

East Cooper Baptist Church
May 21, 2017

Substance vs. Shadow; Joy vs. Bondage
Colossians 1:17-2:4

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.”

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.” Colossians 2:8-10

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” Colossians 2:16-17

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen.”

Martin Luther, “Diet of Worms” 1521

“We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.” Cambridge Declaration-1996

“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” Westminster Confession of Faith

Warning: We live in a world of spiritual conflict which involves well crafted arguments by the adversary (Col 2:4)

Apostolic Response: Toil, struggling with enormous energy for, the well being of the church

Plan of Action: Glory in Christ “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3)

Warning: Some advocate a belief system of “high sounding nonsense” and “magic incantations”

Apostolic Response: See to it, that no one takes you captive (Col 2:8)

Plan of Action: Glory in Christ “in whom the fullness of the deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9)

Warning: There were those who base right standing with God on rule keeping or mystical experiences with angels

Apostolic Response: Do not let people pass judgment on your diet regulations and special days; or let them rob you, of the joy of the Cross

Plan of Action: Glory in Christ by holding fast to him (Col 2:19)

“Paul strongly forbade the Colossian Christians to come under these regulations. Such things may appear spiritual, but spiritual life is a matter of relationship with Christ and the heart’s commitment to him. To consider these matters as necessary to the Christian life would undermine the work of Jesus. If human effort is effective, the work of God is unnecessary.”

The New American Commentary

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are some examples of “embracing shadows” verses rejoicing in the reality of Christ?
2. Why should you consider naming your new labrador retriever “Alone”?
3. What had happened to the joy of the church in Galatians 4:15?
4. How do we toil and struggle with the energy of Christ? (Colossians 1:28-29)
5. Why is a rule-based faith incredibly self-defeating?