

Christianity is Not a Mixture of Teaching

TEXT: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

THESIS:

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Colossians 2, we see that Paul had some wishes for the church at Colossae and Laodicea, but also for all those who had not seen Paul.
 - a. He first wanted to encourage the church and knit together strong ties of love (2:1-2).
 - b. He wanted us to understand God’s secret plan (2:2-3).
 - c. He wanted us to all guard against theological deception (2:4-5).
 - d. He wanted us to continue to grow in Christ (2:6-7).
 - e. And, he wanted us all to rejoice and be thankful (2:7).
2. But, then in vs. 8, Paul tells us to beware.
 - a. And this word, “Beware,” he is issuing is a very strong warning.
 - i. Now, if there were no danger to our souls, no warning would be given in the scriptures.
 - ii. Yet, here is a warning.
 - b. Paul is telling us that there is a real danger.
 - i. He is telling us to pay attention.
 - ii. He tells us to be on the lookout because the word “beware” is a present active verb indicating a continuous action is needed.
 - iii. Always be on the lookout.
3. And, Paul warns so the saints would not be spoiled.
 - a. I think this word “spoil” is an interesting word because when we think about something that is spoiled, we throw it away because it is corrupt, decayed or mildewed.
 - b. But, this word spoil means to plunder or rob, as when plunder is taken in war.
 - c. The meaning is, beware lest anyone plunder or rob you as a Christian of your faith and hope.
4. There are individuals who seem ever so sincere, but put on masks and false appearances and are out to impose upon weak minds.
 - a. We need to be careful.
 - b. We need to make sure that we are not patterning or molding our minds and characters like the world (Rom. 12:1).

DISCUSSION:

- I. WE CAN BE ROBBED BY PHILOSOPHY
 - A. Some men are genuinely searching for truth and reality.
 1. They love wisdom and they use their zeal to become skilled in any art or science, or any other branch of knowledge.

2. They seek to learn what is truth and they attempt to realize and solve the problems we face.
 - a. However, they limit themselves to the universe.
 - b. And because of this, their theory is flawed because in the end, their answers are incomplete and in error.
 3. Nevertheless, there are many who have fresh ideas or philosophies on what truth is or how to fix ourselves.
 - a. We call them “self helps” today.
 - b. And, truly they are self helps because they seek our help to make a name for themselves or to achieve a higher position in life.
 - c. And, they need people to accept their positions, to persuade them, whether right or wrong,
 - (1) Otherwise, their ideas die.
- B. Have we ever heard the expression, “Sounds good to me”
1. That is human philosophy.
 2. It is profound and yet, without a doubt, philosophy can and does attempt to replace truth with itself as our guide in life.
 - a. Brother Lipscomb said, “All the philosophies of men, all the deceits of human wisdom, and all the rudiments of the world discovered by human reason spoil men, ruin their souls, lead them to everlasting death by leading them away from God and his salvation.”
 - b. And, this is what we need to look at.
- C. We must guard ourselves against worldly philosophies and ideas because they are designed to ensnare and enslave us or as Paul said, they will “spoil you.”
1. But, what is meant by philosophy?
 - a. Well, philosophy is that which follows the traditions that men have followed down through the ages.
 - b. It is the search for reality by using the basic knowledge of the world and expanding on it by crude notions.
 - c. It is using human knowledge and worldly traditions to solve problems in life.
 - (1) It is people like Aristotle and Socrates who asked questions such as: Where did I come from? What am I doing here? Where am I going?
 - (2) It is people such as atheist and evolutionist who parade scientific garb of how a big bang occurred and how we came from chimpanzees
 - (3) It is people like Joel Osteen and Benny Hinn who base our knowledge capacity by our experiences and how anything goes as long as we are sincere.
 - (4) It is people such as psychologist and self help gurus who declare their own morals of right and wrong based upon

themselves and their ideas.

- d. All of these fit in the same category because they all try to solve or find answers to life using the world as its base for solutions.
2. But, the consequences, to listening to worldly advice, is tragic.
 - a. As long as philosophy bases itself upon the world, there is no permanent answer or solution to life.
 - b. Why?
 - (1) Because man and his world will die.
 - (2) Peter said, “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:10-13).
 - (a) Man needs something much more than a worldly philosophy.
 - (b) We need something that offers more than short term answers.
- D. The truth is, when men reject God’s revealed truth, they replace it with a system of their own design, which inevitably leads them into all kinds of corrupt activities.
 1. Look at Jam. 3:13-18.
 - a. James asked, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”
 2. Look at Rom. 1:18-32 and see what man replaces God’s revealed truth with.
 - a. Paul said, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; **Being filled with all**

unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Back-biters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who **knowing the judgment of God**, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, **but have pleasure in them** that do them."

(1) They replace the system of God with themselves and their own ways.

3. Look at 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

a. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God **the world by wisdom knew not God**, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe....Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

(1) When people rely upon the wisdom and advice of the world, they leave God out of the picture.

E. Now, while philosophy is any religious doctrine or practice that originates with man and by his authority, its greatest reward is that which only man can provide.

1. This is why Paul said that it would spoil us, meaning, it will take us captive, it will make us a slave to it.

2. You think of all those who are seeking answers and who are in need of help in the world.

a. Now, you think about all those books, people and self helps that are out there.

b. From Chicken soup for the soul to Joel Olsteen's feel good sermons, to the scientist who believes in aliens.

3. Now, where do people turn to for answers and help: From the one who created the universe or the one who lives in the earth?

II. PAUL ALSO MENTIONS VAIN DECEIT.

A. One man said, "Vain deceit refers to the empty arguments by which the philosophies of men are recommended to our race. The idea is, that the doctrines which were advanced in those systems were maintained by plausible, not by solid arguments; by considerations not fitted to lead to the truth, but to lead astray."

1. This is a good explanation because the word deceit means to delude, to be deceptive, to trick.

2. Basically, this is one who is offering something in his hands, but his hands are empty.
 - a. They are being deceptive which is sin.
 - b. And this is why Paul was telling them to be rooted and to be established (Col. 2:7).
- B. In Ephesians 4:14, the scripture says, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”
1. We all need to be in such a state that we are not feeble, inexperienced or easily deceived.
 2. We do not need to be tossed like the waves of the sea.
 3. We need to be able to see people’s tricks and not be trapped into their deception.
- C. In Jude 4-5, Scripture states, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”
1. Sometimes, we let the wrong people into our lives.
 2. Sometimes, we end up with the wrong answers because we let people or we read something that attempted to justify their opinions, lifestyle, or wrong behavior.
 - a. In doing this, they may gain temporary freedom to do as they wish, but they will discover that in distorting truth, they are playing with fire.
 - b. There were those who believe they can do whatever they like and will justify it by their reasoning, their philosophy.
- D. But, as Paul and others have shown, philosophy and vain deceit are man-made schemes and arguments and this is what Colossae was being exposed to which is why Paul warned them, “Beware.”
1. Now, earlier in Matt. 15:1-9, Jesus came to the scribes and Pharisees and talked to them about their leaving the law.
 - a. They had put their traditions above God, they put what others told them was acceptable before God, but they were wrong.
 - b. Jesus in fact, called them hypocrites because they were teaching what man thought was best.
 2. Now, the traditions of men were nothing more than being based upon human tradition invented by humanly rules and regulations.
 - a. In the first century, Jews and Gentiles placed certain emphasis in meats, drinks, washings, rites and other things.
 - (1) These were vain and empty.
 - b. When they should have been looking at the rudiments of God, that

is, the A, B, C's of Him, Paul said to watch out for what the world says is suppose to be important.

- (1) A good example of an A, B, C or rudiment of God would be Gal. 3:24-29, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- (2) But, what Paul and the Colossae church was dealing with and what we wrestle with is the vain and empty things of the world.

III. AND, NOT AFTER CHRIST

- A. We need something else besides the worldly philosophies and answers.
 1. We need something better than man's sharpest thinking and the sciences of men.
 2. Man needs:
 - a. A life that is abundant and eternal.
 - b. A life that is not based upon guesses and falsehoods.
 - c. A life that is not based upon that which fades away.
 - d. A life that lives for a purpose.
- B. And, the only way that man can ever know that purpose and the answers that we all seek, even in times of great distress, is from that which has been revealed to us.
 1. God had to reveal himself to man.
 2. We have to look at Jesus Christ and this is the key of this verse here in Col. 2:8.
 - a. Oh sure, one can look at the rudiments, that is, the signs and spirits of the stars and planets (astrology).
 - (1) Some say that these things determine the fate of man.
 - (2) But, they are inanimate objects, possessing even less ability and power than man.
 - b. Others say that we can look at things that are self help for the answers to our problems.
 - (1) But, that is looking at things from a man's point of view.
 - c. Some say that we can rely upon other philosophies to discover truth.
 - (1) But, the truth is, the only truth is God!
- C. No, the key to this verse is Jesus Christ.

1. In Jn. 8:31, Jesus tells us to “continue in my word.”
 - a. That is, remain, dwell in it, continue to be present in and always strive in and do not depart from my word.
 2. Now, we learn from the beloved John that if someone, “transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . .” (2 Jn. 9).
 - a. When problems arise in the lives of mankind, many times we will ask ourselves, Why?
 - (1) Why us?
 - (2) And, we will seek to find answers.
 - b. But, could it be that maybe a problem has arisen because we did not abide in the doctrine of Christ?
 - c. And furthermore, could it be that when we seek for answers, that we do not find what we are truly looking for because we failed to look to God for those answers?
 - d. Many times when things happen, we may look all around us and forget to look up to God when we need Him the most.
- D. That was the problem developing at Colossae.
1. They were about to lay aside the doctrine of Christ, lay aside Jesus Christ, or at least, they were tempted to lay aside the doctrine of Christ and look elsewhere for religious wisdom, philosophies, traditions, and the basic rudiments or A, B, C’s of life.
 2. They started picking up the teachings, understandings and wisdom of men and of the world.
 - a. And, this is exactly what Paul is warning them against.
 - b. He said, “Beware,” open your eyes and look around:
 - (1) Less you be robbed of the rich treasures of the Gospel.
 - (2) Less you be striped of your spiritual armor.
 - (3) Less you be taken away from the truth.
 - (4) Less you be deprived of your spiritual privileges and blessings.
 - (5) Less those who are worldly rob you and feed on you as prey.
 - (6) Less, you, as the innocent sheep, are carried away by the wolves.
- E. These errors that Paul exposed here are rooted in this world and are not after Christ.
1. Paul, earlier, had told the church at Galatia, “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world....But now, after that ye have known God...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. 4:3, 9).
 2. We must look to God for the answers of life.

CONCLUSION:

1. We need to Christians who encourage the church to be knit together with strong ties of love.
 - a. We need to be Christians who understands God's plans.
 - b. We need to be Christians who will guard ourselves against theological deceptions.
 - c. We need to be Christians who continue to grow in Christ.
 - d. We need to be Christians who rejoice and are thankful to be among the saved.
2. But, we also need to, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
 - a. Christ must be first in our lives (Matt. 6:33).
 - b. And, we need to be careful that nobody spoils our faith through intellectualism or high sounding nonsense.
3. Jesus died for us.
 - a. He wants us to be forever with him.
 - b. But, are you listening to His Gospel?
 - i. Are you living for God?
 - ii. Do you have your eyes focused on Him?
 - iii. Are you seeking the answers from Him?
 - (1) If, not, come back to God.
 - (2) Put your trust, your faith in Him.
4. Come to Him.