

Lesson 12

Nov. 23, 2025

Walk in Christ Your Lord

Faith in Christ is life changing.

THE LESSON OVERVIEW

In Colossians 2:6-23, Paul exposed false teachers by highlighting the work of Christ as the sole source of salvation. He explained why the false doctrine that elements of the old covenant needed to be added to the gospel of Christ was wrong and should be rejected. The false teachers claimed to possess superior knowledge, which seems to have combined elements of the Mosaic Law with Greek philosophy. Paul argued that faith in the finished work of Christ was all the Colossian Christians needed to enjoy salvation and a right relationship with God. As Paul urged another congregation, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul wrote the Colossians Christians to confront false doctrines about salvation being introduced by certain teachers claiming to be followers of Jesus. Based on Paul’s opposition to their teaching, it appears these were Jewish teachers falsely claiming that salvation required both faith in Jesus and the continued practice of elements of the old covenant, including circumcision and observance of certain Jewish holy days and dietary restrictions. Paul explained that salvation comes through Christ alone and not through works. He also described the majesty of Christ, emphasizing that redemption comes through faith in Him.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

1. BE ROOTED AND BUILT IN CHRIST: Colossians 2:6-12.

- A. Waling With Christ (6-8)
- B. Fullness in Christ (9-12)

2. ALIVE WITH CHRIST: Colossians 2:13-17.

- A. From Death to Life (13-15)
- B. From Shadow to Reality (16-17)

3. REJECT MAN-MADE RELIGION: Colossians 2:18-23.

- A. Lost Connection (18-19)
- B. Submission to Christ Alone (20-23)

DISCUSSING THE LESSON

1. BE ROOTED AND BUILT IN CHRIST: Colossians 2:6-12.

A. Walking With Christ Colossians 2:6-8

Paul reminded the Colossian Christians their faith was birthed through the faithful proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as they had received the Gospel, they should continue to conduct their lives in harmony with what they had been taught (v. 6). Furthermore, they should make sure their faith continued to be built on the firm foundation they had received through the Lord's faithful ministries (v. 7). False teachers were trying to influence the Colossian Christians to accept a false gospel, so Paul told the Christians to make sure that their lives continued to align with the life-giving message they had originally received. Paul intentionally used the full title "Christ Jesus the Lord" (v. 6) in a culture saturated with Roman icons proclaiming, "Caesar is Lord." By underscoring the lordship of Christ, he was making a statement against false teaching in the Colossian church.

Paul instructed the Christians in Colosse to ensure they were not being deceived by the false teaching that had surfaced among them, which Paul characterized as "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (v. 8). This teaching did not have its foundation in Christ, but in worldly thinking. Regardless of how persuasive the teaching may have been, Paul saw it as empty and deceptive, not faithfully representing the teaching of Jesus Christ. Given the presence of this false teaching, Paul warned the Colossian church to be especially careful to confirm that any new teaching they received lined up with the true teaching of Christ they had already received. Only by doing this could they be assured of continuing to walk with Christ faithfully.

B. Fullness in Christ Colossians 2:9-12

Paul again affirmed the deity of Christ to the Colossian Christians, assuring them that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (v. 9). While the teaching that was creeping into the church at Colosse cannot be specifically identified, it apparently called into question the deity of Jesus. It also introduced additional rules and traditions that were intended to supplement the gospel of Christ, which the Christians had already believed. One of the false doctrines was the requirement that all male Christians must be circumcised. Paul addressed this teaching, as he had done in other letters, by explaining true circumcision is not that which is done in the flesh by human hands, but that which is done withing a person's heart, "by ... Christ" (v.11; see Romans 2:25-29). The false teachers in Colosse appear to have elevated the practice of physical circumcision to a place of prominence and presented it as a requirement for those desiring to follow Christ. Paul would have nothing to do with this teaching, and he wanted to ensure the Colossian church did not either. "Circumcision made without hands" (v. 11) speaks of transitioning from the old life of sin and alienation from God to a new life in Christ.

Paul elaborated further on this matter by discussing the spiritual significance associated with baptism. The believers had been figuratively "buried with Him [Christ] in baptism" (v. 12) and then raised to life. When they were dead in sin and physically uncircumcised, God raised them with Christ, having put off the old fleshly way of life and taking on the new way of life in Christ. They were brought to life in Christ without the physical act of circumcision, so to listen to those who were teaching that they needed to go back and be physically circumcised was nonsensical.

It is easy for us to hear various doctrines regarding Jesus Christ and what it means to be children of God, especially with widespread access to social media. Therefore, we must have a

solid foundation built on the Bible itself regarding teachings about Christ. This is why personal and corporate study of the Bible play a vital role in the lives of those who desire to follow Christ faithfully. Truth begins with God and is found in His Word.

2. ALIVE IN CHRIST: Colossians 2:13-17

A. From Death to Life Colossians 2:13-15

Paul continues to build on his arguments against the false teachings regarding circumcision by explaining to the Colossians that God had brought them to life in Christ while they were uncircumcised in the flesh (v. 13). Paul also said while they were in that uncircumcised condition, their sins were forgiven, and any indebtedness that came from their sin had been canceled, taken away by God, and nailed to the cross (v. 14). Jesus, the sinless Son of Man, took humanity's sin debt on Himself so we could be absolved of all guilt and receive eternal life. This truth makes any additional attempts to supplement what Christ accomplished through His sacrificial death meaningless and unnecessary. Everything necessary for reconciliation with God and entrance into life in Christ has already been satisfied.

While some may think of Christ's death only in terms of forgiveness of sin, much more took place. Paul states that through Christ's death and resurrection, God "spoiled principalities and powers" (v. 15). Central to Christ's mission was the provision of freedom for those who were spiritually imprisoned and oppressed by sin and evil (see Luke 4:16-19). Paul's words concerning the disarming of powers and authorities are directly connected to Christ's mission to free humanity from the sinful chains that had bound and oppressed them so long. This freedom was fully provided by Christ.

B. From Shadow to Reality Colossians 2:16-17.

In addition to the claim that circumcision was required, the false teaching in Colosse included other rules and requirements – what a person should eat or drink, and the need to observe various festivals and special days (v. 16). This is not the only time Paul confronted these issues (see 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14). Paul's response regarding these matters was, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or the new moon, or the sabbath days" (Colossians 2:16). In the Law, holy days were addressed in Leviticus 23, the new moon in Numbers 29:6, and the Sabbath in Exodus 20:8, Deuteronomy 5:12-14, and elsewhere. All were fulfilled by Christ, who said, "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17 NKJV).

Paul said issues related to food and drink and the observance of special days had been "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17), the reality of which was found in Christ. As Paul acknowledged in Romans 10:4, Christ accomplished the Law's ultimate purpose – to enable people to establish and maintain a right relationship with God. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, all that is needed to enter a right relationship with God is grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Therefore, the Colossian Christians did not need to practice things that were temporary and no longer necessary, given the fulfillment provided in Christ.

Everything needed for a right relationship with God was provided through the death and resurrection of Christ. Although we are to be faithful in our relationship with the Lord, we must remember Christ's death and resurrection alone provided for our salvation. After putting our faith in God's grace, no additional action on our part is needed to gain salvation. Everything else we do

as His disciples must come from our love for Him and not as an effort to make Him love us (or save us) more.

3. REJECT MAN-MADE RELIGION Colossians 2:18-23

A. Lost Connection Colossians 2:18-19

Paul previously told the Colossians not to let anyone judge them regarding what they ate or drank or concerning matters of observing specific days. He added, “Let no one cheat you of your reward” (v. 18 NKJV) to warn against allowing false teachers to set themselves up as judges with the authority to determine qualifications regarding the Colossian Christians’ spiritual lives. These teachers promoted the “worshiping of angels.” While angels are regarded as celestial beings and messengers of God, they should never be worshiped. The new believers in Colosse needed to focus on the superiority of Christ over all other spiritual beings. So must we.

In characterizing these false teachers, Paul pinpointed the problem when he said they were “puffed up by [their] fleshly mind[s]” (v. 18). The Holy Spirit was not at the heart of the actions and decisions of these false teachers. Instead, their sinful nature motivated them, as exposed in their arrogance and pride. The importance of the Holy Spirit in believers’ lives was critically important to Paul (see Romans 8:1-11), and the absence of the Spirit in these false teachers caused him grave concern.

Paul then used an analogy related to the human body to help the Colossians understand the problem they faced with the false teachers. He warned that the false teachers were “not holding fast to the Head” (Colossians 2:19 NKJV), meaning they were not connected to Christ through the Holy Spirit. Paul already said Christ is the “head of the body, the church” (1:18). The false teachers had lost connection with Christ, further confirming their ideas and judgments came from their unspiritual minds. They had given themselves to ideas and philosophies that had no foundation in Christ, and the church should, therefore, feel no compulsion to bring themselves under the influence of their teaching.

B. Submission to Christ Alone Colossians 2:20-23

Paul reminded the Colossians that they had “died with Christ from the basic principles of the world” (v. 20). This may refer to the powers and authorities Paul mentioned in verse 15, or perhaps to the teaching being promoted by these false teachers. Either way, because of their identification with Christ in His crucifixion, the Colossian Christians were no longer subject to the powers and authorities that had already been disarmed or to the false teachings being promoted by false teachers. These Christians had been set free through fight in Christ, so they did not need to submit to the rules of doctrines the false teachers attempted to enforce in the church.

Using scorn and ridicule, the apostle summarized the rules imposed by the teachers as “Touch not; taste not; handle not” (v. 21). This brings to mind legalistic teachings in some churches today that focus on “do not’s” as if they can bring us into and keep us in a right relationship with God.

Paul said the rules associated with the false teachers would “perish” because they are “the commandments and doctrines of men” (v. 22). These commands and teachings did not find their basis in Christ but in the carnal minds of the false teachers. The Christians were under no obligation to comply; indeed, they should reject any teaching contrary to the gospel of Christ.

Paul concluded by noting the regulations being promoted by the false teachers had “a show [appearance] of wisdom, “but that had no value in restraining “the satisfying of the flesh” (v. 23). The true Gospel message provided the Colossian Christians with the power they needed to live the life made available to them through Christ. The absence of the power of grace in the false teachings indicated their origin was human wisdom and not the truth of Christ. Therefore, it should be seen for what it is and rejected.

We live in a time when any kind of teaching, true or false, can be communicated worldwide. Social media, podcasts, and many other forms of technology have spread all types of information and misinformation. It is important to heed Paul’s words to the Colossian church and scrutinize the teaching we receive, no matter how spiritual or wise it seems. We must always look at the Bible as the one source to screen all potential truth. God’s Word alone is the foundation for truth.

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

As Christ’s followers, we must study the Word of God as the foundation of our faith. We must compare all teachings with Scripture because the truths of the Bible are life changing.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

Read Acts 17:11 and reflect on your reading and study of God’s Word. Commit to growing in the knowledge of His Word and promoting the importance of Bible study to all new Christians.

WORKSHEET

The Churches in Asia (AD 62)

The Church in Philippi and the Church in Colosse were only 350 miles apart, but they were located on two different continents. Philippi, in Macedonia, was in Europe, where few churches were located in New Testament times. The church in Colosse, in Asia Minor, was in Asia, where many churches were located.

Asia Minor in New Testament Times was the geographic area now known as Turkey. Seven of the churches that were in Asia Minor are well-known to readers of the New Testament, because they are identified and described in the Revelation 1:11-3:22: in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

The Church in Colosse Was Only Eleven Miles Northwest of Laodicea, but it is not mentioned by name anywhere in the New Testament outside of Paul's Letter to the Colossians 1:2. This does not mean the church there was unimportant; it simply means the Apostle Paul never ministered there in person (2:1).

The Church in Colosse Was Likely Established by people from Colosse who traveled to Ephesus during Paul's ministry there (AD 54-57; Acts 20:16-17, 31), were converted to faith in Christ by his ministry and returned to their home city and influenced others to become believers in Christ.

In addition to the Seven Churches and the Church in Colosse in Asia Minor, we learn from the Book of Acts of many other churches in Asia Minor. There was a church in Paul's native city of Tarsus, in the southeastern province of Cilicia (22:3, 9:26, 30: 11:25-26; 15:23, 41).

There Were Churches in Asia Minor located in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13:14; 14:6-7, 20-23), established by Paul and Barnabas during Paul's first missionary journey (AD 48-49; Acts 13:1 – 14:26. During Paul's second missionary journey (AD 50-52; Acts 15:36 – 18:21), he and Silas visited many of the churches in Asia Minor before going into Europe.

Alive in Christ Colossians 2

1. How do we demonstrate we have “received Christ Jesus the Lord” (vv. 6-7)?
2. How have Christians been “buried” and “raised” (v. 12)?
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3. What was “nailed” to Christ’s cross (vv. 13-14), and how are we the benefactors?
4. What types of things should we not judge others by, and why not (vv. 16-17)?
5. What does Jesus Christ, “the Head,” do for “the body” of believers (v. 19)?
6. What “may seem wise” but provide “no help in conquering a person’s evil desires” (v. 23 NLT)?