**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ Over Legalism, Part 1**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 2:11-17**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to realize their freedom in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 vitally important facts that keep believers from falling prey to legalism.**

**Introduction:** The Central thrust of Colossians 2 is the affirmation that followers of Jesus are true monotheists (2:9). The Jews had:

1. already been circumcises (**2:11-12**)

2. the Torah can no longer exclude the Gentiles (**2:14-15**)

3. no one should feel obligated to adopt Jewish food laws (**2:10-23**)

**I. The circumcision of Christ is sufficient. Vv.11-13**

**II. The cross of Christ is sufficient. Vv.14-15**

**III. The substance of Christ is sufficient. Vv.16-17**

**I. The circumcision of Christ is sufficient. Vv.11-13**

A. True believers are **circumcised** in Christ. V.11

The reference to circumcision indicates the Jewish nature of this reference false philosophy that wants to capture people from Christ.

Circumcision was established and mandated by God in the Old Testament, by God for the entrance into the covenant community of His people. But circumcision of Jesus the (Messiah) is the sufficient circumcision.

The circumcision of Jesus Christ was spiritual and associated with circumcision of the heart (inner man).

**Deuteronomy 10:16** "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer

**Deuteronomy 30:6** "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

**Jeremiah 4:4** Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench *it*, Because of the evil of your doings."

**Ezekiel 44:7** "When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it-- My house-- and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations.

**Romans 2:29** but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

This is a reference to the transformational nature of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not the literal practice of circumcision, which was a type in the Old Testament, but Christ is the reality.

B. True believers are **baptized** into Christ. V.12

Baptism relates to Christ’s death and burial (**Romans 6:3-8**). It is not the New Testament equivalent of Old Testament circumcision. Believer’s baptism symbolizes union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, illustrating a complete separation from the former way of life (**Ephesians 2:1-10**).

The believer has been raised with Christ through faith in Christ (**see below Colossians 1:23; Galatians 2:20**) according to God’s power.

**Colossians 1:23** if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

**Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

**Romans 6:4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**Ephesians 1:19-20** and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power **20** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

**Acts 2:24** "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

C. True believers are **transformed** by Christ. V.13

Prior to our faith in Jesus Christ, all of us were spiritually dead in sins and trespasses (**Ephesians 2:1-3**) and cut off from God and God’s people. (**Ephesians 2:11-12**)

In Christ, God made the dead come alive to a new life (**see 2 Corinthians 5:17 below**) and forgave them all their past, present, and future trespasses.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

“The extended meaning ‘trespass’ in Scripture involves a violation of God’s law, which is virtually the same as an act of transgression. It can be used as an act of infidelity towards other people.” [**Expository Bible Dictionary of Bible Words, pp.980-981**]

**Leviticus 5:15** "If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering.

**Leviticus 26:40** `*But* if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,

**Joshua 7:1** But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

Rebel against God

**Deuteronomy 32:51** "because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel.

**Ezra 10:2** And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.

**II. The cross of Christ is sufficient. Vv.14-15**

The next logical questions are “How was this accomplished?” “How am I as a believer made complete in Christ?” “How am I transformed in a radical way?”

A. The cross of Jesus Christ wipes out the requirements of the **law**. V.14

The certificate of debt may refer to a handwritten document or the Mosaic law in our case. Paul typically viewed the law’s purpose as revealing the guilt of the sinner.

(**Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:23-29**)

**Romans 7:13** Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

**1 Corinthians 15:56** The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law.

**Galatians 3:10** For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

God has abolished the records that are against us, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ substitutionary atonement at the cross.

1. It was **against** us. V.14a

2. It was **contrary** to us. V.14b

3. It is **taken** out of the way. V.14c

4. It is **nailed** to the cross of Christ. V.14d

B. The cross of Jesus Christ disarmed **principalities** and **powers**. V.15

1. He made a public spectacle of them. V.15a

The word for spectacle, is the idea of disgrace, this is the humiliation of these spiritual principalities and powers in a public visible shaming and defeat.

(**Ephesians 1:3-12; 4:7-11; 6:10-12; Philippians 2:5-16**)

2. He triumphed over them by the cross. V.15b

The word triumph (**see below 2 Corinthians 2:14**) provides the image of a triumphal procession where a victorious General would lead a parade to display the booty, treasure, prisoners, slaves, and King on a platform, with his armor on a post stripping him of all power and authority.

**2 Corinthians 2:14** Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.