

# Hold Fast to your Freedom in Christ

## Colossians 2:16-19

**16** Therefore 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. **17** These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. **18** Let 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, **19** and 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.

We live in a time when fear and talk of our freedoms being torn from us abound. Although the fear of losing our physical freedoms is somewhat understandable, we can put our lives in the hands of our sovereign and good God trusting in His absolute, loving control. It is in Him and in His sovereignty that our fears cease. There is another greater freedom that is also constantly being threatened that should concern us more than our physical freedom, and that is our freedom in Christ.

### I. **Do Not be Judged by Legalism (16-17)**

In Colossians 2:16-19 Paul cautions the Colossae believers against false teachers that were trying to steal their freedom in Christ. Although we typically believe that legalism is an attack on us based on our behaviors from other believers, and our mantra is, “Do not judge me,” in this context we see that legalism has more to do with presenting a false standard of salvation. Legalism can best be defined as “Christ plus rules.” In this culture and time, believers were being told that they needed Christ and to be obedient to certain diets or ceremonial laws. Christ AND anything is a false gospel and weighs us down with laws and standards that are unattainable, unnecessary, and sinful. Christ is enough! He has made us qualified (Colossians 1:12). He is the source of our salvation and when we understand the freedom we have in Christ, we will understand that we are free to follow His law.

### II. **Do Not be Disqualified by Mysticism (18)**

Some preach and live Christ AND behaviors or rules, while there are others who preach and live Christ AND spiritual experiences. We have a mystical, spiritual, and living relationship with Jesus Christ. There are times we experience a greater awareness of the Lord in our lives or of His working, but these “experiences” are not how we know that we are saved, nor are they how we determine that we are saved. It is not our experiences that prove our salvation, but Christ alone has made us qualified. (Colossians 1:12).

### III. **Stay Free by Holding Fast to Christ (19)**

We have to stay connected to Christ in order to live truly free. If we focus on rules and spiritual experiences we will lose our freedom in Christ and be drawn away from Him. Being untethered will leave us trapped in judgment/fear and anxiety. Jesus tells us that He is the Bread of Life. He is all we need.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are the “rules” of “true Christianity” that we are tempted to impose on each other?
2. What does it mean when Paul says that these “are a shadow of the things to come”?
3. What is the purpose of the “rules” and laws? Where can we find the fulfillment of them? (Col. 1:12)

4. What does it mean to not be disqualified by mysticism?
5. What is the “secret” to true freedom in Christ?

### **Going Deeper**

1. Are we guilty here at Second Presbyterian Church of falling into the mindset of Christ AND....? What kinds of things do we put on ourselves and each other in assessing our spirituality?
2. What is correct thinking about spiritual experiences? Do you live as one declared holy, blameless, and above reproach or do you unnecessarily carry the burdens that were laid on Jesus?
3. Describe the difference between the location of spiritual nourishment and the source of spiritual nourishment.