



**Colossians: Jesus Over Everything**  
September 10 – Colossians 2:16-23

**Section 1: Introduction**

Our text is book-ended by two passages that emphasize our identity in Christ that comes from his salvation and supremacy over all (Colossians 2:6-15) and how we should live out that new identity (Colossians 3). The key emphasis of this text is to find freedom from the expectations of man-made religion and the judgment of mere mortals, and to live in the identity given to us by God through Jesus.

As mentioned before, Colossians was written to fortify the church against false teachers who were trying to impose strict rules about earthly things (food, drink, festivals) to reach a self-made “holiness.” In these verses, Paul calls out the religious activity of these false teachers as mere shadows (verse 17). He then encourages the church to not worry about being judged or feeling disqualified because of not adhering to the restrictions and rules of their man-made religion and traditions.

As we begin to internalize this passage, we will start to find the freedom of Jesus. Freedom for our own walks with Jesus and a freedom that we get to offer the world who is weighed down by the bondage of sin and religious pressure we were never meant to carry.

Read Colossians 2:6-15 (for context). Then, read Colossians 2:16-23.

## Section 2: Walk slowly through your passage

Verses 16-17:

1. What does Paul mean to let no one pass judgment on you? Are these religious activities bad or good?
2. How were these things a shadow of what was to come (namely Jesus)?

Verses 18-19:

1. How were the false teachers “disqualifying” the believers in the church of Colossae?
2. What were the teachers emphasizing in these verses? How did they miss the point?
3. God is the one who gives growth, but how are we able grow? Look at the first line of verse 19.

Verse 20-22:

1. What regulations were the false teachers asking the church to submit to? Are these regulations bad within themselves?
2. What were these rules based upon? Can they be redeemed to bring freedom instead of an unnecessary weight/bondage? How so?

Verse 23:

1. Self-focused, religious activity can make us look good (have the appearance), but it lacks any power. Why does it not have power (value)?

### Section 3: Reflection questions

- Read Mark 2:23-27. Where do you see similarities between how both Paul and Jesus viewed the religious activities of the culture at the time?
- Pulling from verses 16-18, have you ever felt judged and/or disqualified when it comes to your walk with Jesus? Was this in your own mind, from others, or both? Reflecting on the verses right before this passage (Colossians 2:6-15), is this how God sees you?
- Considering that Jesus has given you a new identity that is alive and free, verses 20-22 asks us a question to ponder: *if you don't live for the things of the world, then why do we still submit to them?* Honestly answer the question for yourself. Are you still trying to reach God through religious activity or are you walking with him and allowing him to form your actions, choices, and thoughts?
- What pressures or expectations are you putting on yourself that are self-made traditions or religion? What about ones you may be putting on others? Like verse 16, Romans 14:13 tells us not to judge others, but to instead remove roadblocks from their walks. How can you remove barriers for others to come to Jesus instead of creating more?

## Section 4: Pray the Scriptures

Using Colossians 2:16-23, write out a prayer in response to what you've read OR use the prayer already constructed below to pray this passage.

### [Sample prayer]

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the gift of life found only in Jesus and the freedom it brings to me. Help me to remove the pressures and expectations I put on myself with my performance, whether I failed today or not, but instead to remember who I am in you. Help me to remember that my accusations and debt has been cancelled. I no longer have to work my way into your good graces, but I get to walk with you in them. Let your Spirit guide me to the good you want me to do in this world and to only live to please you, not man. Thank you for your love and freedom to be fully alive and fully free!

In Jesus' name,  
Amen.

## Section 5: Memorize Scripture

Throughout this series, we want to be memorizing Scripture. Use the prompts below to help you get Colossians 2:16-17 into your heart and mind.

1. Write out the passage: Write down Colossians 2:16-17 in your journal or on a notecard.
2. Memorize Colossians 2:16-17. Use various techniques to memorize the passage, such as repeating it out loud, creating visual associations, or setting it to a melody or rhythm, take time to commit these verses to memory.
3. Review and practice: Regularly review the passage throughout the week. Recite it from memory and reflect on its meaning and significance.