**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ Over Vain Philosophy, Part 1 & 2**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 2:8-10**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to prioritize Christ’s humility, deity, and sufficiency in light of**

**man-made philosophy on life.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 mindsets needed to prioritize Christ over vain philosophy.**

**Introduction:** Man since the beginning of time, down through time, in modern times, and in future times to come contemplate the meaning and reason for our existence. The questions: “Who am I?,” “Why am I here?,” and “Where is it all going?” are universal among the human race. The falsehood and vain thinking of man can only be overcome by doctrinal truth about Christ. (**Romans 1:21-22**)

**I. Beware of vain philosophy about Christ. V.8**

**II. Battle vain philosophy with Christ. V.9**

**III. Ban vain philosophy because of Christ. V.10**

**I. Beware of vain philosophy about Christ. V.8**

This is a strong warning for believers to watch out, so that they are not taken captive, plundered, and enslaved by or through false doctrine. It is teaching that teaches people to live according to the world instead of Christ as its goal.

**Galatians 5:1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

**Matthew 7:15** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

**2 Peter 3:1** Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),

A. The 1st method used is **philosophy**. V.8a

Philosophy in this context refers to speculations and ideas of people, that are not rooted in divine revelation. Specifically, Paul is speaking of religious practices the false teachers were promoting (**James 1:26**). Philosophy in its definition “the love of wisdom.”

“But if one loves wisdom that is not of Christ, or contradicts truth about Christ, God the Father, and Scripture, he is then loving and depending on an empty idol.”

[**The Bible Knowledge Commentary New Testament, John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck. P.677**]

Historian Adolf Schlatter noted that, “everything that had to do with theories about God, the world and the meaning of life was called ‘philosophy’ at that time - .

[**John MacArthur Commentary Colossians & Philemon, p.100**]

B. The 2nd method used is **empty deceit**. V.8b

Paul describes this philosophy as “empty deceit.” Although the false teachers at Colossae considered their view the height of wisdom, Paul dismisses it as empty deceit.

Apates (deception) means “a deceit, fraud, or trick.” The philosophy of the Colossians false teachers was not what it appeared to be. It sounded good, sounded right, sounded like it made sense, but only seduced the minds of those deceived by it, but in the end it was only a dangerous illusion.

“With Paul it would no doubt be true to say that philosophy, in the simple sense of a love of knowledge and a desire for the truth, would be quite compatible with his position. But to philosophy in the developed sense with its emphasis on the primacy of human reason he would obviously be utterly opposed. . . . Hence, while the Christian may see a certain negative value in speculative philosophy, he will constantly be on his guard lest he come to study revelation, not as a believer, but as a humanist. This does not mean that he should come with a blind unreasoning faith. But it does mean that, instead of bringing philosophical presuppositions which will colour his study of Scripture and so prejudice his interpretation, he comes as one conscious of the finiteness of his intellect, and aware that his mind also is affected by his sinful nature. Thus he is willing to be taught by the Holy Spirit, and acknowledges that it is the Word of God rather than his own reason which is the final arbiter of truth.” [**Ibid., p.100-101**]

C. The 3rd method used is **traditions** of men. V.8c

This is human traditions, which implies they have human origin (whether Jewish or Gentile in origin), as opposed to the divine nature of the Gospel or God’s Word.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-6** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, **6** and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Tradition is (paradosis) that which is given from one another. Just because people believe something or handed down through the years does not make it true (check the record) nor is it a valid way to determine truth. Tradition usually serves only to perpetuate error.

“First-century Judaism is another example of the effect of tradition. The Jewish leaders and teachers had encrusted the Word of God with so many customs, rituals, and teachings that they were no longer able to distinguish it from the traditions of men.” [**Ibid., p.101**]

D. The 4th method used is **elementary** principles of the world. V.8d

“To abandon biblical truth for empty philosophy is like returning to kindergarten after earning a doctorate.”

**1 Corinthians 1:18-21** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God **19** For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." **20** Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

**Colossians 2:20** Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—

**Galatians 4:3** Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

**Galatians 4:9** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4** But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, **4** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

**Ephesians 6:11-12** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

**II. Battle vain philosophy with Christ. V.9**

While we are to beware of vain philosophy, that opposes the deity, sufficiency and humanity of Jesus Christ, the Christian must battle vain philosophy with Christ. Logical arguments will not impact the futile mind, bent toward foolishness.

Paul in verse 10 now focuses on the humanity of Jesus Christ, to refute the false teachers teaching. Some commentators believe Paul was dealing with early forms of Gnostic teaching. Gnostics believed in basic form that all matter was evil, and spirit was good. Therefore, Jesus could not be God in human form bodily, because God is not evil.

Illustration: College Professor logical reasoning refuted.

As philosopher Jean Paul Sartus put it, “Life is an empty bubble on the sea of nothingness.”

[Ibid., 677]

**Ecclesiastes 1:14-18** I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. **15** *What is* crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. **16** I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge." **17** And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. **18** For in much wisdom *is* much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

A. Battle by pointing heretics to Christ **alone**. V.9a

**Acts 4:12** "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

B. Battle by pointing heretics to Christ’s **fullness**. V.9b

God dwells bodily in Jesus Christ.

Katoikeo means “to settle down and be at home.”

Pleroma – fullness of God dwells in Jesus Christ alone.

“if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father”

“The seven ‘I AM’ statements in John.”

C. Battle by pointing heretics to Christ **bodily**. V.9c

Both Christ’s deity and humanity were often being challenged by early heresy. Those heretics tended to diminish Christ to an angel whose “body” was only an emanation and not real. Paul affirms here that Christ is both fully God and truly man. (**1 Corinthians 15; John 21**)

**1 John 4:1-6** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, **3** and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. **4** You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. **5** They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. **6** We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

**III. Ban vain philosophy because of Christ. V.10**

The believer is complete in Christ, because of who Jesus Christ is, and because of what Jesus Christ has done, and is doing!

Christ is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form, but the believer is the fullness of Christ in bodily form. The word complete means “you have been filled” complete denotes a completed act with ongoing results. (**1:9, 18**)

**2 Peter 1:4** by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

**John 1:16** And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

Jesus Christ’s fullness is imparted to each believer “has settled down and at home with us.” Pepleromenoi (been made complete), the perfect tense of the word indicates that the results of our having been filled are eternal.

**2 Peter 1:3-4** as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, **4** by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

**Colossians 2:14-15** having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. **15** Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Therefore,

1. Believers are spiritually complete because they now have fellowship with Christ.

2. Believers are morally complete in that they now recognize the authority of God’s will and word in and over their lives.

“If you love me you will keep my commandments.”

3. Believers are mentally complete because they know the truth about ultimate reality and can respond to it.

A. The Christian Acknowledges Christ’s headship over all principalities. V.10b

This refers to all spirit beings or rulers. (**Colossians 2:18**)

**Ephesians 6:11-12** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Power over demon gospels.

Burning of sorcery and magical books in Ephesus.

B. The Christian acknowledges Christ’s headship over all powers. V.10c

This refers to ruling power and authorities.

**Romans 13:1-3** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. **3** For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

**1 Timothy 2:1-6** Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. **3** For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,