

Right now. There you go. Do I need to repeat any of that or did you catch it enough? Okay. Just a big thanks to sponsors and chaperones drivers, people who go down, who make that happen.

You're living out one of the values here at Sherwood Oaks, which is mentoring across generations. You're feeding and pouring into the lives of young kids. And what you find is you get your life poured into as well. Well, appreciate Darren's prayer last week. These kids that we get a chance to serve are living in a rough place and we get a chance to pour into their lives.

Those lies that the kids talked about, they're lies that we all have, we all deal with, we all face, don't they? They can mess up our understanding of God and what his plans for us are. I think that's why Paul, last week we talked about this. Paul calls those hollow and deceptive. There's nothing much there, really.

But they do tell us lies about ourselves and about God. So that's where we're at this morning. We're in the book of Colossians. If you're joining us for the very first time. We're so glad you're here.

I'll give you just a real quick recap. Paul is not there. He's writing a letter to people he's never met. He introduces himself, they've heard about him and he's heard about them, but this really serves as his introduction and the introduction to each other. He prays for them, this amazing prayer, one of my favorite prayers in the Bible, where he prays that they would be filled with the knowledge of God by the Holy Spirit, that their lives would please God, that they would bear fruit in every good work and they would experience his strength and joy as they serve him, that they would sort of experience this all things new that is promised when we come into Christ.

And he specifically speaks to the kind of lies that they were dealing with in their culture and the kind of lies that we deal with in our culture. He says in verse six, he says, see that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophies. So, yeah, Brandon, thank you for helping our kids. I look around back here for him. I know he's not here.

I think he's back there now. Thank you for helping our kids stay vigilant, to recognize lies and address them with scripture as soon as they hear them. I'm going to pray and then we're going to read some scripture together. If you've got your bible and want to turn to Colossians, Colossians is in the New Testament about three fourth of the way through the New Testament. There are not any red letters there I can point you to.

But if you tool around there long enough, you'll run across it. You'll track it down. Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for your word, which speaks truth into our lives and addresses those hollow and deceptive philosophies that our world throws at us, that our own flesh throws at us and the devil throws at us to keep us away, distracted from and ineffective in our walk with you. So today, as we open your word, speak truth to us through your word, in Jesus name, amen. So if you're in Colossians, we're in chapter two.

We're going to read verses nine through 17, which is a lot, but I think it would be good maybe if we stand together and read God's word together. Can we throw that scripture up on the screen, please? There we go. For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority in him.

You were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self, ruled by the flesh, was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins. Having canceled the charge of our lethal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us, he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival or a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come. The reality, however, is found in Christ. You can be seated.

I recently rearranged my living space and I moved the couch to a position in the room where I have a direct view to the front door. Now, it's a glass front door with sort of that modeled glass that you can't really see through, but it lets light in, which is fine during the day, but at night I'm sitting there reading my kindle or whatever, and I catch movement on the glass. Door. That alarms me, quite honestly. And the first couple of times it happened, I actually got up and went to the door.

I thought someone was out there at night. There was movement. I saw the shadow and I'm like, what is outside my door? What I found out was there is a flag on the neighbor's porch hanging, and the streetlight on the other side of that casts a shadow. And when that flag moves, when the wind catches it, it throws a very disconcerting shadow on my front door.

Man, I don't like those kinds of shadows. They make me believe things that just aren't there. They make me believe things that aren't true. And that's what Paul says about the deceptive philosophies. They make us believe things that just aren't there.

Now for the Colossians, I think Alan talked about this a couple of weeks ago. There were a couple of different philosophies that were really getting into that group and messing things up. The first one was this idea of gnosticism. How many of you guys have ever been a gnostic? You ever went to the church of gnosticism?

We don't have any here in Bedford, but we do have this philosophy. Gnosticism says this, that God's got special people and then all the rest. And to the special people, he gives special insight. Maybe he gives special salvation or special spiritual powers, but to the rest of them, everyone

just has to muddle along the best they can. And so this hollow and deceptive philosophy can lead in two places.

If you're in the in group, do what you want. God's chosen you, you're good. Eat, drink and be merry. If you're in the out group, well, God's not chosen you, so I guess you just do what you want. Eat, drink and be merry.

Those are philosophies that Paul will talk about later, and he'll address this tendency just to live the way we want. Paul says, no, you're in Christ. You're a new creation. You want something different. In Colossians chapter three, he'll say this, put to death, therefore what belongs to the earthly nature.

So this whole idea of just doing what you want is an empty and hollow philosophy. The other side of the philosophy that was empty and deceptive was this idea of the legalist, and the legalists were made up of the church folk who were really adamant about a lot of stuff that Paul thought, it's fine, but it's not nearly as important as you think it is. Things like keeping certain rules, observing certain religious feasts. The Old Testament, the Jews had lots of festivals that were designed to point people to God. But the festivals themselves became the thing.

And Paul says, no. This sabbath, which is a gift from God, became a thing that controlled people. See, the legalists believe that God cared more about his laws than he did about his children. And that is a hollow and deceptive philosophy. Later, we just read this in verse 16 of chapter two.

He'll say, don't let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival or a new moon celebration or a Sabbath Day. These, he says, are shadows, shadows of things that were to come. The reality, however, is now found in Jesus. So SabbAth and festivals, if you observe them, should only be tools to point you to a greater reality. And the greater reality is Jesus.

In fact, verse nine we just read in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form. We've talked about this in the last couple of weeks. In Christ, you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority and celebration and festival and observance. Any other power or authority.

No matter how much divine wisdom someone has, no matter how much divine power someone claims to possess, no matter how much divine authority they claim to have been granted, they're just shadows of the real thing, of the greater authority, who is Jesus. But shadows can make us think they have more power than they really says. No. No. It all submits to Jesus.

So those who are claiming special insights and privileges, no. Those who demand you worship on this day or celebrate this, no, not for the true believer and those demanding you be circumcised to really belong. Paul says no. And I can see people in this room going, wait, circumcision? Is this what we're talking about today?

A little bit, yeah. It's hard for us to imagine, I think, fully today, the importance placed on this act. Circumcision played a big role in the life of Judaism for guys only, by the way. But it was a reminder of God's covenant that he made with Abraham. Abraham was commanded to circumcise both Ishmael and Isaac.

Later, it became so important that Moses nearly died because he didn't circumcise his son. Circumcision is a big deal. It happens eight days after a little baby boy is born. He's circumcised in a religious ceremony. There's the mohel.

M-O-H-E-L. He has the knife now. In old times, it was the dad who did it. Now they have a special guy whose job it is to know how to administer anesthetic and all that stuff so the baby is not in pain. So there's the mohel, and then there's these people named who hold the child and bless the child, sort of like Jewish godparents.

And they're called the Kavatar. Am I pronouncing that correct? Brian says, no, Brian is Jewish. Jewish. So I looked at him for all my expertise and he's like, yeah, you guess is as good as mine.

I have this on good authority Google. So the Kavatar are like the godparents who bring them. It reminds me of the story of Jesus. Remember when Jesus was brought to the temple on the 8th day to be circumcised? And there's two people there, Simeon and Anna, who hold the child and bless the child and make a pronouncement, a prophecy over the infant Jesus.

This idea of circumcision was really about the covenant that God made with his people. And for Jewish people in Colossae to see Christians who claim to be part of God's new covenant, but they are not circumcised, it's almost unimaginable. But Paul says, no, no, that is merely a shadow of a truer and better thing. And he has this on good authority because in the Old Testament the prophet Jeremiah talks about this very idea. He prophesies that this time is coming when this shadow is made complete.

In reality, Jeremiah 31:33 says, this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After that time, declares the Lord, I will put my law in their minds, I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God and they will be my people. This is not about a little act with a knife. This is about God doing something amazing and circumcising the heart and the mind. And they will be God's people based on God, not on a mohel.

This is the covenant that Jesus is referring to when he lifts up the cup at the last Supper. We'll do this in just a little bit. He'll take the cup and he says, this cup represents the new covenant that I am making. I'm being poured out for you. This is me becoming the covenant that you need.

Paul says, listen Colossians, if someone's demanding a physical sign that you're part of God's new covenant, here's what you point them to. It says, you point them to your baptism. See, baptism is connected with this idea of spiritual circumcision. Chapter two, verse eleven. Paul says in him, you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by hand, not

performed with human hands, but your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith and the working of God, who raised him from the dead, instead of a little piece of flesh being cut away in baptism, we offer the entirety of ourselves.

There's nothing we hold back.

Circumcision was a shadow, a shadow of a greater thing, that our entire selves be consecrated to him. So in baptism, where our old life dies and we're buried with Christ in baptism, and then we're raised to walk in newness of life, that's the reality. Paul goes on to say in verse 13, do we have that scripture, guys? Verse 13, when you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us, he has taken it away and he has nailed it to the cross. The old is gone. Behold, all things have become new. And then look here. This is the amazing part.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross. Remember a couple weeks ago we talked about things seen and things unseen, and Christ being supreme ruler over it all, says here all the powers of the scene and the unseen, the scene, the roman government, the religious rulers there in Jerusalem, those who hated him and even the powers unseen, Satan and his legions of demons who thrilled at the sight of the son of God nailed to a cross, gloating in his face, brandishing their weapons of power and disdain and tyranny.

What would they say? You said you could save the world and you can't even save yourself. And then Jesus says this amazing thing. It is finished.

It is finished. It is finished. And I believe that proclamation sort of began to like. Sound waves echoed through the universe, began to be filled with it. Every atom began to be filled with it.

It is finished. And what happened? The thing seen was this. The earth began to shake. The sky went dark.

We've got an eclipse coming in just a few weeks, and the sun will go dark. There'll be a shadow pass over it.

The sky went dark. The earthquaked. The veil that separated man from God's presence in the temple was torn and shredded apart the spiritual realm. Every weapon was sucked from their hand and thrown at the foot of the cross. The hands of evil were emptied, completely disarmed, Paul says, and humiliated by the cross.

And in the burning and brilliant and glorious light of Christ's victory over the things seen and unseen, where he put all things under his feet, Paul says, everything else is mere shadow. Why are you allowing people to manipulate you with mere shadows?

Don't let anyone judge you. Don't let them judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, or a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. They're just shadows. They're just shadows of things that were to come. But now the reality is, in Jesus, shadows have no substance.

They only indicate that something is standing between you and the sun this morning. Is there anything standing between you and the Son? Could be religious stuff. Oftentimes it is. For people who love God.

There's a real temptation to make things of God bigger than God, like that little lego Jesus. We diminish Jesus and we elevate things that are secondary.

A Sabbath. Make no mistake, a Sabbath is very important to God. It matters to him that we rest from our work so that we can remember his completed work. But Jesus says, the Sabbath was made for you. It's for your benefit.

It's for your blessing. You weren't made for it. Don't let anyone judge you by how you keep the Sabbath. Do it, but do it in a way that points to Jesus the Son. Don't let the Sabbath become a deterrent to seeing Jesus.

Even this moment of communion that we're getting ready to share in the grace that we experience in this moment is not found in that little square of carbohydrate and that little cup of juice.

Those are shadows, emblems. They're types that point us to the sun. But I'm telling you, I know people who, if they miss a Sunday and don't get communion, they start to get anxious about it. I just want to tell you that that's not where the power is. The power in the baptism is not inside the water.

The power is the fact that the water and the burial point us to Jesus. The grace and mercy and compassion we find in Christ is not found in a little bread square or a little juice cup. It's found in Jesus. These things point to him. They are shadows and foretaste of glory divine.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, you in Christ have put to shame and humiliation all the forces that beat into our lives. All the voices that feed lies to us. They only have now power that we surrender back to them. And so today, as we come to this point of communion, we want to rest in the power that you have.

We do not fight this battle. We do not fight against the things seen and unseen with weapons of warfare that we hold in our own strength. But the weapons of our warfare are mighty

nonetheless because they are wielded by you. You have put them to shame. You have humiliated them.

And their time is coming. So remind us this morning as we take the bread and the cup, that we are new creations. You're making all things new. We live within a new covenant of promise, where we find our completeness and our rest in you. We do not live now under the thumb and the judgment of any authority other than you.

We thank you for this bread. It points us to Jesus, who offered his life in exchange for ours. And we thank you for this cup because it points to this new promise, this new covenant that is not made with human hands, but is made by you yourself.

And in that, we can rest confident in your grace. In Jesus name, amen.

Thank you for listening to this message from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Did you know? You can watch all of our video content, both current and past, on our YouTube channel? Visit [YouTube.com slash Sherwood Oaks](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3) to watch messages, series and complete worship services.