

Study Guide

COLOSSIANS

Always. Only. Jesus.

Jesus, Our Substance | Colossians 2:16-23

¹⁶Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

¹⁸Let 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, ¹⁹and 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.

²⁰If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²²(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Introduction

At this point in Colossians you have probably realized that the Apostle Paul is relentless about the sufficiency of Christ. Here are two reasons why:

1. Christ is sufficient. “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority” (Colossians 2:9-10).
2. There are countless forces, fueled by our adversary the devil, trying to divert our attention away from Christ's sufficiency to shake our faith in Christ's sufficiency and shatter the joy we have in him.

So, Paul is relentlessly pressing the sufficiency of Christ for Christ's glory and for our joy in the sufficient Christ. This Sunday's text warns of those trying to divert our attention and points us again to Always. Only. Jesus.

The BIG Idea:

Jesus is the substance of our salvation.

Don't settle for shadows. (16-17)

Don't be conned by the conceited. (18-19)

Since you died with Christ,
life free to Christ. (20-23)

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[Forever Jesus](#)
[Matt Papa, Keith and Kristyn Getty](#)



Let's Think About It

Thinking about not settling for shadows (16-17):

How would you define "shadow" versus "substance" in the context of verse 17, and why does this distinction matter for daily faith?

What are some examples of modern-day "shadows" (traditions, rules, or rituals) that people treat as necessary to be right with God?

Why do people find it easy to judge others based on religious tradition?

Thinking about not being conned by the conceited (18-19):

Why do people enjoy judging others based on their experiences? How could that sneak into our lives?

What does it mean to hold fast to the Head, Jesus Christ?

Thinking about dying with Christ:

How does our death with Christ change how we live?

Why do religious rules sound wise but do not help in stopping the indulgences of the flesh?

Are there any rules feeding your pride and causing you to judge and disqualify others?

Only Trust Him

John H. Stockton, 1869

Come, every soul by sin oppressed
There's mercy with the Lord
And He will surely give you rest
By trusting in His word

For Jesus shed His precious blood
Rich blessings to bestow
Plunge now into the crimson flood
That washes white as snow

Yes, Jesus is the truth, the way
That leads you into rest
Believe in Him without delay
And you are fully blessed

Chorus:

Only trust Him, only trust Him
Only trust Him now
He will save you, He will save you
He will save you now

Surely Christ thy griefs hath borne;
Weeping soul, no longer mourn;
View Him bleeding on the tree,
Pouring out His life for thee;
There thy ev'ry sin he bore,
Weeping Soul, lament no more.

Cast thy guilty soul on Him;
Find Him mighty to redeem;
At His feet thy burden lay;
Look thy doubts and cares away;
Now by faith the Son embrace;
Plead His promise, trust His grace.

Lord, Thy arm must be reveal'd
Ere I can by faith be heal'd;
Since I scarce can look to Thee,
Cast a gracious eye on me!
At Thy feet myself I lay;
Shine, O shine my fears away!

Augustus Toplady, 1759 [rev. 1774]
Spurgeon's Own Hymn Book, 536