

Colossians 2:16-19

“A Mind Freed by Christ”

Sermon Outline

Tim Black

1.

Introduction

1.

A Mind Freed by Christ is a mind...

1.

Freed from error: Jewish Legalism & Pagan Religion vv. 16, 18

2.

Devoted to Christ vv. 17, 19a

3.

Growing in Christ's wisdom v. 19b

1.

Body: A Mind Freed by Christ...

1.

A Mind Freed by Christ is a mind freed from error 16, 18

1.

These verses evoke the greatest speculation regarding the nature of the Colossian heresy. The false teachings in Colosse appear to have been a combination of Judaism & paganism. That is, a combination of both *true* and

also

religion. So they have a ring of truth, but in the end are false. We know what the OT and the Jews taught, but we are less certain what pagan ideas were being taught in Colosse. I think the reason Paul doesn't clearly define those pagan ideas for us here is that he doesn't want us to spend our time speculating about what they were. In the end, those ideas

themselves

were empty speculation, and nothing more, and Paul is clearly warning us here to avoid such speculation. What Paul

does

want us to do here is to see the difference between true and false religion, and to make sure that in regard to

both,

we “

take every thought captive to obey Christ

,” as Paul says in

2 Cor. 10:5

.

2.

The errors of Jewish Legalism – OT ceremonies, and them used wrongly 16

1.

Food and Drink

Col. 2:16-19 - A Mind Freed by Christ

Written by Tim Black

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16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of **food**
and
drink

,

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Options

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Dietary laws in Leviticus – clean & unclean foods

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But, there were no laws regarding *drink*, except for priests

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Meat & drink offerings

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Ezekiel 45:17 It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the **burnt offerings**, grain offerings, and **drink offerings**, at the **feasts**, the **new moons**, and the **Sabbaths**, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement on behalf of the house of Israel.

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Either way, the ceremonial law of the OT is in view

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Festival, New Moon, Sabbath

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16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a **festiv al** or a **new moon**

or a
Sabbath

.

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The same was the case regarding the festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths. They were part of the ceremonial law, especially because they involved sacrifices and offerings.

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Leviticus 23:37-38 37 These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall

proclaim as times of holy convocation, for
presenting to the LORD
food offerings

,
burnt offerings

and grain offerings, sacrifices and
drink offerings

, each on its proper day, 38 besides the
LORD's

Sabbaths

and besides your
gifts

and besides all your
vow offerings

and besides all your
freewill offerings

, which you give to the LORD.

1

-

Festivals. The feasts are:

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Passover/unleavened bread (no work)

-

Firstfruits (no grain)

-

Weeks (no work)

-

Trumpets (sabbath, no work)

-

Day of Atonement (sabbath, no work)

-

Tabernacles (sabbath, no work)

-

Sabbaths.

-

Woven throughout these feasts are days on which no work should be done (all but Firstfruits), and those days in the last 3 of these feasts are each called a “sabbath,” in vv. 24, 32, and 39. These sabbaths were “ **beside**”--in addition to--the weekly Sabbath.

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Every seventh year was also called a “Sabbath” (Lev. 25:1-6)

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Focus: *Ceremonial* sabbaths, because in the NT there was no dispute over whether the church should take communion or worship on the first day of the week! The disputes were over the Jewish ceremonies.

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New moons. In addition to these feast and sabbath days, sacrifices and

offerings were given on the first day of every month, called the “New Moon.”

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Jewish - OT Ceremonies

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Paul is saying we need not worry that we are obligated to keep the ceremonies of the Old Covenant. We're not.

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Legalism - Used wrongly

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Paul is also warning us not to fall into the trap of the wrong use of those ceremonies. It was not the blood of bulls and goats that saved God's people in the OT, but rather God's people in the OT were saved through faith in the coming Messiah. Outward ceremonies alone did not save God's people in the OT, and neither will they save you today.

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The errors of Pagan Religion 18

1.

Asceticism and worship of angels

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Not only are we free from the errors of Jewish Legalism, we are also free from the errors of Pagan Religion.

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18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on
asceticism and worship of angels

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Asceticism

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Definition: Denying your body what it needs, and denying yourself enjoyment

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Goal: free your mind to commune with God, discover secret truths hidden from other people

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Not so different from the goal of mind-altering drugs: free your mind to experience a higher state of consciousness

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Assumes the body is evil or an
obstacle to true knowledge

-

Worship of Angels

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False teachers appeared to
teach that one should worship the angels
because they are mediators through

whom you can come closer to God.

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This isn't so different from what the Catholics teach, that Mary, saints, angels, and the church are mediators, go-betweens, between God and man.

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But Christ is the only Mediator between God and man!

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And angels should not be
worshiped. They are creatures rather
than the Creator.

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Paul said that

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Galatians 1:8 even if we or an
angel from heaven should preach to
you a gospel contrary to the one we
preached to you, let him be
accursed.

-

This religion is clearly beyond Jewish ceremonies used rightly or wrongly. This religion is further from the true OT religion than the errors mentioned in v. 16.

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Visions and Pride in Folly

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The reason it is further from the truth is that it is solidly based on baseless human speculation. It is based on supposedly authoritative **visions**, and is characterized by **pride** in what amounts to **folly**.

—

18 Let no one disqualify you,
insisting on asceticism and worship
of angels, **going on in detail**
about visions, puffed up without
reason by his sensuous mind

-

The charismatics claim to have seen visions, to have personally received special revelations that give promises or laws that are other or more detailed than those God gives us in scripture. Paul warns you here that if they do not speak according to the word of God in scripture, they have not received their word from the Lord, but have come up with it from their own imagination.

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It's so easy for us to turn our own imagined speculations into the "gospel truth." To take what we've pulled out of thin air, believe that we're right, and then tell everyone how smart we are.

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We've spent about half this sermon now talking about the errors from which Christ frees us.

But Paul doesn't want us to spend all our time on those errors. He wants us to turn from them to Christ.

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A Mind Freed by Christ is a mind devoted to Christ

1.

Devoted not to ceremonies & self-righteousness, but to a

spiritual relationship with Christ 17

1.

17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

2.

Truth: ceremonies taught us
about Christ & His work

-

Blood & sacrifice -
atonement

-

washing - forgiveness

-

circumcision - putting off of
flesh

-

Error: cling to the sign and
not to the thing signified – to Christ!

-

**Devoted not to speculation &
lies, but to Christ and His
wisdom 19**

1.

**19 and not holding fast to
the Head , from whom the
whole body, nourished and knit**

together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

2.

Who does your thinking for you?

-

You say, “I do my thinking for me!” But not all of it.

-

The people you listen to do
much of your thinking for you.

-

Newspaper, radio, talk
shows, TV dramas, your favorite
music lyrics.

-

You adopt what they say.
You take it with a grain of salt,

but accept much of what they
say as the truth. I do it too.

-

But as you evaluate those
talking heads, and follow them,
do you hold fast to the Head?
To Jesus Christ? How much do
you listen to Him?

-

Let me blow your mind.

-

You probably thought that asceticism in **v. 18** was all bad. Nothing good about asceticism, right? Then where does Christian fasting fit into Paul's picture here? Isn't fasting all about denying our body of needed and pleasurable food, in order to come closer to God?

It is.

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So pagan asceticism has a Christian counterpart in fasting

! And this is the case for each of the errors Paul condemns in these verses. Each error is truly wrong, but has a Christian counterpart which is the right way to live. We need to take every thought captive, whether it is Jewish, Pagan, or seemingly

Christian, we need to take every thought captive to obey Jesus Christ. So, for example, when we Christians fast, we are not practicing pagan asceticism, though we achieve the ascetic's goal even better than he does, because Christ teaches us that:

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The body is good, and all foods are good

-

Truth is plainly revealed
for all in Scripture

-

And fasting is no reason
to be proud, or to condemn other
people who don't fast like you
do. Listen to what Christ says
about fasting.

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Matthew 6:16-18

16

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

-

When it comes to evaluating OT or NT ceremonies, or pagan religious ideas, we need to hold fast to our Head, Jesus Christ, and listen to Him. In the most biblical of ways, He will free your mind.

-

A Mind Freed by Christ is a mind growing in Christ's wisdom

1.

If you hold fast to Christ as
your Head, you will grow in

Christ's wisdom. You see, when you are devoted to Him, He fills you with His life, and you come alive on the inside, and you grow. Jewish legalism will try to intimidate you into chasing shadows rather than following Christ. Pagan religion will try to disqualify you and take away your prize of the upward call of God in Christ. But when you are devoted to Christ, you will grow in Christ's wisdom.

2.

Paul tells you 3 ways you will grow in Christ's wisdom. Write these down! Consider them this week.

3.

Place: Growing in His body

1.

19 and not holding fast to
the Head, from whom the
whole body

2.

The *place* where you
experience this growth is in the
body of Christ, the church.

3.

Outside of Christ's body

you have no hope of growing in
Christ

-

Ephesians 2:12 remem
ber that you were at that time
separated from Christ,
alienated from the
commonwealth of Israel and
strangers to the covenants of
promise, having no hope and
without God in the world.

-

The *corporate* church is
in view - “ the
whole
body
”

-

The *invisible* or *spiritua*
/
church is in view – this is the
body that grows.

-

Are you part of the
church in a spiritual way?
Do you abide in Christ by
faith, have Him abide in
you, and thereby bear fruit in
your life? Is anything

keeping you from taking part in the body of Christ?

-

Is anything keeping you from taking part in the corporate church?

-

Let nothing disqualify

you for the prize of growing
in Christ!

-

**Means: Growing in His
nourishment & fellowship**

1.

The means by which
you experience this growth
is His nourishment and
fellowship.

2.

19 and not holding fast
to the Head, from whom the
whole body, **nourishe**
d and knit together
through its joints and
ligaments

3.

“nourished” - through
the “ means
of grace”

-

Food & drink

-

Christ Himself is
our food & drink

-

John 6:53-56 **5**

3 So Jesus said to them,
“Truly, truly, I say to
you, unless you

eat

the flesh of the Son
of Man and

drink

his blood, you have
no

life

in you. 54 Whoever
feeds

on my flesh and
drinks

my blood has eternal

life, and I will raise him up
on the last day. 55

For my flesh is true
food

, and my blood is true

drink

. 56 Whoever

feeds

on my flesh and

drinks

my blood abides in

me, and I in him.”

-

We feed on Christ
through the “means of
grace” - the word, pr
ayer
, and the

sacraments

-

The word of
Christ

-

Colossians

3:16 Let the **word** **of Christ**

dwell in you richly,
teaching and
admonishing one
another in all wisdom,
 singing psalms and
hymns and spiritual
songs, with
thankfulness in your
hearts to God.

—

Prayer —
devoted to a
spiritual relationship
with Christ! He
calls you to...

—

Matthew 7:7

Ask,
and it will be given to
you; seek, and you
will find; knock, and it
will be opened to you.

-

Sacraments

-

We still have
food & drink! And a
right use of them. We

may even call
Communion a New
Testament “feast!” In
fact, scripture
calls it such in Jude 12
— a “love
feast.”

—

Christ calls you
to “**take**,”
and “
eat
,” remember and
believe the body of
the Lord, broken for
you.

-

Question:
What is keeping you
from this
nourishment?

-

Offerings – we still have food and drink in the NT. We also still have offerings. Is anything keeping you from offering

your resources to
Christ? Does He not
feed you?

-

“knit” - social interaction in the church

-

You need the
other members
of Christ's body.

You need the joints,
and ligaments.

The other people in
Christ's church.

You may think the
other guy is an
elbow, but if you're
an awkward thumb,
you need him!

As you spend time
knowing, and loving,
and serving another
member of
Christ's body, Christ
will knit you together
with His people,
and fill you with His
life.

—

Acts 2:42 **A**

nd they devoted
themselves to the
apostles' teaching
and
fellowship
, to the breaking

of bread and the
prayers.

-

Have you made
a friendship in
the church this

year?

-

Have you
deepened a
friendship in the
church this year?

—

Have you
reached out to
the sick, the
hurting, the lonely
in this congregation
this year?

—

Or are you
running away
from the people in
Christ's church?
And from Christ, in
the process?

—

If so, you need
to know that
you're also running
away from
Godliness.

-

**Nature:
Growing in His**

Godliness

1.

The nature of
this growth you
experience is that it
is a growth in

Godliness.

2.

19 and not
holding fast to the
Head, from whom
the whole body,

nourished and knit
together through its
joints and
ligaments, **grow**
s with a growth
that is from God.

3.

God is this
growth's source,
and because of
that, this growth
bears His
character. What
is going on in you
shows forth the
nature of God, and

shows the life of
God at work in
you.

-

God takes
away the old

man, and enables
you to put on the
new man.

-

Colossians

3:5

sexual

immorality,
impurity, passion,
evil desire, and
covetousness,
which is idolatry.

—

Colossians

3:8

anger

, wrath, malice,

slander, and

obscene talk from

your mouth.

—

Colossians

3:12-15 1

2 Put on then, as
God's chosen
ones, holy and
beloved,

compassion,
kindness,
humility,
meekness, and
patience, 13
bearing with one
another and, if
one has a

complaint against
another, forgiving
each other; as
the Lord has
forgiven you, so
you also must
forgive. 14 And
above all these

put on love,
which binds
everything
together in
perfect harmony.

15 And let the
peace of Christ
rule in your

hearts, to which
indeed you were
called in one
body. And be
thankful.

—

What things
are keeping
you from growing
in Godliness?
Are you

committed to an
idea, or a
practice, that
follows the lead
of the world
rather than of
Christ?

—

In which of
these sins are
you not yet
holding fast to
Christ and letting

go of looking
good on the
outside? Are
you caught up in
a mere
formalism or
externalism?

—

In which of
these virtues
do you need to
hold fast to
Christ more

firmly?

—

Conclusion

1.

**A Mind Freed
by Christ is a
mind...**

1.

freed from error: Jewish Legalism & Pagan Religion

2.

**devoted to
Christ**

3.

**growing in
Christ's**

wisdom

4.

Christ's

promise:

1.

John 8:31-32

31 So Jesus said

to the Jews who
had believed in
him,

"If you
abide in my
word, you are
truly my
disciples, 32

and you will
know the truth,
and the truth will
set you
free."

1 Here it seems
the Sabbaths in

v. 38 are the
weekly
Sabbaths. The
weekly
Sabbaths are
grouped with
gifts, vow
offerings, and

freewill
offerings—all
things that are
not so much
symbolic and
thereby
ceremonial, but
are more matters

of worship from
the heart. This
seems to
indicate that just
as much as
freewill offerings
continue to be
our privilege and

duty today, so
also is the
weekly Sabbath.

This is
supported by the
fact that the
weekly Sabbath
is introduced in

v. 3 as
foundational to
the feasts, but is
not grouped with
them, and in fact
is separated
from them in v.
38 by the word “

besides

.” The feasts
and their
offerings are “
besides the
LORD’s
Sabbaths.

”