, and Christ came in and did surgery.
 He chopped off and cut away all the filthy sin and fleshly appetites and made my heart new and alive to the things of God.
- That changed heart leads to a changed life, and it serves as a mark to the rest of the world that I belong to Jesus.

In Paul's time, there were those who prided themselves on circumcision. They were telling new believers that in order to become a true Christian, you first had to convert to Judaism, which means... you guessed it. You have to get circumcised. Paul was vehemently against this because he understood the grace of God. That is, it was the circumcision of the heart that is important to God, not the flesh.

☐ SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:6 (ESV) [6] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision amounts to anything, but faith working through love.

APPLICATION

In fact, in the church at Galatia, these Judaizers were all over the place, exerting tremendous influence. In the book of Galatians Paul says, "I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!"

- That's pretty graphic and offensive right? They are going to preach about how holy it is to get circumcised, why don't they just cut off all their business and be holier than all of us.
- APPLICATION: God is not looking for us to prove our worthiness by an outward act by our own hands. He wants to do a work not made with human hands, but a spiritual work in which the hardness of our hearts is removed and we gain clean and sensitive consciences before God. OPeople can externally transform themselves, but on Jesus can internally transform the heart.

☆ MAIN POINT 2

Baptism in Christ



[Col 2:12 NKJV] 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

This is interesting language about burial in relation to baptism.

• Baptism is the one practice in the New Testament that is likened to the death and resurrection of Jesus, and invites a person into that death and that new life in Christ. Paul writes to the Romans:

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Rom 6:4 NKJV] 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

I've joked around with people when baptizing them that we may need to hold some under the water a little longer!

 But in all seriousness, that water really is a graveyard that represents the work Christ has done in destroying the power of our flesh, and through faith in the power of God, we are raised to new life.

 We are about to celebrate Easter. Paul talks about the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. It takes power to raise one from the dead to live forevermore.

Don't tell me for a minute that the triune God has the power to raise
Jesus from the dead to live forevermore, but doesn't have the power
to help you kick that addiction, that habit, that old lifestyle or carnal
tendency... It's a matter of faith and embracing who Jesus says you
are.

MAIN POINT

The Forgiveness of Christ

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:13-14 NKJV] 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

ΩΩ QUOTE

Our primary argument in convincing men to do something for their souls is to convince them they can do nothing at all. -JC Ryle

Even if you could circumcise yourself, you still have the problem that all your trespasses make you as good as dead before the presence of God! The key here is **WHO** has overcome our insufficiency, and **HOW** it was overcome.

- You did not find a way to make yourself spiritually alive through adhering to religious rituals and self-set standards of moral performance.
- Christ made you spiritually alive together with Him, and he did so by nailing the requirements (the Mosaic Law) that testified to our guilt to the cross with Him, having fulfilled and accomplished every perfect requirement of God on our behalf.
- When Jesus "took it out of the way," it indicates that there was an insurmountable roadblock between us and God. As Ephesians 2:14-16 says,
 - Ephesians 2:14-16 (ESV) [14] For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of separation, [15] having abolished in his flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man of the two, making peace, [16] and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility through it.

The handwriting of requirements against us: I believe this refers to the commandments and ordinances of

the Mosaic law.

There's nothing wrong with God's law. In fact, that's our problem.
 There's something wrong with us and our ability to keep that law perfectly from the heart.

 When the newfound church was deciding what to do about the large number of non-Jewish gentiles that were trusting in Christ, they held a counsel to determine whether or not those new believers, whom God had welcomed by His grace, needed to be circumcised and adhere to the strict Jewish code.

☐ SCRIPTURE

Acts 15:8-11 (ESV) [8] God, who knows the heart, testified about them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just like he did to us. [9] He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. [10] Now therefore why do you tempt God, that you should put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? [11] But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are."

JJ QUOTE

— Charles Spurgeon

"The law serves a person as a looking glass in which they may see their own face; but it has no power to wash away dirt."

The fullness of what Christ did: Not only did he erase your sins, he wiped out that which would stand against you and condemn you. Imagine standing before God and the start reading:

- You shall have no other God's before Me (car)
- You shall have no idols
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- Honor your father and mother (One time when I was 6)
- Murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet.

Well I made it out pretty good, I only broke 6 out of ten, and even then it was minor.

☐ SCRIPTURE

James 2:10 (ESV) [10] For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

APPLICATION

Good news, for those who trust in Jesus, he took those requirements of the law, fulfilled them for us, nailed them to the cross along with Himself as our sacrifice, and obliterated them from ever testifying against us! **JESUS ASSASSINATED THE KEY WITNESS!** Amen!



The Victory of Christ



[Col 2:15 NKJV] 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

In Colossians 2:14-15, Paul portrays Jesus not as a helpless victim nailed to the cross, but as a mighty warrior who was obliterating His children's greatest enemies. Jesus engaged in warfare to fight a battle we could never win on our own.

 The image that is presented here is one of a conquering nation parading its defeated captives around to humiliate them in front of the victorious nation. Christian, always remember this:

□ QUOTE — Josh Blevins

Regarding your salvation and position before God, the demonic forces of Satan now stand weaponless and humiliated before the people of God.

Oh, he can try with his toothless bite. He can lob his fiery darts, tempt the flesh, but don't give Him more credit than he deserves. God has made you more than a conqueror through Him, and ensures that no weapon formed against us shall prosper in the enemy's hand if we walk in the full armor of Christ.

And with that, we see "If Jesus..." Next, we see "Then no one."



Then No One Can Judge You

SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:16-17 NKJV] 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Don't let men judge you:

Let Christ judge you, let the Spirit judge you, let the word of God judge you, but don't let men come and bring their regulations and self-created standards and make you feel guilty or ashamed because you haven't met their standards. The only standards that matter regarding your salvation are the one's God has established.

Don't be judged by human standards in:

- DIETS
- DEVOTION
- DAYS

Remember, the legalist wants to create human standards to measure one's relationship with God.

- You can only be good with God if you eat or don't eat certain things.
- You can only be right with God if you observe or don't observe certain days.
- You can only find God's favor if you celebrate certain feasts.

APPLICATION

Today, there are still movements that want to convince you that unless you are embracing and adhering to Jewish customs and Mosaic commands, you are not a complete Christian.

[Gal 2:4 NKJV] 4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

 I've seen the results. Many people who sincerely love Jesus are now walking in condemnation and fear because they don't feel like they are measuring up if they celebrate Christmas or don't observe the Feast of Tabernacles; walking around condemned if they ate a pork sandwich or drank a cup of coffee!

Christ came to ensure that you can walk in freedom! Not in sin.
 There are sinful things we should avoid as a result of God's
 Grace. That's not legalism, that's holiness. But we are free from trying to earn God's favor through man created religious standards. One of the many issues jesus took with the Pharisees is they mixed up the two:

• [Mat 15:9 NKJV] 9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

IMPORTANT: Now, people who don't want to be confronted by their sin will often use the "Don't judge me" argument, sometimes even referencing this verse. This is where it's important to understand context.

 Paul is not saying we shouldn't judge between righteousness and unrighteousness according to God's word. No, what the Bible warns about is self-righteous judgement based on your own preferences or traditions. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said:

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Jhn 7:24 NKJV] 24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

☆ MAIN POINT 2

Then No One Can Cheat You

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:18-19 NKJV] 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

This is the second time Paul warns the believer about being cheated from the treasures of wisdom and knowledge they have in Christ.

- People are drawn to extracurricular knowledge and wisdom. Instead of digging deep into Jesus, they'd much rather consume themselves with spiritual conspiracy theories. They're far more concerned about the book of Enoch than obeying the clear commands of Christ. They want to talk like experts on the subject of angelic power while neglecting the power of Jesus to make them holy, bold witnesses.
- Paul warns us that "knowledge puffs up." The fleshly mind is filled with pride the more we think we know about spiritual things. But what good is our knowledge if it's not connected to head who is Christ?
- False humility is a real thing! There have been times, especially in my younger Christian years, when pride masqueraded around like humility. Becasue of my own insecurities and need for affirmation, I would slip in how much I read my Bible, how late I stayed up praying, how much I did for another person. What grace God has to have put up with me! I basically broke every one of Jesus' principles about praying in secret, giving in secret, fasting in secret, and doing good without tooting my own horn!
- But false humility should break our hearts when we see it in ourselves, but there are those who delight in it!

False humility - an expression of self-deprecation with the intention of self-exultation.



Then No One Can Subject You

☐ SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:20-22 NKJV] 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

False teachers often exhibit a desire for power and control over others, seeking to manipulate and dominate their followers. They may use deceptive tactics to gain the trust and submission of their audience, leading them astray from the true teachings of the Gospel. Throughout history, we have seen examples of individuals who have abused their positions of authority within religious contexts, exploiting the faith and loyalty of others for personal gain. It is important for believers to be vigilant and discerning, measuring all teachings against the unchanging truth of God's Word. As Christians, our ultimate authority is God Himself, and we are called to submit to His will above all else.

Sometimes, we will be good about not letting others subject us to
these things, but Paul warns us not to subject ourselves! Sometimes,
we can be our own worst enemy. In our desires, sometimes sincere
desire, to find favor with God, or even worse, puff ourselves up in
pride, will subject us to man-made rules in order to find identity,
purpose, and wholeness. This is a dangerous trap that leads to
becoming consumed with all the wrong things rather than with Christ.

•	Jesus told the Pharisees that they were more concerned with the
	outward "Do Nots" than the righteous "Dos" that come from the heart:

■ SCRIPTURE

Matthew 23:24 (ESV) [24] You blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a came!

☐ SCRIPTURE

Matthew 15:2-3 (ESV) [2] "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat bread." [3] He answered them, "Why do you also disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?

JJ QUOTE

— John McArthur

"The greatest enemy of spiritual growth is self-

righteousness."

Paul tells us that all these outward rituals deal with things that are passing away.

 Your clothing, your foods, your traditions and holidays... they are all fading and passing away.



Then No One Can Decieve You

SCRIPTURE

[Col 2:23 NKJV]23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

In other words, the ultimate deception is that religious practice outside of God's transforming grace is enough to give you the substance of righteousness. They aren't. They will give you nothing more than the appearance of righteousness.

DD QUOTE

— Pastor Josh

The indulgences and desires of the flesh will never be quelled by outward religious activity.

Conclusion

It's rightly said that there are two main religions in the world: *religion* based on what you do in the flesh, and religion based on who you are in Christ. Where do you stand today before God?

☐ SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) [8] for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, [9] not of works, that no one would boast.