

Colossians 2:11-23 Cut the crap! Circumcise that sin!

v. 11a – The first requirement of OT law was to get circumcised. This symbolized the covenant made between God and Abraham. Jewish law taught that no one could keep the requirements of the law without being circumcised. Paul explains how physical circumcision is no longer a requirement to uphold God's unattainable standard. Instead when we trust in Christ we are circumcised by Christ in a way that cuts off the sins that caused death in our life and separating us from God and His blessings. But, when we give our lives to Christ we become dead in our sins and through our faith we are raised to a new life free from the results of sin (Romans 6:23).

Romans 2:25-29

²⁵ The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. ²⁶ And if the Gentiles obey God's law, won't God declare them to be his own people? ²⁷ In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will condemn you Jews who are circumcised and possess God's law but don't obey it. ²⁸ For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. ²⁹ No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise ^[d] from God, not from people.

God desires the circumcision of the heart and not the body.

Deuteronomy 30:6 - The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

v. 11b – the putting off of the sinful nature – refers to the old nature of who we were, sinners. However, “The old nature has been put off at the believer's circumcision, and it is no longer present.” Our old sinful nature is no longer with us. We don't have a sin nature and a Christ like nature. We can only have one and if you are alive in Christ that old sin nature is gone. Kaput, zapped, been buried. We are now a new person with a new nature, a nature that desires to glorify God as it says in Romans 6

Romans 6:5-11

⁵ Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. ⁶ We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. ⁸ And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. ⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. ¹⁰ When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. ¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

v. 12 – Baptism – Buried with him – put under the water symbolizing going into the grave as Christ did. Baptism is a symbol of you dying to your old self, to your old nature that is full of pride and selfishness.

Raised with him – Coming out of the water is coming up a new person with your sin nature cleaned off and your new self that lives to glorify God, in whom you have faith. Through God's power, which raised Christ from the dead, your sins are "cut" away so that you can no longer be dead in your sins but alive with Christ.

Even though physical circumcision was a requirement by God in the OT He still focused on the heart as it said in Deut 30:6. Now physical circumcision is no longer a requirement because of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Therefore we receive a spiritual circumcision in us and get a spiritual baptism into Christ. How does this all happen? It happens when you have faith in the power of God.

v. 13 – When you were dead – God made them alive while they were unbelievers. God saved them while they were sinners (Paul uses dead and uncircumcised to describe our former condition).

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners**, Christ died for us.

v. 14 – here Paul begins to go into how the written law is no longer valid because of Christ. He had been setting us up for sufficiency in Christ and preparing our camp to make sure it was in order and had its defenses ready before going into the attacks. He was preparing our foundation to be stable.

The heresy was also banking on having a strong knowledge of the law and following it. Kind of like what we read when Christ is talking to the Pharisees and calling them out for shining up the outside of their cups, following the law, but the inside is a complete lie and their hearts weren't doing it for God's glory but their own.

The legalistic view held by the heresy was causing the believers to wonder if all you really need is faith in Christ versus following the commandments (OT law).

The definition of legalism: any philosophy or movement that assumes God's blessing comes from keeping the law, whether Jewish or human. It assumes a contractual relationship whereby in one's thoughts God can be bought by human effort.

Written code: Dogma – doctrine "the rules and requirements of the law of Moses; carrying a suggestion of severity and of threatened judgment." The written code, every time it was mentioned it was synonymous with not only the Law of Moses or Ten Commandments but also the threatened judgment associated with not following it. The law condemned us instead of liberating us in freedom to talk and trust God. The heresy was using fear to control people with this imposed judgment if they only had faith in Christ and did not follow the law.

So Paul says that Christ canceled the dogma, the written code, the law, and nailed it to the cross. Basically saying that anything you did that involved keeping the law, sins and all, died at the cross where Christ died. They were left there. When Christ rose there no longer was a law that we needed to follow to receive the mysterious prize of God. We have Christ, which saves us, as a free gift with no requirements.

Now, Paul never spoke against the law. Instead he said that our failures are not because of the law but because of the desires of our flesh in Romans 8:4. Here he is saying that we are no longer held to the condemning aspects of the law; the results of not following it. We can still benefit in our Christian walk by following the law as guidelines for living.

Nailed to the cross – Above Christ's cross was his accusation just as other criminals of the day. That's where the crimes that each criminal was being accused of were placed. Most likely it referred to the indictment hung over the prisoner's head when he was crucified. By such action, the criminal's debt to society was canceled since he paid for the crime.

v. 15 – Paul talks about how when the Roman army would win a battle, the enemies would be disarmed (a military term, meaning completely stripped of their armaments), rendering them powerless with no power or authority. Then they would be stripped naked and paraded through the streets of Rome, proving the triumph over them.

This statement is kind of ironic because when Jesus was on the cross, he was naked and disgraced publicly. During this time, though, the evil powers and authorities were probably rejoicing because they thought they had won. They also were probably getting their army ready to take over the world now that God's Son, who was supposed to save the world from the evil powers, had just died. But, the tables were turned and the disgrace became triumph. Christ reigned supreme and His redemptive work crushed everything that would cause us to be far from God for the rest of eternity.

v. 16-19 This is essentially a listing of things that the heresy was calling the church to believe and the dangers of them.

v. 16 Do not give in to what others are telling you. You have a strong foundation, your camp is in order and your defenses are up. You know this is not of Christ, but of man's thinking. This was referring to eating or drinking (dietary laws of the OT) and festivals (requirements of the old Jewish law). Paul was not refuting the practice of celebrating festivals or abstaining from certain foods. However, the legalistic side came out when the heresy said these were requirements to have more knowledge of God and to be closer to God.

v. 17 – These festivals and celebrations were only an example of how worship in heaven will be to God. However, now our focus and worship is to be Christ.

Hebrews 8:5

New Living Translation (NLT)

⁵ They serve in a system of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: "Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain."⁵

v. 18 – *katabrabeuō* – to decide as an umpire against someone. To disqualify - following false humility and the worship of angels will disqualify you from the prize. What was the prize? Salvation? Not necessarily. This word has a similar meaning to v. 16 and says "Paul's point was that following such teaching would lead to a loss of the joy and spiritual benefits of the relationship to Christ who is the head. The attack was serious. It could have led to a spiritual disqualification." Not only would you lose your grasp of freedom in Christ and constantly be

riddled with guilt. Following the heresy would lead to a corporate loss, everyone around you would be affected by your sin.

Angels were seen as higher than humans and worshiped and served God. The heresy said that you could get the same spiritual high through knowledge as the angels had. As a result you could have a higher spiritual experience. However, it took false humility or severity of the flesh. You could essentially deprive and beat your body enough that it could be more sensitive to these higher spiritual feelings. As a result someone says that they have experienced these “delusions” and can describe them in detail, when really they are just hallucinating from having a near death experience. Then, because of this “experience” they became arrogant and haughty, letting everyone know about it. Many churches practice this even still today. An “experience” means nothing if it points to your benefit instead of the glorification and worship of God. Many times we return to church for an experience and not to worship God, be careful of this.

v. 19 – These people have lost the connection to Christ who is the head of the body as Paul mentioned back in Chapter 1. These four characteristics are a way you can test if any belief system will sustain itself.

Four reasons that the heretical teachings wouldn't make it:

1. Self Glorification – focused on experiences
2. Not connected to Christ, the head – it would starve spiritually
3. Not focused on building the body – it was individualistic, only focused on yourself
4. Not supported by the body - therefore it will not grow because only God causes the body to grow.

v. 20-23 – Why you so stupid? Paul is reiterating his point by saying, why would you even think about following this heresy? You already know that you are free from these judgments because of Christ. These teachings are based upon humans who don't even say they believe in Jesus as God's Son! Yes, these things might seem cool and get you closer to God but they are false and lack any value in truly helping you be restrained and defeat sin!

v. 23 - false humility = in case any of you were wondering, I'm fasting. Yup, I am and I just wanted you to know. I am depriving myself of these things so that I can be closer to God. Just letting you know.

“But lack any value in restraining from sensual indulgence”

Gal 5:24-26

²⁴ Those that belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

You no longer have a sin nature; your nature is now to glorify God in all that you do. Yes, we mess up, all the time. But we can't let that keep us down. There are so many things out there warring against us, trying to get us to follow them: human teaching, legalism, asceticism, worship of angels, false humility. But these heresies just keep us focusing on ourselves, in which we will ultimately fail. We need to focus on Christ who is the head and points us to God who will grow us

in our faith and dependence. There He can help us in our restraint of indulging in sin. Nothing else can. But we must understand that our old nature has been cut away and our new nature is there. Nothing else can exist. If you focus on Christ as your new nature then your old nature will truly die and you will only grow in your knowledge and faith of God.

What are you holding on to that continues to keep you thinking your sin nature is still intact? What are you worried about, your pride or your humility?

Cut the crap off your old nature, it is gone, stop acting like you have it. Don't be stupid, focus on your new nature, your nature that desires to glorify Christ!