

A TIMELY WARNING
Colossians 2 8-10

Intro: In Paul's epistle which we might call a companion epistle with Colossians, he clearly indicated in the last major section of that epistle that the Christian life is a warfare – a warfare against sin in our own hearts, and likewise a warfare against the evil influences of the fallen world in which we live. And all of this is engineered by Devil. We are in a warfare against the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

It is always a struggle for us to maintain our fellowship with the Lord, but there are also times when Christians need restoration to fellowship with the Lord. To state it another way, there are always ways in which a healthy Christian life is under attack, to draw that Christian away from the Lord. And the same is true of a church. Or, a church may grow lax about fellowship with the Lord, and it needs to be restored; it needs a revival. The same can be true of individual Christians like we are.

Now, in the case of this ancient Colossian church, the church was in a good state of spiritual health. And so that could probably have been said about most of the saints in the church at Colosse. But where the Lord is working in people's lives, where people are really growing in grace, the Devil is also going to be at work to tear things down. He will try to disrupt their fellowship with the Lord, and with each other. *That is what was going on in Colosse.* So far the Devil had not been successful, and Paul did not want him to be successful. Therefore, not being able to go to them, he wrote this letter to them to encourage them to continue in their obedience to the Word of God so that they would continue to grow and this strong church would become even stronger. There really is no such thing as standing still in our relationship with the Lord. We are either moving ahead, or we will be slipping back. The Devil can't take our salvation away from us, but he can certainly throw a lot of roadblocks in our way. A healthy Christian will be a growing Christian. A healthy church will be a growing church. I am not speaking primarily about growing in numbers (although that often is characteristic of a church where its members are growing). But I am talking about spiritual growth.

What evidence do we see in this epistle that the Colossian church and its people were spiritually strong?

Look with me at these verses: Col. 1:3-5. Then 1:21-23. Also verse 5 of

chapter 2 is strong evidence that the church was in good condition spiritually. But in verse 6 and on down through chapter 2 we see that Paul's words to the Colossian church clearly indicated that he wanted them to continue growing, to continue in fellowship with the Lord and with each other.

Last week we considered Paul's words in verses 6 and 7 in chapter 2. The greatest safeguard we have against sin in any form is to continue walking as Christians in the same way that we began the Christian life. We were saved by God-given faith, and we are to "walk," to live, by faith. But we don't do this in our own strength. We are to "walk in Him," in Christ, in fellowship with Him, in dependence upon Him, in obedience to Him. We are just as dependent upon the Lord to be able to live for Him as we were for our salvation to begin with. Verse 7 clearly indicates that our relationship with the Lord is a growing relationship. And we can get all of the help that we will ever need to live godly lives by looking to the Lord Jesus to give us both the desire and the ability to live in God's way instead of our own way.

The Holy Spirit has expressed this truth in different ways throughout Scripture, but it could not be stated more clearly than in those three words, "walk in Him," ***walk in Christ!*** The big question for all of us is, Are we doing this? We get our strength from reading, believing, and obeying the Word. We seek the Lord in prayer. And then by faith we do what He has told us to do in the Word. We can't do it in our own strength. But we can by the Lord's power working through the Word.

But now we come to the warning that Paul gave to the Colossian saints, and the Holy Spirit has included this in the Word because we need to be on constant guard against those forces within us and outside of us which seek to get us to believe *that we need more than we already have in Christ.*

I told you last week that the Word "beware" in verse 8 of our text is a translation of the Greek verb, to see. And it is used here as a warning, a warning to every Christian. Each one of us is to "see to it" that we do not turn from the truth of the Word of God, and the truth about Christ, to some other teaching that we may be told is better than we have, and that completes what we have.

The word philosophy means a love of wisdom.. And the Bible has a lot to

say about wisdom. But it tells us that there is a wisdom of God, and there is the wisdom of this world. The Bible gives us the true wisdom. It is a revelation from God and is centered in God. The wisdom of God is infallible and unchanging. It is absolute truth. It is not self-contradictory.

Now in contrast with the wisdom of God, the philosophy of life that you find in the Bible, there is now unified wisdom at all in the wisdom of men. Human philosophies do not lead us to God; they lead us away from God. The Bible tells us that “the world by wisdom knew not God” (I Cor. 1:21). In our universities scientists can deal with all of the wonders of God’s creation, but never see God in it at all. God’s wisdom, on the other hand, which is revealed in the Bible, bring us right to God, right to Christ, and right to the Holy Spirit. The truth that you find in the Bible is real truth, and it is the standard by which all other philosophies are to be judged. It is tragic that more of our politicians don’t consult the Bible because if they did they would find out what is wrong with the world, and what God has done to correct the problem through His Son Jesus Christ. And yet the Devil is always coming along with his philosophies, but they are nothing but as they are described here in our text for what they are: “vain deceit.” And if people do not know the truth of the Bible, they flock to these worldly philosophies and become slaves to error that lead them captive farther and farther away from God. They follow the traditions of men and the “rudiments of the world,” but the one fault with them all is that they are “not after Christ.” Lightfoot in his commentary says that this expression means that “Christ is neither the author nor the substance of their teaching” (p. 241). They are enslaved by what has come from man, and what can never be proved. Every philosophy needs to be judged by what it teaches about Christ, and whether or not He is given, as Paul said in Colossians 1:18, the preeminence.

John Eadie, another reliable commentator on Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, had this to say about the expression, “not after Christ”:

It was not according to the doctrine of Christ. It was not based upon Christ, but was in contrariety to His Person and Work. It depreciated Him, and undervalued His mediation. But true Christian wisdom has Him for its center, and Him for its object. It bows to His authority, and ever seeks to exalt Him. Any new doctrine may be safely tested by the estimation in which it holds Christ; for all that is false and dangerous in speculation, invariably strives to lower His rank and official dignity, and therefore is neither in source, spirit, substance, nor tendency, according to

Him (p. 140).

Nobody has the time or even the inclination to study all of the philosophies of men, but all teaching is to be judged by the place that it gives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember what we saw last week in verse 6 of this chapter. There are many groups that will give some recognition to “Jesus,” but balk at calling Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Most expositors point out the fact that the Apostle Paul did not mention by name, or names, the false teachers who were causing the trouble, or trying to cause trouble, in Colosse. He gives a hint when he speaks of “the traditions of men,” indicating that it was humanism. Also follow me as I read from Colossians 2:18-23. Any philosophy which either ignores Christ altogether, or does not give full acknowledgment to His absolute Deity, is to be treated as false. If they are wrong about the Lord Jesus Christ, they are to be treated as spreaders of false doctrine. That makes it very simple, doesn't it?

One definition that can be given to a philosophy, is that it gives expression to a way of life. Perhaps you have heard people talk about their philosophy of life. The Bible states very clearly how the people of God are to live. It is a way of life which only people who have Christ as their Savior and Lord, can possibly live. And so if we are to find the greatest protection against error, and be assured they are living a life that is pleasing to God, we must know Christ as our Savior first, and then we will have the power to live as we are directed to live in the Word of God.

Verse 9 is an explanation that Paul gives for the warning that he had given in verse 10.

Paul was still talking about Christ: “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” or in bodily form. Thus He is speaking of Jesus the Son of God in human form. The fact that He was born of a human mother, conceived by the Holy Spirit, is a fact that goes beyond our ability to understand. But that He did it without losing any of His Deity, is equally amazing. Notice the words, “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

I will remind you of a truth that is fully declared in Scripture, and which most of you already know. The Godhead is made up of three Persons:

God, the Father; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and the Holy Spirit. We have not question about the Deity of God. Nor do we have any question about the Deity of the Holy Spirit. But what we need to understand is that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in His infancy and throughout His life on earth, even through His death and resurrection, He continued to be “ALL the fulness of the Godhead” even though He was truly human. And the word “all” suggests that the Deity of Jesus Christ was never diminished in any way. He was just as fully God as a human on earth as the Father and the Holy Spirit continued to be in heaven.

In verse 10 Paul added another point from our point-of-view to show the importance of Christ in any philosophy that may come our way.

In substance it amount to this: What could any philosophy possible give us more than we already have in Christ? Paul said, “And ye are complete in Him which is the head of all principality and power.” Bishop Moule pointed out that this statement which Paul made is emphatic: “And ye are,” not may be, or will be, or could be, but for all believers “ye are.”

We could not be more complete, more acceptable to God, than we are in Christ. If Christ is God, and we are in Him, what possibly could we lack? He is our perfect acceptance with God. And nothing can ever change that. What could any philosophy at to what we have in Christ. He is All in all. What could we possibly have that would add to what we have in Christ?

But could we lose Christ? Could anything or anyone take Him away from us? The answer is a resounding, NO! How can we be so sure? Because “He is the Head of all principality and power.” “Principality and power” usually refers to heavenly creatures, both good and bad. This is really an expression of our Lord’s sovereignty over the most powerful of all of God’s creatures. This would include the Devil and all of the forces of evil. They are powerless against the sovereign God of the universe.

Concl: And so verses 9 and 10 tell us why we are eternally secure in Christ. All Deity dwells in Him Who came as our Redeemer. Neither His humanity nor His death on the Cross made any change in Him, He always has been and always be the Son of God. This is what gave inestimable value to His death on the Cross. And in Him, and only Him, are all of our needs met – for justification, for sanctification, and for glorification. And He stands as Lord, as Head, as Sovereign over all

creation, but especially over His redeemed ones. We are complete in Him. Nothing needs to be added. Nothing can be added to Who He is, nor can anyone add anything to what He has done for our salvation to what He did for us when he died on the Cross for us, and now He ever lives to make intercession for us.

This is the story of Romans 8:28-39. Let me read those verses to you as I close:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us pray.