

98-12-02b Colossians

We're ready now to resume our study in Colossians chapter 2. And having given, I think, fair weight to Paul's statement in verse 4, the purpose for which he is communicating is that we remain in the truth and not be deceived, not be led astray by convincing sounding arguments, persuasive arguments, people that have a point of view. And this is so prevalent today. All of us I think can think of examples where people are saying, but just look at the results when we all get in the stadium and cheer together and when we go out in teams and look at the numerical success we can have with our church when we do thus and so.

This is one of my peeves, and I don't think anybody will be offended. You know, the very common perception today is, well, the old hymns just aren't acceptable anymore. You know, this is a modern society.

We don't want to hear these old stodgy, dried out, dead hymn singing. We want a praise and worship service where we can bring in an orchestra and swell people up on a wave of emotion and kind of get them up to a crest and then hit them with a little morsel of truth that will really stick with them because they're really receptive because we've pumped them up with the drums and the orchestra and the taped track behind which somebody sang. You all have probably heard me say this before, but I will say it again.

I believe that every time you hear someone do a special in church to a taped track, they have just denied another believer the opportunity to exercise their spiritual gift in accompanying them. You don't need a full 66-piece orchestra to sing a song to the church. All you need is a reasonably proficient pianist or a reasonably proficient organist or get a couple of people to hum in the background and sing.

But to get a tape of some people that we don't know in some city we don't know where playing some instruments we never saw on a tape and then singing to it, you might as well just tape the pastor. You might as well just tape the Sunday school teachers. Everybody can just fax in their church attendance and just have sort of a virtual church.

We can all just sit at home and email each other. So that's just my two cents worth on taped accompaniment. I think it's a persuasive deception from the pit of hell myself.

Anyway, we don't want to be deceived. We don't want to be led astray. And some of these subtle things do more damage than they appear.

And every believer has something that God has given them to give to other believers. It's been called spiritual gift. The Bible talks about it in those terms.

It's more broadly defined under the category of love. Your ability to express love to other believers, that's your spiritual gift. You may be really good at encouragement.

You may have an instinct. You know people like this and some of you all are these people that just have an instinct for being available and being willing and being in the right place at the right time to lend a hand or to assist or to meet a need. Somebody gets sick and they're the first ones to think, you know, I could make a meal or I could babysit the dog or I could do this or I could do that.

There are people that just have that instinct of being a blessing to someone. I don't have that gift. I would really have to sit and try to think through.

It's not my area of gifting from God to be the first to think. Now this would be a really helpful thing to do, but some of you all have that gifting. Well, you can't put that on a tape and mail it to somebody.

That's my gift. Sometimes you can. But the love and the blessing that believers give to one another under the power of God is personal.

It's done live primarily. So it is a deception. It's a persuasive thing to think, well, this sounds so good.

We'll play this orchestra and doesn't that sound wonderful and won't everybody's hearts be blessed. Well, that sounds good on the surface, but if you stop and think about it, in the churches that have got the sound system to play these tapes, I'll bet you they've got four or five or six or ten people who could have been up there ministering their personal spiritual gift to that local body of believers, and they're denied that because somebody popped the tape in the tape player. It's the same thing with churches, and this is in our area of Christianity, where churches that have a strong teaching emphasis, and rightfully so, have sometimes gotten monolithic.

Well, if the pastor's out of town, we just don't have church. When they're large enough, they may have other men that have a teaching gift and would benefit from the opportunity to exercise it and may have an insight to share with that group or may receive encouragement from that church and be nurtured up so that eventually they reach the point of being able to go out and function as a teacher or as a pastor or whatever. It's the responsibility of the group to look for opportunities for everybody in that group to find their place of function, and it's done personally.

See, we've got a deceptive wind blowing in Christianity where we've got a church with six assistant pastors, and they pretty much do the work. This guy does the youth organization, this guy does the music, this guy does the Sunday school, this guy does the outreach and visitation, and this guy does the main teaching in the sanctuary, and so forth. And we say, well, they're sort of like the paid staff.

They're my proxy. They'll go out and do the ministry. They'll visit the sick and afflicted around about us.

They'll do the evangelism. We'll pay this guy, and he'll clean up the grounds of the church, and we'll support these people, and they'll be our missionaries and so forth. And we start having ministry by proxy.

It's acceptable. It's common. It's traditional in the church today.

And people unconsciously abandon the responsibility to be alert and aggressive to find their own personal opportunities both to bless and to be blessed by the ministry of fellow believers. We are brethren much more than we are some sort of an organization headed by a few active participants. So these are the kinds of things we can think about.

As Paul writes into the situation in the Colossian church, there are very many analogies in our church today. We have this problem. We are being attacked, and we are being led astray as the body of Christ in this generation by these very same sorts of things.

What are they, and how can we avoid being sucked into them? The good thing is that before Paul gets into very much of the specifics of this, he tells us what the preventative medicine is. He says, I'm speaking these things to you, and if you pay heed to this truth, you won't be led astray. You will not find yourself on the wrong path.

You will not find yourself embarrassed at the judgment seat. What is the key? Well, function the same way you began. You began by faith in Christ, in specific knowledge of Jesus Christ, claiming specific truths.

That's how Christ came into our lives. That's how we walk. Verse 7, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith.

This is a beautiful picture if you look at the first half of verse 7. Because you have rooted, you think about the roots sinking down into the soil. That's your foundation. That's what keeps you stable in the high winds and the storms that come along.

It's got to be good soil. You see these trees blowing over every once in a while. They've got all kinds of roots.

We were in the Redwood Forest, and the tallest tree, the record-holding tree in the forest, blew down back in 1991. The tree was perfectly alive and had a wonderful root system. But the problem was the ground got soaked with rain and was soft in that area.

And when a wind came along, even though it had all these roots, because the ground wasn't good, the tree toppled. And great was the fall of it. They told us all about how this thing fell, and we walked past it, and it's enormous.

So now a tree that's not quite as tall is actually the king of the forest up there because this one blew over. Well, there's lots of people that really sink their roots into church life and really sink

their roots into different kinds of things in life. I'll use that phrase once again.

It matters what you sink your roots into. If we're going to be rooted, what are we going to be rooted in? Well, what does it tell us in verse 7? We're rooted and built up in Him, in Jesus Christ. Not in a pastor, not in a denomination, not in an ist or an ism, not in a denomination or a strand or any other kind of intermediate entity.

Rooted in Him. And the wonderful thing is with all of the accretions and additions and distortions that have cropped up in and around Christianity, every believer still has the opportunity to crack open the Bible and to have the truth ministered to their souls by God the Holy Spirit. God has provided pastors and teachers and others in the church so we can speak the truth to one another in love and be a blessing to one another.

But when you boil it all down, it's kind of like the old gospel song, You and Me, Jesus. You've got the Lord, His Spirit, His Word, and your soul. And that's the bottom line.

That's where the roots are sunk, is in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Him. So you start at ground level and sink down roots into the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then what do you do? Once you've got the roots, once you've got the foundation, now you can build up from there.

And so that's the second term, rooted and built up. You find these terms coupled fairly often in Greek literature and a couple of times in the Scriptures. And that's the idea.

You start with the foundation. Remember what Paul says in another place, I have planted, Apollos watered, and so forth, and he says the foundation has been laid. Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, Christ Jesus the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the foundation. You can't lay any other foundation. You can't lay Peter.

We were talking about this during the break. Peter, I'm going to call you Petros, and on this rock I will build my church. And there's been hundreds of millions of people that have gone down that road and thought that the church is built on Peter.

Well, I'm sorry, but Peter is not the foundation. Jesus Christ is the foundation. And then built up in Him.

You sink your roots into Him, that's what's going to build us up. Nothing else is going to build us up. If we're on the wrong track, we're going to discover when we analyze our own souls that we're not making progress in patience.

We're not making progress in joy and peace and the ability to put up with wrongs that we suffer. When we are rooted and built up in Him, we're going to see the fruit of the Spirit in greater evidence. We're going to have our ups and downs.

We're going to have our setbacks, and we're going to have our periods of personal apathy and setbacks of our own making. But in general, if we're looking at and pursuing the truth of the Word of God, sinking our roots into the Lord Jesus Christ, it's got to make a difference. If it's divine power, if it's the real thing, it has to make a difference.

It's like nuclear material. It's like radium or uranium. You can't just stick it in a can on the shelf.

It's got divine power. And if you put that in your soul, it's going to have a transforming effect. And that's one of the ways we know.

If we sit and get pablums Sunday after Sunday, week after week, we say, you know, I've got no power in my life. I've got an empty spot in my soul. When we get the truth of the Word of God in our soul, we say, ah, I have insight.

I'm getting my senses exercised to discern good and evil. I can identify more clearly when I look at things that this is a good thing and this is not a good thing. I am able to have peace under pressure.

I'm able to function more effectively in all of those areas of the fruit of the Spirit, patience and forbearance. People don't get under my skin like they used to. I can control my tongue better than I used to.

I can put up with wrongs that are inflicted on me better than I used to because I've got a different perspective. I've got a better understanding of God and His plan. And when you've got your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ, it's pretty difficult to feel too sorry for yourself because He's just so great.

And He has put us in such a great position. And if we keep our eyes on Him, we sink our roots deep into Him. And if we're built up in Him, our identity is His.

We're in union with Him and we share His attributes as Son of God, as Heir of God, as Priest and King, as fulfillment of the destiny that God has placed on the human race in this age. And it's a grand thing. And the small details of this life shrink into proper perspective when we keep our eyes on Christ.

Rooted and built up and established. Just like that tree. It takes time to build those roots.

It takes time to be built up. And over time, you become established. It becomes a fixed thing.

And when we make this a priority on a regular basis and make it a pattern in our life, we become established. We become rock solid. You look at those great big... It was really surprising when you see some of these trees laying over because you think they're so big and their roots are so huge.

How could one of these things ever be knocked over? The only way you can be knocked over is if you've got your roots in faulty soil or if you just die on your feet. If you lose your desire to live in Christ. But with divine power at our disposal and with our relationship with Jesus Christ growing on a daily basis, you can do nothing but grow and become established.

And that's what Paul talks about here. How does it happen? The same way you got saved. It's by faith.

Faith is trusting and treating as reality specific things in the Word of God. Finding and believing the truth. Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith as you have been taught.

If there was any doubt, some people try to say, well, you're really built up and established by going out and doing good works. Some people think it works backwards. You go out and do good works and that will somehow soak its way into your soul and change you and make you a better person.

Well, come out and let's all model the Christian life and let's all go out and do the things that a good Christian does and that will turn us into good Christians on the inside. This is another persuasive yet empty philosophy. And that's what Paul goes on to talk about in verse 8. He says, beware, watch out.

This is a really strong word in Greek of warning. When it says beware, this is one of those, have you ever seen on the chain link fence, it's got one of these black and yellow signs where you've got all the electrical transformers inside and it says, caution! Exclamation, exclamation, exclamation. Dangerous, high voltage.

It's got red and black stuff all over it. And it says, whatever you do, don't come in here chasing your baseball because it's highly dangerous. Well, this is what this word implies in Greek.

It's not just kind of, oh, be careful. This is like, watch out. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit.

The interesting thing here is when you look at that phrase, philosophy and empty deceit, they're both governed by the one preposition that's translated through. This is *dia* in the Greek. Through philosophy and empty deceit.

And the way they're linked here, this is two sides of the same coin. This doesn't mean that every philosophy is bad. Because the word here, and the word philosophy is only used once or twice in the New Testament.

This is one of the uses here. But we have kind of an English understanding of what philosophy is. But this was used, for example, when Josephus was writing and talking about, he described conditions during the time of Christ.

And he talked about the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Essenes. He said these are philosophies, philo-sophias, of the Jewish faith. These are theologies.

These are understandings. These are interpretive grids. Whatever you want to call it.

These are lifestyles in terms of spiritual things. That's what philosophy means here. It's not an altruistic philosophy or the philosophy of Kant or Hegel or one of these other philosophers and so forth.

This is talking about a way of thinking about life. And it can be anything. It can be a true one or a false one.

But because of the way this is constructed, it is the empty deceitful philosophy. The empty deceitful understanding of how life works that we are to beware of. Because we can be cheated.

We can be deceived and swindled. Don't let anyone swindle you. Don't let anyone cause you to waste your life and your time with a false idea of how life works.

Now, how does this take place? Well, you have three kata phrases. According to. Kata.

K-A-T-A is the preposition in Greek. It means according to. And this is the preposition of measurement in Greek.

When you see kata, most of the time it says this is according to the standard of. And it implies you're being measured against something. And this is exactly what's happening here.

People will bring forward an empty, deceitful, but very appealing and persuasive and seductive view of life. They have a billboard down here on Jupiter, or they had for a long time, of Anthony Edwards, is it? Tony Edwards? The guy with the big toothy smile, real handsome, tan guy. He's got a success package.

You can get tapes and books. It's Tony somebody wrote it. It has late night infomercials and so forth.

I think it's Tony Edwards maybe. I obviously wasn't successful in figuring out his program. But this has been, you know, they have celebrities and all different people from walks of life coming on and saying I really benefited from this, his tapes and his idea about how to live life.

And he comes on and he's very personable. He's a likable guy. He's very disarmingly charming.

And his ideas make a lot of sense. And people have found that it works for them. They listen to these things and kind of get to look at life a certain way.

And things go well. And their business improves. And their relationships improve.

And their finances improve. And they say, oh boy, Tony, what's his name? Well, he's really got life figured out. Well, what's the problem? I am sure that those things actually happen.

I think people have better relationships, better job success, and better finances from following any one of a number of these kinds of programs. The deception is God isn't going to check your bank account at the judgment seat. God isn't going to check and see how many promotions you've got on the job at the judgment seat.

God isn't going to check to see how many times you smiled and made eyes at one another over a rose and candlelight at the judgment seat. Success is not measured according to the standard of those things, according to the standard of the tradition of men. Are you measuring up to the traditions? Lots of Christians are considered to be highly successful and wonderfully spiritual because they tag, they punch the box, they check off the line for attendance at church and having a self-effacing and very pleasing personality and saying praise God and brother this and so forth, or whatever the particular tradition may hold.

People say, oh, they're just good as gold, nicest person you'd ever want to meet, man of God, heart for the lost. All of these adjectives will be used. Well, that's fine, but these are traditional measures.

There every time the doors are open at church, measured by the standard of works. Not to say that there aren't people who do all of those things that are genuine Christians. The measure is not what they do.

The measure is what they have become, what God has made them in their soul. Not according to the standard of the tradition of men. Not just because in the traditional definition you're a wonderful person.

That's not the measure. But an empty philosophy will make that the measure. And you'll be revered and have buildings named after you and have people stand up and say, oh, this person, I know they would never tell you this, but they're the most wonderful person I've ever known, and go on and on and on.

And this is a human measure. And without stating the actual merits of the person involved in that kind of situation, we have to keep in mind that conforming to the tradition is not the measure. This was the big problem with Israelites and the law.

All of it, down there every time the synagogue is open and go to Jerusalem and offer the sacrifices and keep the feasts and wear the little beret on their heads and nod in front of the wailing wall, whatever it is they do, that's conforming to a tradition. We have the same traditions in the church. Also, not according to the standard of the elemental principles of the world.

This is a reference to angels. This is a reference to external or supernatural powers. Do we have

this at all in our culture or has this died out completely? Is there any interest at all in angels? Is there any interest at all in demons? Is there any interest at all, do people ever pray off demons and, oh, the demon of gluttony and the demon of drunkenness and the demon of drug addiction and the demon of child abuse and the demon of anger and the demon of this, that, and the other? This is rife in the church today.

We want to blame everything on a demon. We want to blame everything on Satan. And if we can only get Satan tied up, if we all pray and bind Satan, everything's going to be great.

We don't measure things by the standard of the elemental powers of the world that this is a reference. I won't go into all the gory details, but this phrase, when you find it in the New Testament, the elemental or basic principles of the world, this is a reference to angels, demons, unseen forces. This is another standard.

And lots of people in the church figure that if things are going badly, well, it's Satan's fault. They don't stop to consider that maybe they haven't discerned God's will, that God is not in what they're doing, and that they're just failing because everything they're doing is totally human in origin, human in power, human in result, and therefore flawed. We want to blame everything.

We think, well, and there are people that go a lot further than that and have gotten an unhealthy interest in angels as far as trying to figure out the good angels and the bad angels and what's my guardian angel doing and is my angel wrestling with a bad angel and on and on and on. It's a big distraction. If it was a problem then, it's a problem now.

Paul says, beware. Don't get caught up in a way of thinking that measures things by whether or not it conforms to tradition, that measures things by some unseen forces of goodness or darkness, that measures things not according to Christ. Christ is the measure.

Whatsoever things are good, noble, lovely, honorable, of good report, think on these things. That's the measure of Christ. We pray in Jesus' name.

The things that we're shooting for, when we look at issues, whether it's someone's illness or it's a potential closing on the sale of a house or a business thing going well or whatever it might be, and we want to go to God and pray, we know that we're supposed to close out and pray these things in Jesus' name. Do we stop and think, am I looking at this from the standpoint of the Lord's interest in it? What interest is it in the Lord's eyes whether this house deal goes through or not, whether this business thing goes through or not, whether this person gets well or not? What is God's stake in this situation? What does it signify in His plan? That's the way He's looking at it, and if we're going to live life in the divine viewpoint, that ought to be our way of looking at it rather than, oh boy, I sure do want this to happen because it will please me. We want to step back and start measuring things according to Christ.

That's the standard. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price, and it is our calling

to glorify God in what we do.

And so we should measure things according to the measure of Christ. Well, of course, you have to know Christ to be able to measure by that standard. This is the problem when you go out and you're trying to measure something and you can't find your tape, you can't find your ruler.

You say, well, I think my shoe is about a foot long, and you try to pace it off and do other things. It's really helpful if you have the ruler or you have the measuring tape so that you can accurately measure right down to the quarter of an inch or eighth of an inch. Well, to measure according to the standard of Christ, we have to know Christ.

That takes us right back to knowing the word of truth. How do we have our senses exercised to discern good and evil? We have to know the word of truth. Beware lest anyone swindle you through philosophy, that is, empty deceit.

Measuring according to the tradition of man. Measuring according to the basic principles of the world. And, of course, there's a secular side of this as well.

A lot of people today think, you know, we talked about angels and so forth, but a lot of people in those days, people, when they thought about the forces that guided the world, they figured it was the gods or angels, unseen intelligences. Today, it's science. Everything is governed by science.

Well, it's the free radicals versus the bad cholesterol and the good cholesterol and the polyunsaturated fats and whatever it is that science says. Oh, it's this, that, and the other is going to promote or not promote cancer. This, that, and the other is going to do something to your health.

And all of this is based on science. People are so willing and able to place their faith in some study at an obscure university somewhere that says this food will cause cancer or this food will make you fat or this food will do something bad to you. People will change their lifestyle, change their priorities, do things completely different because of a scientific statement.

And science has become the elemental principles of the world in our culture. The unseen forces that guide what happens in life. And so we listen to the voice of science.

And science says, oh, you've got some kind of gas seeping up through the floor of your house or overhead electric lines are making funny growths on your head or whatever it may be. If they say something, then we immediately treat it as reality. Well, that's what this passage is talking about.

Is that your measure? If you're measuring according to that, you're not measuring according to Christ. It doesn't mean that we disregard and stick our head in the sand and act like the Christian scientists and ignore any technology or any advances that medicine or anybody else has made. But our final authority, the priority by which we measure things, is where does this fall in the divine view? And too little of that takes place today.

Why do we measure according to Christ? Because in verse 9, in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And this is fascinating because when it says, in him dwells all the fullness of deity, there are two different words in Greek and they're different only by one letter. There's a word from theos which is translated deity or Godhead.

And then there's a word, you know, theos is T-H-E-O-S. There's another word in Greek, T-H-E-I-O-S, which means godlike or a difference would be we would translate one deity and we would translate the other divinity. And as an adjective we would say, well, this is godly or this is godlike.

There's one thing that partakes of God, the former partakes of God. The second follows after the pattern of God. We talk about divine viewpoint.

It's not God's viewpoint per se. It's when we're following after the pattern of God's thinking. Well, if this word here had the I in it, that all the fullness of divinity dwelt in Christ, we would say, well, he was just as godly as you could possibly be.

He was just as divine as he could possibly be. But it wouldn't be stating that he was actually God. But because that little iota is not in this word, all the fullness of deity, this tells us that the actual substance of God, if you will, dwelt in Christ in bodily form.

It wasn't his godlikeness that he was full of. It was deity itself that he was full of. That one iota makes a lot of difference.

It's the difference between deity and mere divinity. Scholars of that word used to be called divines, used to call them divines because they were followers after the truth of God. But they didn't call them deities.

You see the difference? This is deity. This is the substantial nature of God. This is God himself that Christ is the fullness of.

All the fullness of deity dwells in him bodily, and you are complete in him. All the fullness of deity dwells in him, and we are in him. And because we're in him, the same word is used here as the root of both of these terms for fullness.

This is a tremendous statement. The more you think about it, the more it's likely to blow your mind. You think about the infinitude of God.

All of that infinitude of God dwells in Christ. Well, guess what else dwells in Christ? You do, and I do. For that reason, we have access to, and we are in a sense united with the fullness of deity.

We have access to that. The potential is there for all the fullness of deity to have its effect on us because we dwell in the same place. All the fullness of deity dwells in Christ.

You and I dwell in Christ. Positionally, we always dwell in Christ. It is to the extent that in our experience, in our daily life, we dwell in Christ, sink our roots in, are built up and established in him.

To that extent, we're going to partake of the fullness of deity, the fullness of God. This word that's translated complete is from the same word that's translated fullness. We are made full in him who is the head of all principality and power.

If you look at this, these things refute. We have another chiasm here, another brackets in and brackets out pattern in verses 8 and 9 because these statements that are made here, you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. Well, principality and power refers back to what we saw at the end of verse 8, the basic principles of the world.

People want to try to deceive you and measure by the basic principles of the world, science or angels or unseen forces, whatever they may be. Well, guess what? Jesus Christ is the head of all of those things. Who knows more about science than any living scientist? The Lord Jesus Christ.

Who knows more about how your body works? Who knows more about what effect various environmental factors and hereditary factors are going to have on your life? Who knows the very number of hairs on your head? Scientists can't even figure that out. So these things correspond and this is an inside bracket. And as you move on down, he says in verse 11, in him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hand.

What was the prevailing tradition of men that was floating around in that day? It was the Jewish traditions. It was the traditions of the law. Well, guess what? You have fulfilled the law in Christ.

Christ fulfilled the law. He says, I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. And he did.

Christ is the end of the law. And we are in him. And so the law, why go to the lesser thing when you've already got the greater? In Christ, we don't need to run down here and have the child circumcised on the eighth day for religious reasons.

And circumcision is standing in for all of the traditions that the Judaizers were trying to put on Christians at that time. Why? You have a circumcision that's beyond any earthly circumcision. It's a circumcision made without hands.

It's the ultimate fulfillment of all of these traditions that were designed to teach about Christ. In Christ, we have the reality. So that corresponds back to the middle of verse 8 when it says according to the tradition of men.

Don't let anybody measure you by these little earthly shadows of the real thing, these little traditions of men and these supposed forces of nature or forces of angels or whatever it might be. Jesus Christ is above and beyond all of those things. He is the fulfillment and the originator of all

of the good parts of those things.

In Him, you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of sins of the flesh. In actual circumcision, a very small, unnecessary part of the body is removed. Well, in this spiritual circumcision, the power of the flesh in its totality is removed.

We have died to sin. We have put off the body of flesh. We have the ability in Christ to live not to serve sin, but to serve God by the circumcision of Christ.

In the circumcision of Christ here, this is one of the more unique ways of referring to the death of Christ on the cross. Remember that Jesus Christ, when He died, the death He died, He died to sin. When His physical body died, the power of sin died with it.

In His resurrection, sin has no more hold over Him. Spiritually speaking, positionally speaking, and ultimately this will be our reality, but for now, in our spiritual lives, we partake of His death, burial, and resurrection. The circumcision of Christ is His separation from the power of sin in the flesh.

When He died and put off the mortal man and was resurrected and put on immortality, sin and death, remember the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Well, Christ separated and put off all those things, and so this is labeled circumcision, circumcision of Christ. He's going to go on to develop that imagery a little bit in the next few verses.

It says in verse 12, Buried with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, see once again, just living in this earthly body, that's the uncircumcision, that's the association with the things of death. He has made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

And so there's a sense in which we are already resurrected with Christ. There are other passages where Paul emphasizes that we have yet to be resurrected, when he's talking about the actual resurrection. But here, and you can go to Romans 6 and see the same idea, where reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield your members as instruments of righteousness to God, because you are alive in Christ. So this is a long and there's lots of dwelling that we could do on these different words. But what's the big idea here? What's Paul getting across? He's saying don't lose sight of the fullness and the complete deliverance and the complete set of resources that God has given us in Christ.

Any problem you have with sin, or anything stemming from sin, any solution to it other than Jesus Christ is going to be incomplete and just a shadow. The fullness and the complete solution to anything stemming from sin is in Christ. All the fullness of deity dwells in Him, and we dwell in

Him, so we have access to that full solution.

Don't let anyone measure you. Don't let anyone browbeat you and say, well you're not measuring up to the standard of my tradition, because Christ transcends. Any tradition that was any good at all originated with Him, and He's already fulfilled it.

So if you've got Christ, Christ is the end of the law. You've fulfilled every righteous requirement of the law by dwelling in Christ, by being rooted and built up and established in Him. We fall down when we neglect that opportunity, and we fall subject to, in some ways, the penalty of the law, because when we don't dwell in Christ and avail ourselves of His fulfillment of the law, we put ourselves back under it.

We put ourselves back under condemnation. We put ourselves back in the area of discipline and self-induced misery. That's what Paul is getting at in what can be a very deep and murky theological set of statements here.

He has wiped out in verse 14 the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. The law was put in place to point up and to demonstrate and to quantify our shortcomings. Well, that has been accomplished, and now Christ has blotted that out.

That's finished. It's over and done with. Don't let anyone drag you back under the law.

What are some of the things that still crop up? People think they're still under the law in terms of the Sabbath. People make a big deal out of worshiping on Saturday or Sunday. People make a big deal of whether or not you should tithe.

Guess what? Your Sabbaths have been observed in Christ. It doesn't matter what day of the week you worship. You can worship any day of the week you want to.

You ought to be worshiping all the time. Every day is Sunday. It's kind of like the Marine Corps used to tell us that every day is a holiday and every meal is a feast.

Well, as believers in this age in Christ, we fulfill the law of the Sabbath in Christ. When we're rooted and built up and established in Him, your Sabbath obligation is met because we enter into that rest. Read Hebrews chapter 4 and 5. Tithing.

People make a big deal out of tithing or offering. Give back to the Lord. Let every man as he purposes in his heart so give and so forth.

Guess what? Your tithe, which is a Levitical responsibility, is fulfilled in Christ. Christ has paid your tithe because you're complete in Him. You are full in Him.

You have fulfilled the law in Him. You don't owe any law requirement because it's all been paid in Christ. So there's no way anybody can legitimately dig up the tithe and say, oh well, you know,

this little Sabbath part of the law is still in effect or this little tithe part of the law is still in effect.

They just haven't read Colossians chapter 2 adequately. He has wiped out the handwriting of requirements and ordinances which was against us. And He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross.

Now the He here in verse 14, by the way, is God the Father. Having disarmed principalities and powers. Now we're back to these elemental spirits of the universe.

People think that they're the ones to go to. He has made a public spectacle of them and triumphed over them in it. Why go to these defeated, lesser things and live your life by them? Christ is the ultimate.

He is the fulfillment and He's above and beyond all of these things. And so in verse 16, Paul is going to begin to make application of these things. Don't let anyone judge you in food or drink.

Or regarding a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath or any other thing that is a tradition, that is an earthly, according to the standard of, type of measure. It's nobody's job to measure you. It's nobody's job to judge you.

Well, that's what we're going to pick up next time. Because it says, don't let anyone judge you. Well, how can you stop them? People do this all the time.

They look at us and say, well, I don't think you're really pleasing in God's sight in the things you're doing. I think you're inadequate. I think you're falling short.

I think you ought to be doing this over here. How can we fulfill this command to not let anyone judge us? Well, that's what we'll pick up next week. Let's close here in the word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the fullness and the status that you have given us in Christ. And we thank you for not only our positional standing in Him, but also the opportunity to make these things a reality as we live from day to day by sinking our roots deep into the soil of the truth of your word and being built up and established in our faith. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make that process come to pass in our souls.

We pray that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that these things will live and be meaningful to us as we face our decisions and the tasks and requirements of each day. We pray that in all things our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, because of whom we have this opportunity, that He will be glorified in all the different aspects of our lives. And we pray these things in His name.

Amen.