**Colossians – Pre-eminence** – **wk 4 – No Additives!**

**10-year-old suburb church, new Christians struggling, confused and blown around by the culture. Would they survive?**

**Their new pastor (Epaphras) traveled to Rome to get some help & instruction from Paul (in jail). This is Paul's response.**

**Paul – I’m thankful and praying for you, hang on to Jesus**

**Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

**There are a lot of people who see themselves as “spiritual” gurus, new age teachers, church goers, moral people. Paul is talking about truly Spiritual people, living & thinking as Jesus.**

**It does not matter how spiritual I think I am, but how spiritual God thinks I am. What is God pleasing spirituality? A Biblical perspective.**

**What’s more spiritual? Hands. Shoes or sandals - short hair or long hair - jeans or slacks - beard or shaved - veggie tales or sponge bob - hymns or Hillsong - tattoos or no - piercing or no - drinking or not – cussing or not – republican or democrat?**

* **Spirituality is measured by character and obedience to Scripture - not by our adherence to man-made rules and traditions**

**Today we are not referring to the clear instructions of scripture when God says something we do it, but no additives.**

* **Sometimes adding extra can make things less**

**Extras, but less filling. Confusing what God has commanded.**

**Don't confuse the tools of spirituality w/ the rules of spirituality**

**Amour All - Advertised as a miracle (slick & shinny) awesome until you stop. Alleged that once you start - can’t stop, or it dries out and cracks.**

**Spiritual additives are similar - we spray on self / others - look good at first, but eventually cracks and damages our faith.**

**Pro 30:5 “Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar.**

**Paul Gives Us 5 Warnings (Additives) - Danger, Danger!**

**Lost in Space (Pic) Robot - I had the toy. - B-9 Class M-3 General Utility Non-Theorizing Environmental Control Robot “I cannot accept that course of action” – “Does not compute” – “Danger!” Today the Apostle Paul is saying - Danger!**

**5 Additives to our Faith That Poison the Root System**

**5 things that we still like to add...**

**Colossians 2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. 5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.**

**1. The vain arrogance and arguments of - Intellectualism**

**2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.**

**Even though I am not there - don't be tricked or led astray by "fine - sounding" opinions and teaching. We are to be intellectual.**

**Empty arguments: Atheism, agnosticism, humanism, naturalism, universalism, inclusivism- people explaining away the word of God**

**The answer is the next verse - 6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, (deep and high) strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.**

**Rooted in Christ - grounded in what you were taught – it results in a Grateful attitude and outlook.**

**2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**

**Tickling ears – narcissistic preaching. End time negative doom & gloom preaching. Both tickle the ear.**

**Don't let them lead you astray from the truth - it only results in confusion and negativity.**

**v7. “As you were taught” - problem is some were (are) never taught**

**2 Cor 11:14,15 - Satan masquerades as an angel of light - It's not surprising that false teachers also come doing righteous deed.**

**We need to know the truth before deception comes. People won't announce deception. We need to know the difference. Some are deceived by their own deception - think they're right.**

**Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive (to devour - how?) through hollow and deceptive philosophy, (man’s wisdom) which depends on human tradition (manmade institutions) and the basic principles of this world (manmade principles) rather than on Christ.**

**Devoured by human reasoning, human systems, and human logic.**

**2. The futile Philosophies and Traditions of – Institutionalism**

**Empty religious traditions and manmade systems taught as doctrine.**

**v8 calls them empty (hollow) they don't deliver what they promise. Not only do they not deliver, they cheat you of growth.**

**(Ma 15:9 Jesus warned some will teach tradition as doctrine)**

**IE. Russian Orthodox - debate over 3 or 2 fingers for sign of the cross – 2 fingers to the death! We do the same: Church doesn't have a cross - too many crosses - too dressed up / casual - a hat! Too old / young - too many lights - too many tattoos - not enough tattoos - too loud - no hymns - too many hymns**

**We all have our traditions - we all have our view of church**

**They are all ceremonial Christianity.**

**There is nothing wrong with ceremony, ritual, or even tradition… you might find it meaningful… but God does not care – He is not in heaven relishing in the liturgical.**

**In India many churches take their shoes off (on holy ground) – but here come barefoot… which is right? God does not care. Whether you dress up or dress down – have a cross in the church or not – meet in a beautiful building or in a theater… It is us who place value on these things often judging people’s spirituality.**

**Paul's response to this - Col 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, (JESUS deity!) 10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, (JESUS sufficiency) who is the head over every power and authority. (JESUS authority - nothing happens without his allowance)**

**You know what that means? We are complete in JESUS!**

**Knowing who you are in Christ - He is our fullness and has provided you all you need for faith and life.**

**2 Peter 1:2-3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.**

**“Warning!" When anyone suggests that you need this tradition or this perspective in addition to or instead of Jesus Christ!**

**Col 2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, (what is circumcision and why are they talking about it?)**

**Paul speaking to new Greek followers of Christ who were told they must now follow Jewish traditions to be saved. (ie. circu)**

**Paul was constantly dealing with this (Ro, Gal, Eph, Acts 15:6-27)**

**…done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.**

**Baptism is a picture of our salvation. Buried the Old, Raised the New - Cutting away of our sins through the cross. Don't let anyone tell you need more than Jesus! (We are not saved by it)**

**This next part is powerful! 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, (we were his enemy, wanting nothing to do w/him) God made you alive with Christ. (regeneration) He forgave us all our sins, (redemption) 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, (Justification) which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, (sanctification) nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, (put them to shame!) triumphing over them by the cross.**

**The OT is the X-ray. The diagnoses and the prognosis. You are deeply sick and dying. But the OT cannot save us – it only identifies the issue. Religion identifies our sinful nature.**

**Yet some think religious rituals can fix them – additives.**

**3. The fruitless formalities and acts of – Ritualism**

**Religion’s rules and rituals – put the work and effort on us – constantly trying to measure up to ours and others’ expectations. BUT…**

**Jesus Forgives sin – sin debt charged, overdraft we couldn't pay**

**Jesus Cancels the charge - forgave the debt (sanctified)**

**Jesus Takes it away! - As if it never happened! (Justified)**

**Jesus Nails it to the cross - posted on the cross - as a notice to all**

**Jesus Pays it in full. "It is finished" - Received by faith.**

**Jesus Disarms enemy - removes power, makes spectacle of them.**

**Satan might have thought he had him (dead), But Jesus rose from the dead, disarming the enemy!**

**God did not come to us when we were crying for help, but when we were shouting leave me alone, I don’t need you. He made the 1st move!**

**When you were spiritually dead - God made you alive. In Christ by faith - we are alive! Right now – forgiven. You’re past, gone!**

**Col 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, (kosher meals) or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (OT was a shadow of Jesus - but now…)**

**Some people are self-appointed - Religious police. Christians who impose the OT dietary laws - Sabbaths - Passover feasts.**

**You are free to do so – but are not required to do so.**

**Some are more concerned about what's in your refrigerator than what's in your heart - especially if there are 6 of them and one is missing. FYI - I don't drink - my convictions may not be yours. Bible is clear - do not get drunk. Stick to God's word - we need nothing extra. (Romans 14:17-23)**

**Hebrews: OT is like a child and the NT is an adult. Kids need rules - What was once written on stone - is now written on our hearts.**

**What we get when ritual become required - We end up with…**

* **Insecure God – God moved by ritual or angered when it’s not –that looks outside rather than inside the heart – you can kiss up to him because he can’t see the heart (I’ll just go to confessional…)**
* **Mafia God – Do this ritual or - bang! Jump the hoops or else.**
* **Arbitrary God – You did the wrong thing or wrong way - you’re out.**

**What God looks for - John 4:23 - He is searching for those who will worship in spirit and in truth… (and a nice suit)**

**\* The clear things admonished - But no additives!**

**Another warning - Col 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility (they pretend to be humble) and the worship of angels (they seek spirits for answers) disqualify you. (cheat you) Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; (they claim spiritual visions) they are puffed up with idle notions (they are vain and arrogant) by their unspiritual mind. (they are fleshly minded - not as spiritual as they think) 19 They have lost connection with the head, (they don’t follow Christ) from whom the whole body, (the church) supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. (Body of Christ grows when are all working together in Christ.)**

**4. The fake spirits and leaders of - Spiritism - Occultic & cultic activity**

**Dabbling in fortune telling, new age, horoscope, mediums, talking to spirits/ dead. (Duet 18) In churches - seeking signs & wonders, chasing the supernatural, and secret knowledge. Everything is a spirit. Veneration of dead people, saints. Fixated w/ near death experiences. Paul says - these things divert one away from Christ. And dangerous.**

**Col 2:3 Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

**Gnostics in the early church - secret knowledge - talking to spirits. Jesus was not God - man filled with - apparition - not flesh & blood. You can see how Colossians deals with this.**

**Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel (spirit) from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. (cast away) 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (it's poison)**

**Cults / false teachers always claim something extra. You need us - our book, our prophet, our studies, our church.**

**They want to go deeper than God goes = arrogance defined.**

**The last additive - Col 2:20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? (do not, do not, do not)**

**5. The fabricated rules and regulations of - Legalism**

**Again - this is not about following the clear (house rules) of God's word but adding to them, additional regulations.**

**That we can somehow get God to love us better or more.**

* **Personal sanctification vs. implied legalism (explain).**

**Col 2:22 These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, (they look good outside) their false humility (I'm closer to God than you because I do this or do not do this) and their harsh treatment of the body, (self affliction) but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (They don't really work anyway - they don't deliver what they promise)**

**Our lustful actions are more than just trying really hard to stop - it's something deeper inside... it's a heart issue (spiritual).**

**Matthew 23:27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.**

**Trying to work on the outside without addressing the root issue inside, lacks what is needed to bring real change.**

**It's an inside job - Transformation comes from a renewed spirit, mind, and heart. Lasting change starts inside with the HS working in us.**

**Once our spirit is renewed by the Cross - the motivation to change starts on the inside. (Ro 12:1-2, Phil 2:13, Gal 5)**

**Love of Jesus is our motivation to live holy lives, not regulations. “If you love me you will obey me…” (John 14:15)**

**Stop trying to armor all your life - you may look good for a while - nice and shiny. But eventually you'll crack...**

**The answer to a cracked broken life is… Jesus – alone!**

**After challenging them to keep away from some additives, Paul shares some of the black and white issues - what true spiritually looks like**

**Jesus’ pre-eminence in marriage, kids, work, and relationships**

**No more additives. Jesus is the fullness of God... by faith you can have the fullness of Christ’s grace, forgiveness, and understanding.**