Colossians 2:11-23

“Don’t Lose Your Head!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. **Illustration:** Back in WWII they invented the “Military Decoy Paratrooper Dummies”, aka paradummies.
   1. They’ve been used as recently as the Gulf War where special forces implemented these dummies to distract Iraqi troops. They have also been used in Afghanistan.
   2. Sometimes these rubber dummies have firecrackers to help distract the enemy from where the real attack is about to hit.

B. **Have you ever been taken by surprise** by one of Satan’s rubber dummies in your life?
   1. You found yourself fighting the wrong enemy. You were wrestling against flesh & blood, & didn’t realize you had the wrong enemy in your grips!

C. **Greatest Pursuit of Hebrews** was **Light** [The Lord is my light & salvation]; **Greatest Pursuit of Greeks** was **Knowledge** [These things are written that you might know you have eternal life]; **Greatest Pursuit of Romans** was **Glory** [We know nothing matched the splendor of Rome; It wasn’t built in a day; & all roads led there]¹
   1. Thus Paul inspired by the H.S. said For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor.4:6
   2. Paul born a Hebrew; raised in a Greek city; & of Roman citizenship.
      a) He knew what their pursuits were all about, & knew the answer for all...was in the face of Jesus!

D. **Last week** we tackled Gnosticism, which believed the spirit alone was good; matter was essentially evil! (lived out in rigid asceticism, or loose morality)
   1. This week we’ll hear Paul’s warning against other false teachings that crept in to Colosse: Legalism; Mysticism; & Asceticism.

E. **The flesh** loves to be religious, so long as that religion doesn’t have a cross to crucify the flesh!

¹ From Ravi Zacharias Podcast
II. **DON’T LOOSE YOUR HEAD!**

A. **LEGALISM OR, CLEAN SLATE!** (11-17)

B. (11-13) The Circumcision of Christ - (11) is not speaking of His physical circumcision as a child, but rather His death on the cross.

1. His *water baptism* pointed to the symbol of *suffering on the cross* I have a baptism to be baptized w/and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Lk12:50
2. His *circumcision* as an infant pointed to His *putting off the body* when He took our sins on Calvary.
   a) Circumcision removes a *fragment of the flesh* from the body, but our identification w/Christ puts off the *whole fleshly nature!*

C. What kind of **forgiveness**? - See Luke 7:42 (*nothing to pay*) *Wow!*

   1. All trespasses - ALL!

D. Wiped out (14) - washed over & **wiped out**, (i.e. Washing out writing on a papyrus)

   1. It was used for wiping out a memory of an experience or for canceling a vote or annulling a law or canceling a charge of debt.

E. Handwriting - it was a written acknowledgment of a debt; an I.O.U.; a statement of indebtedness, personally signed by the debtor.

F. Requirements - decree, edict, something decided. A legal obligation which was a *binding law* or edict which was placed on a *public place* for all to see.

G. Against us - hostile, directly opposed to us.

H. Taken it out of the way - put it out of sight.

I. Nailed it to the cross - the manner in which Christ removed the handwriting(I.O.U.).

   1. He nailed the Mosaic Law with all its decrees to His cross, & it *died* with Him!

J. Illustration: My speeding ticket in Canyon Lake.

   1. It was a *trespass*(Did you know you were doing 53 in a 35? No way!); I talked with them, Kim talked with them, about the specific ticket because it was $250!!!
   2. We tried to pay it last week, but it had been mysteriously “wiped away!”
   3. The *handwriting* that was against me (my signature, see card!)
   4. The *requirement* that was against me (A legal obligation which was a binding law or edict which was placed on a *public place* for all to see; well not all, but my bro & sis)
   5. It was some how *taken out of the way* (*put out of sight...Praise God!!!*)
      a) But Brian you *deserve* to pay the fine(I know!); you *don’t deserve* grace(I know!)
K. (15) **Results?**

L. **Disarmed** - to strip off. As one puts off a garment.
   1. Christ divested *(desvistere des=removal; vistere/vestis=garment)* Himself at the cross of the evil powers which had struggled with Him so strongly during His ministry in attempts to force Him to abandon the pathway of the cross.²

M. **Public Spectacle** - expose; to display as a victor displays his captives or trophies in a triumphal procession. (Lightfoot)

N. **Triumphing** - It pictures a victorious general leading his prisoners in that triumphal procession.

O. (15) *(Message Bible)* He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.

P. So far, the **OT Covenant Laws** are now set aside; Satan has been completely defeated(15); therefore enjoy the liberty you have in Christ, Let no one judge you(16).

Q. (16a) **Diet** - No one should condemn another believer for what he or she eats or drinks.

R. (16b) **Days** - No one should condemn another believer 4 not celebrating certain holy days
   1. Festival/yearly (like Passover, Pentecost); new moon/monthly; & Sabbath/weekly.
   2. For these old rules were only shadows!

S. (17) **Shadow** - OT ritual observances were dim outlines of the NT redemptive truths!
   1. He says, “watch it, you are going out of the sunlight into the shadows”.³
   2. It’s as bad as a boyfriend who admires his girlfriends photo, while he ignores his girlfriends presence.
      a) So they had turned from the fullness of Christ, to the ABC’s of the world(20).

T. **MYSTICISM - DON’T LOOSE YOUR HEAD**!(18,19)

U. (18) Let no man sit as umpire in your life -

V. **False humility** - A counterfeit that tries to imitate genuine spiritual humility.
   1. This word was often used in connection w/ fasting which some believed this ascetic practice was an entrance into the heavenly realm.

W. **Mysticism** teaches that God can only be known through 2 methods: worship of angels & seeing visions.
   1. Truth: One can only know God through Christ who is the head of the body, the church.

² Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.; pg. 575
³ Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of the NT.
X. (19) The Head(Christ) - He is the Head we members of the body.
   1. A body functions through nourishment, not legislation.
      a) You don’t tell your body “Start digesting!” or “Stop hurting!”
Y. This is where we witness the difference between history & the gospel?
   1. History says, “Jesus died”; the Gospel says, “Jesus died..for me!”
   2. History says it really happened; the Gospel says, it really happened...for me!
   3. History says, “His death changed history”; the Gospel says, “His death changed history..for me!”
Z. Grows - not from a denial of certain foods, but rather growth comes from God!

AA. ASCETICISM - A SELF-IMPLIED RELIGION! (20-23)

BB.(21) How the flesh loves legalism: fasting, regulations about food, bodily disciplines.
   1. Special religious observances with their regulations make people feel spiritual!
   2. Nothing wrong with spiritual discipline, in the spirit, to the glory of God; but when it is done in the flesh & for our own praise, then it becomes sin!
   3. Giving up certain habits or pleasures doesn’t automatically make you spiritual!
      a) E.g. Fish on Friday during Lent(fast from meat).
      b) Like Carnival & Mardi Gras. They’re Pre-Lenten festivals, last opportunity for excess before Lent begins.
   4. Obeying man-made religious regulations might impress some people as spiritual, but Paul states clearly that these practices cannot control or overcome the flesh!
      a) They might seem to help us develop piety & superior spirituality, but they are useless as far as God is concerned.

CC. Asceticism teaches that one can purify the spirit by punishing the body.
   1. But the spirit can’t be purified by punishing the body. Why? Because his body is already dead(died w/Christ,vs.20) how can beating a dead man help you?

DD. So Paul you’re saying, all the believer needs is Jesus Christ? Yep!
   1. Paul says don’t fall back to “Kindergarten living”; we must graduate into a higher level of Christianity.
   2. It is impossible for the flesh to control itself, better itself, or perfect itself.
      a) Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Gal.3:3

EE. The Cross: where Truth met Love; where man’s worse collided with God’s best; where righteousness kissed Justice; & where it’s nothing you deserve, but everything you may appropriate for the asking!