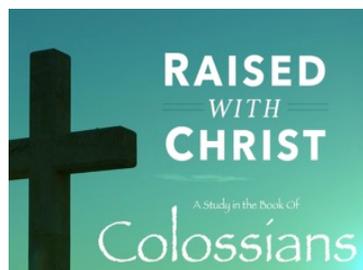


“Raised with Christ!”

Part 5: “Growing GOD’s Way ...”

Colossians 2:16-23



Introduction: As the “Good Shepherd” Jesus says, “I am the door of the sheep ... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

We who believe have received Christ, we have been filled with Christ, raised with Christ and are ALIVE in Christ.

Psalm 73:23-28: “Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides YOU!” (vs. 25).

True spiritual maturity that brings satisfaction to life is found only in relationship with Christ!

I. Spiritual maturity is not found in keeping rules!

Verses 16-17: “These are a shadow of the things to come” (vs. 17).

The Gospel is incompatible with the teaching of other religions that salvation is by works.

Colossians 1:3-6: “... the Gospel ... is bearing fruit ... as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth” (vss. 5-6).

Verses 20b-22; Galatians 2:20: “And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20; see also Galatians 3:24-25; 1:8).

We still need to hear what God says about substituting rules and old covenant laws for faith and Spirit - produced obedience.

Galatians 5:1,13 ... Indulging the flesh is slavery to sin and doesn’t lead to the satisfaction and joy of obedience to God.

II. Spiritual maturity is not found in following religious traditions ...

Verses 18 and 23: “These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self - made religion ... but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh” (vs. 23).

The second deception: “The way to deeper spiritual satisfaction is found in THIS religious activity or THAT religious experience.”

The temptation is to treat your spiritual condition in the same way as you treat your physical condition, attempting to discover a “magic formula” that will produce spiritual maturity.

“Asceticism” is like the anti-drug campaign: “Just say ‘NO’!”

Simply depriving yourself of rejoicing in God’s gifts does not promote spiritual maturity ... and neither does “fake spirituality!”

The supposed “success” of “self-made religion” has no value in transforming the old nature and bringing true satisfaction in GOD!!

III. Spiritual maturity is found only in relationship with Christ!!

Verse 17: “These are a shadow of the things to come, BUT the substance belongs to Christ!”

“Spirituality” and “self-made religion” are being presented as worthy substitutes for a living, vital relationship with Jesus Christ!

Those who were speaking so boldly had disqualified themselves because they were not “holding fast to the Head” - to Christ! (vs. 19).

Jesus is Savior and Lord to all who are “in Christ.” There are no “second - class citizens” in God’s family!!!

John 15:1-5: “Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (vs. 5).

John 15:11: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full!”

Philippians 3:10: “... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him ...”

Philippians 3:12-16: “... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way” (vss. 14-15).