**BCM Bible Study – February 9-10, 2022**

**Colossians 2:16-23**

This section is meant to explain the “philosophy” Paul referred to in 2:8. In fact, our knowledge of the Colossian “heresy”, which at best is fragmentary and indirect, is derived mostly from this passage. Paul’s primary goal in this passage continues to be making sure that the Colossians are equipped with right theology about Jesus to combat these false beliefs.

Judgment from Others: **Read Colossians 2:16-19**
What is the “therefore” in verse 16 referring to? (Leaders: encourage people to look back to 2:6-15 )

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**

* How does this passage expand on what Paul says about food and drink in verse 16?
	+ Clearly there is a distinction between freedom in Christ and wisdom of how we should interact with one another. How do we make sure that we are emphasizing both well then?
* “There is great liberty in what we Christians can do: we can keep days and diets, or forget them. But he [Paul] rejects the right of anyone to judge and/or compel another to comply with his own preferences.” (Hughes)

These various holidays and holy days were all meant to be incredibly important to the Jewish people and serve as great reminders of God’s goodness to them. Are there any days that you personally currently see as holy and observe now? Why are these i?

* What does Paul mean in verse 17 as he refers to many aspects of the Jewish Law as “a shadow of the things that were to come?”
	+ “The regulations of Judaism… were the ‘shadows’ that the approaching new age casts before it. Now that the reality is come, there is no point in clinging to the shadows. And the reality belongs to Christ.” (Wright)
* How do we know the Colossians weren’t just being zealous for God (hint see v18-19)?
* How do you, in your own life distinguish between legalism and devotion to God today?
* “The people he [Paul] is opposing spend so much time in speculations about angels, or in celebrating the fact that the law was given by them, that they are in effect worshipping them instead of God” (Wright)
	+ Have you ever encountered anyone who would fall into this category of worshipping the created thing as opposed to the creator? What were they worshipping?
	+ \*Potential tangent warning\* As we think about this, how do we make sure that we are worshipping each person of the Trinity appropriately?
* Paul makes sure in verse 19 to point things back to Jesus’ headship of the church and how some had become disconnected from this place. What are some ways that we can make sure that we’re truly connected to Jesus’ body and being led by him?
	+ “The problem is that we can worship the rules of our theological constructions more than we worship Christ. This process inevitably results in an ugly, smug arrogance and exacerbates the divisions between us rather than working to bring about reconciliation.” (Garland)

When has theology helped you find God? When has it turned into legalism for you?

On Harsh Regulations:**Read Colossians 2:20-23.**

* What are the ‘elemental spiritual forces’(NIV) or ‘elemental spirits of the world’ (ESV) which Paul refers to in verse 20?
	+ *In essence, Paul is calling the Colossians out for still subscribing to living in the same way that many other humans do. They still had a mindset which suggested that physical things have evil powers over them.*
* How often did you hear an explanation of faith similar to verse 21 growing up?
	+ In the Sermon on the Mount, **Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, etc.** Jesus further explains this idea. What impact should this have on the way that we explain sin to ourselves and others?
* Paul’s comments in v.22-23 come across as rather harsh. Why do you think Paul confronts the false teaching like this? Do you agree with Paul? Why or why not?
* The phrase “based on human commands and teachings” in v22 is seen a few other times in Scripture. **Read Isaiah 29:13, Mark 7:6-8**. Why do such humanly conceived arguments appeal to us?
* Have you noticed a failure in these rules and regulations “in restraining sensual indulgence”?
	+ “Genuine holiness, which is an anticipation of the life of the age to come into which the risen Christ has already entered, is not to be had by methods whose very nature, focusing as it does on perishable material things, binds them to the present age.” (Wright)
	+ How then should we seek genuine holiness?
* What does dying with Christ (v. 20) have to do with our freedom from legalism?

Challenge

Garland says “[Paul] wants first to build up the confidence of the Colossians in their faith so that they can resist their onslaughts. When the Colossians recognize that they have received everything they need in Christ, they will also recognize more clearly that the rivals have nothing to offer them except a reversion to the slavery of their erstwhile masters.”

Where have you seen this reversion within your own life? (Think of sin struggles, relationships, coping mechanisms etc.)

* Spend some time sharing these and Scripture to encourage one another through these.
* Pray through the main passage of Colossians 2:16-23 over the next week!
	+ Ask God to show you where you have connection to the body and where you need to grow.
	+ Ask God to help you in understanding where you lean to legalism or should have more discipline.

**Explanation on Trinity Question**

* *Each person of the Trinity is distinct. So far, the book of Colossians has had its crosshairs focused on making sure that the Colossian church understands and grasps who Jesus is, that is his splendor, glory, and constant working as part of the Trinity. Meanwhile, if you look at John 15:26-27 (16:1-16:15 is also beneficial here) Jesus begins to describe to the disciples how the Father will send the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit is so important to the New Testament church. Even a brief look at the book of Acts shows the importance of the Holy Spirit and how he fills every believer. The Father can be found all throughout Scripture as he speaks from Heaven to Jesus in Mark 1:11, as well as the grand redemptive storyline found throughout the entirety of Scripture (his constant forgiveness of the people of Israel, his starting to prepare for Jesus in selecting David as king, etc.). Oftentimes, we talk about Christianity as a relationship and not just a religion which is great. Yet, how can we further acknowledge the Holy Spirit in us and how he has worked in our lives? How do we acknowledge the Father’s great love for humanity and his son Jesus?*