

Sermon Notes

Accept No Substitutes!

1. Jesus Is Better Than Religious Traditions

"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17)

2. Jesus Is Better Than Religious Experiences

"Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God." (Colossians 2:18-19)

3. Jesus is Better than Religious Moralizing

"If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) --in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence." (Colossians 2:20-23)

3-2-14

For Further Thought And Discussion

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. In Flannery O'Connor's novel, *Wise Blood: A Novel*, she writes, "The boy didn't need to hear it. There was already a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin." What do you think O'Connor means? How can religion be a barrier to Christ? In what ways do people rely upon religion instead of on Jesus?

Going Deeper

1. Please Colossians 2:16-17. What religious traditions is Paul referring to? Why shouldn't the Colossians allow others to judge their compliance with these traditions? When are traditions helpful? When are traditions unhelpful? How can we tell when we're relying on tradition rather than on Christ? Have there been religious traditions that have been a barrier between you and Jesus? When we rely on tradition rather than on Christ, what truth are we denying about Jesus?
2. Please read Colossians 2:18-19. What do you think Paul means by "...defrauding you of your prize?" How were the folks Paul is warning the Colossians about defrauding the Colossians? Have you ever heard someone claim to have visions or to have heard God speak directly to them? Did you believe them? Why or why not? Why is relying on religious experiences rather than on Christ so dangerous? How do you discern the voice of Christ from your own desires and feelings? When we rely on experience rather than on Christ, what truth are we denying about Jesus?
3. Please read Colossians 2:20-23. What is Paul warning the Colossians of here? How does religious moralizing become a substitute for Jesus? Is Paul saying there are no rules for Christians? Why are rules of no value against fleshly indulgence? When we rely on moralizing rather than on Christ, what truth are we denying about Jesus?

Application

What is one lesson you will apply from this week's discussion? How will you apply it?