

Colossians 2:6 – 2:15 The Sufficiency of Christ and His Cross

Introduction: **“Familiarity breeds contempt” says the proverb.** We might think that learning more about a new acquaintance will lead to greater liking. Turns out, according to a recent study done by Harvard Business School, that on average, we like other people less the more we know about them.

See: <http://www.spring.org.uk/2008/05/why-familiarity-really-does-breed.php>

Sad but true: Familiarity really does breed contempt.

"Hell is other people." -- Jean-Paul Sartre

"Fish and visitors smell in three days." -- Benjamin Franklin

Worst of all, this happens among Christians, not only with one another, but in their relationship with Jesus. Not that Jesus is lacking anything; rather, we lack in our appreciation of Him. We begin to look elsewhere for satisfaction, for wisdom, for fulfillment. This is what was beginning to happen with the Colossians and Paul wants them and us to understand that in Christ we really have everything we need.

- I. We are complete in Christ alone. 2:6-10
- II. We receive forgiveness and life in Christ alone. 2:11-15

The more fully we get to know Christ, the less attractive we'll find any substitute for Him.

- I. We are complete in Christ alone. 2:6-10
 - A. 2:6 **received** This describes the beginning of our Christian life: **We received Christ Jesus the Lord.** We didn't take Him in some aggressive way. We received Christ by faith. More than anything that was an act of submission. We simply trusted Him to save us, to forgive us, to accept us and make us acceptable to God.
 - B. Christians are often tempted to deviate from the foundational teaching they were originally given. Christ becomes familiar and, therefore, less interesting to them.
 - C. Paul tells us to continue in the Christian life the same way we started – by faith and trust in Jesus the Lord. The Christian life is a walk of perpetual faith and trust in Him. It is a continuous act of submission. The way that we started is the way we keep going – by faith, trust and obedience. That's how we live out the relationship we now have with Jesus as Lord. That's how we are to **walk in Him.**

Colossians 2:6-7 NKJV ⁶*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

- D. 2:7 Now look closely at v.7:
 - i. We are rooted where? **In Christ.**
 - ii. We are built up where? **In Christ.**
 - iii. We are established in the faith – and that means faith **in Christ.**
 - iv. Paul emphasizes that this is what they have been taught. False teachings were trying to creep their way into the Colossian church. He wants to safeguard them from anything that would draw them away from Christ.

- v. Then he tells them to abound with thanksgiving. When Christ becomes “familiar” to us, we can begin to lack in thankfulness for all that we have in Him. Our relationship with Christ can become routine. We take Christ for granted just as we do other people we are familiar with.

E. 2:8 But here is the big warning. The NKJV “**cheat you**” is not as lively as what Paul actually said. Other versions put it like this:

“See to it that no one takes you captive...” (ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV)

“Don’t let anyone capture you...” (NLT)

When Christ becomes familiar to us, and we begin to get bored with Him, watch out! That’s when we are the most susceptible to the ideas that would love to take us captive. That’s what was happening in Colossae, perhaps with something they called, “**the philosophy.**”

- i. The world is full of “hollow and deceptive philosophies” (NIV) that depend on human tradition rather than divine revelation. They approach life from the human, rather than the divine, perspective.
- ii. The word “philosophy” simply means a “love of wisdom”, so in one sense *philosophy* is good. We should love wisdom. We want to be wise. We want to “love God with our whole mind,” not be ignorant.
- iii. But there are philosophies that can draw us away from Christ – and we should beware of these. This week in our Apologetics class we looked at Buddhism. Just as one example, Buddhism stands very much in contradiction to Scripture and vice versa. To quote the Dalai Lama:

*“Now from the philosophical point of view, the theory that God is the creator, is almighty and permanent, is in contradiction to the Buddhist teachings. From this point of view there is disagreement. For Buddhists, the universe has no first cause and hence no creator, nor can there be such a thing as a permanent, primordially pure being.” [The Dalai Lama, “Buddhism and Other Religions”, in *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings, 4th ed.*, ed. M. Peterson et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) p. 578., quoted in notes from Harold Netland]*

- iv. In other words, for Buddhists, there is no God, nor can there be a God. Such teaching contradicts Buddhism. So what do they ultimately believe? One website puts it very succinctly:

“Buddhism teaches that the solutions to our problems are within ourselves not outside.”

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm>

- v. That’s pretty much the opposite of the Bible, which teaches that *the cause, not the solution, of our problems* is within ourselves. Therefore Jesus came and died to save us from our sins. We caused the problem; Jesus came to solve it for us. If we are looking within ourselves for solutions, we are certainly not looking to Christ.

- F. 2:9 “Christ is the visible expression of God. In his incarnation and now in his glorification, Jesus is God in the flesh.” (*ESV Study Bible*)
- G. He is equal to God, but does not stand beside God as a totally separate being. The One True God is comprised of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- H. 2:10 We “have been filled” in Christ. (ESV) What more do we need?

2 Peter 1:2-3 NKJV ²*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,*
³*as His divine power **has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, ...***

- I. Christ rules over every earthly or spiritual power. Again with Him within us, what more do we really need?

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- II. We receive forgiveness and life in Christ alone. 2:11-15
 - A. 2:11 Referring to circumcision, Paul is saying that we are no more under the authority of the flesh and its influences – the flesh being that sinful state in which we once operated.
 - B. We figuratively “put off the flesh” when we received Christ. But now, remember, we have to keep doing that as part of our walk in Christ. Each day, and probably several times each day, we have to reject the flesh and continually submit to Christ in faith, relying on His strength, His power, to make us acceptable to God.
 - C. 2:12 In another figure of speech, Paul refers to our flesh being **buried with Him in baptism**. When we do our baptisms of new believers each summer, this is the picture we are painting. This is what we were illustrating when Bill Goodrich baptized me back in 1984 in San Diego’s Mission Bay.
 - D. Going under the water is like being buried; coming up out of the water is like rising from the grave. What a perfect picture of the work that God does within us when He gives us new life in Christ. At the moment of our conversion, God regenerates us. Baptism is an outward expression of what God has done within us.
 - E. 2:13 God has made us alive together with Christ. In the old life, the life of the flesh, we were still dead to God. In the Bible, death is not a *cessation*, but a separation. Our sin once separated us from God. Now we are alive in Christ and our sins are all forgiven.
 - F. 2:14 **handwriting** “... record of debt, a note written by the hand which makes one obligated to fulfill what is written (*Complete Word Study Dictionary*)

- G. In the Roman world, when someone was executed by crucifixion, a notice was fastened to a cross by the Roman authorities, declaring the crime for which the criminal was being executed. In Christ's case it simply said "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."
- H. Each one of us had a record of debt before God, and this notice was, in a sense, nailed to Christ's cross when He died. So Christ, the One in whom dwelt all the fullness of Deity, paid the price for all of our sins when He died on that Roman cross.
- I. 2:15 When the Roman Army defeated an important enemy, they would parade their prisoners before cheering crowds back in Rome. This was part of the "public spectacle" Paul is referring to. When Christ died on the cross and especially in rising from the dead, He defeated Satan or "the devil" or slanderer, who still accuses us before God.
- J. The devil is the defeated enemy of your soul. Christ is the glorious victor who has triumphed over every spiritual power and put the devil and all his demonic hoards to public shame. Christ won this victory for you; you now have the privilege of walking in that victory as you walk in Him.
- K. Our lives can now be one great victory celebration of victory over sin, death and the devil who tried to destroy us – but failed miserably.

Conclusions:

- Through faith in Christ we enter into a relationship with God.
- At that moment you became a new person; it's as if your old self died and a new you rose from the dead to take your old self's place.
 - The sins you have committed against God are now gone, paid for by the blood of Christ.
 - No sin and no devil has any authority over you at all, since all such spiritual powers were defeated by Christ in His death and resurrection.
- We must now continue to walk by faith in Him and not fall back into the works of the flesh.
- Beware of hollow human philosophies – any outlook that does not keep Christ front and center in the way you approach life. All of these will ultimately fail and prove to be deceptive.
 - Spiritual resources that do not focus on Christ and Christ alone.
 - Secular resources that have you focusing on purely human solutions
- When temptation comes remember to reject your old self and rely more fully upon Christ.
- Remember that Christ is by very nature God. He is our Creator and Redeemer. We worship Him.
- It is through Christ that we receive the various benefits that God has for us.
 - Eternal life, Forgiveness of sin, Fullness of joy, Direction or purpose for our existence.
- We need to remain thankful for Christ. Don't take Christ for granted. Don't let familiarity with Christ breed contempt for Christ.
- If we ever become bored with Christ, it is not because we know Him too well already, but rather that we do not yet know Him well enough. As God, the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of inexhaustible heavenly riches.

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