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Osaka International Church
Title: In Christ Alone!

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Bible Verses: Colossians 2:8-23

How many people like to be told what to do and what not to do?

Well, I never did before I was a Christian.

In fact, that is what kept me from ever wanting to become a Christian.

I didn't want to have to do this or have to do that, or anything else that was contrary to what I wanted to do.

I wanted to be free to do what I wanted to do any time I wanted to do it.

And so the last thing I wanted to do was to subject myself to the do's and don'ts of the Bible.

But what I didn't realize was, the more I fought to be freed from the righteous commandments of God found in the Bible...

The more I found myself enslaved to my own sin.

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves **slaves** to obey, you are that one's **slaves** whom you obey, whether of **sin leading** to death, or of obedience **leading** to righteousness?

Notice vs. 20

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

You see... the more we fought to be free from the righteous commandments of God...

The more we found ourselves enslaved to our own sin.

As we look back at all those things we thought would bring us freedom, happiness, and contentment. We realize that they only left us hopelessly empty and searching for more and more...

Think about it... vs. 21

Romans 6:21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

Romans 6:22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life **in Christ** Jesus our Lord.

The Gift of Eternal life: *Ultimate freedom, peace, and contentment.... and notice where is it found?*

In Christ Jesus our Lord.

And that is exactly what Paul is saying here as we continue our study in Colossians.

That our salvation, our freedom from sin and death is found 'In Christ alone!'

notice

Colossians 2:6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk **in Him**,

Colossians 2:7* rooted and built up **in Him** and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:8* Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Don't let anyone cheat you, don't let anyone fool you.

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. vs. 3 tells us.

The things that even scientist, or chemists, or doctors, or anyone else are discovering today, are only the things that God has created long ago.

Now, if you want to get your car fixed. Go to a mechanic.

You will not find the literal instructions on how to change the oil here in the Bible.

If you break a bone than go to a doctor.
You will not find the literal instructions on how to set a bone here in the Bible.

How about stress, how about worries, and doubts, or loneliness, or bitterness, or anything else that is grieving our soul?

Well, there is a entire world of advice you can get out there from Psychotherapists, to TV personalities, to your best friend.

But when it comes to these type of issues... there is something you should know....

That is... the Bible specializes in broken hearts and troubled and lost souls!

King David proclaimed,

Psalms 23:3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Jesus said,

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11: 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your (*what*) souls.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When people come to me for advise or counseling in regards to relationships, in regards to struggles of the heart or mind.

I am very careful to look to and to share with them the Words of God.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

In other-words!

Take that thought, that advice given by men, the tradition, the social pressure, the cultural expectation, and whatever else comes into your thoughts.

Take it and compare it to the **knowledge of God**.

Is it supported by the Word of God?

Or is it contrary to the Word of God?

if it is contrary, than the Bible is very clear...

Cast it down!

Anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, we are to bring into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

It amazes me how people can hear the Word of God, understand exactly what it says, and then choose to do the total opposite.

Others will hear the Word of God and if they don't like what it says then they will go seek advice from some other source.

Listen... there is no Higher authority, there is no better source than the Bible.

But you see the real issue is this....

People just want to do what they want to do!

I understand... as I mentioned that was my life before totally submitting to Christ.

And I could totally understand a non-Christian rejecting the Word of God. But for someone who calls themselves a Christian that is really hard for me to understand to be honest.

But than again, that is exactly what the Word of God said was going to happen. Notice....

2Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

2Timothy 4:4 and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

And Paul is telling us here in Colossians to...

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Now since **all the fullness of the Godhead** dwells in Jesus, He cannot be a halfway God or a "junior god." No... This is a dramatic declaration of the Deity of Jesus Christ. He is 100% God!

1Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifested in the flesh,** Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

"God was manifested in the flesh"

We call this the Incarnation, the fact that God put on flesh and became a man.

Also know as.... Christmas!!!

Colossians 2:10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all **principality and power**.

You should know that in many New Testament passages, this phrase

"principality and power"

describes ranks of angelic beings, either faithful or fallen angelic beings.

Therefore, Paul is declaring here that Jesus is the head, and has authority over them all.

Unlike the cults like the Mormons who falsely declare that Jesus and Satan are brothers.

Or Like the Jehovahs witnesses who believe that Jesus is the created archangel Michael.

No... Jesus is God.

As we saw back in Ch. 1

Colossians 1:16 For by Him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers (***again referring to angelic beings... including Satan***). All things were created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 2:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

Most of the Colossian Christians were Gentiles who had never been physically circumcised.

Now their were some Judaizers ("Christians who lived according to the Jewish customs") at that time were saying that in order for the gentiles to be right with God they needed to be circumcised.

Well, Paul here assures them that they **were** indeed circumcised in a spiritual sense, which is even more important than physical circumcision.

Whereas all Jewish males were required to receive physical circumcision, the circumcision that is from Christ is without hands.

Even the Old Testament acknowledges that there are two types of circumcision:

one of the body and one of the heart notice...

Deuteronomy 10:16 "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Deuteronomy 30:6 “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Rather than the mere removal of flesh, Christian circumcision is the spiritual removal of sin from the heart.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither **circumcision** nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Right standing with God is ours totally and completely by faith in Christ which works through love.

This is the key to real power and peace in our walk with God.

As we grow closer in fellowship with God, we begin to share His great love for all people, especially those of the household of faith.

As the love of Christ wells up within our hearts we find we have the desire to reach out to others in sincerity and with pure motives.

No longer do we serve others to impress or to earn a points in Heaven.

We love the Lord, and because we love Him, we love His children as well.

We serve one another in love.

We give to one another in love.

We minister to one another out of love and love alone.

We no longer are consumed with keeping score and resenting others for not being as kind to us as we were to them.

God's love allows us to serve others without requiring kindness in return, without seeking for any kind of reward or applause.

So we can see that the critical issue in the Christian life isn't the keeping of rituals, but the pursuit of faith in Christ that works through love.

Colossians 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of **God, who raised Him from the dead.**

Who raised Christ from the dead? It says God!

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

John 2:20 Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

John 2:21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

So, who did Jesus say was going to raise Him from the dead? Himself! Jesus!

Romans 8:11 But if the **Spirit** of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His **Spirit** who dwells in you.

Here we read that the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in us as believers, is Who raised Jesus from the dead.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the **Father**, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

How was Christ **raised** from the dead??? By the glory of the **Father**.

It was... the trinity of God, who raised Jesus from the dead.

Colossians 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of **God, who raised Him from the dead.**

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Now...

Paul is speaking of Baptism here saying that we are...

Colossians 2:12 **buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith** in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Christian Baptism illustrates our identification with the death and resurrected life of Jesus.
We were **buried** with Jesus = **buried** under the water.
We are also **raise with Him** = raised up out of the water.

Colossians 2:13 ¶ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Paul doesn't say that circumcision and baptism are the same thing, but that circumcision is unnecessary for salvation because we are identified in Jesus and baptized to show that.

But we have to be very careful not to replace one legalistic mandate for another.

There are some groups today that will say unless you are baptized you will not be saved.

Although Jesus commissioned us to baptize.
Although He Himself was baptized as an example for us to follow.
And although we should want to be baptized out of our love and obedience to Him...

Understand, Water baptism itself does not bring forgiveness of sins, nor are we saved by being baptized.
No!
We are saved by Grace through faith **in Christ** alone.

Remember the two thieves that were nailed to the cross along side of Jesus?

Well, one of them put His faith in Jesus and said...

Luke 23:42 Then he said to Jesus, "**Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.**"

What did Jesus say?

"Sorry buddy, but you need to be baptized in order to be saved, looks like you are your out of luck!"

Did He say that?
No!
What did He say!

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Now even though we are not saved through baptism.
Jesus did command us to be baptized.

And unlike today... The early church would never have understood the idea of an unbaptized Christian.

Jesus said,
John 14:15 "**If you love Me**, keep My commandments.

So... if you love Jesus... then keep His commandments.

Notice... this isn't out of obligation... No!
It is out of love!

Not because I have to but because I want to!

It's a big difference!

Why do we love Him?

1John 4:19 "**We love Him** because He first loved us."

Jesus...
Colossians 2:14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Not only were our personal sins forgiven at the Cross, but those rules that condemned us have also been removed and nailed to the cross!

Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed **principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Principalities and powers once again allude to Satan and fallen angels.

Paul is describing Christ's victory on the Cross over the powers that opposed Him and that were against us. To describe this victory, Paul uses the example of a military triumph, when prisoners of war were stripped and paraded before the people behind the conquering general.

Satan and his forces thought that the Cross would be their victory and Christ's defeat.

Yet, in reality, at the Cross the Our Lord vanquished His foes, took away their weapons, and made a public spectacle of them.

Paul has been illustrating our sufficiency in Christ alone by demonstrating how the Colossian believers are complete.

Notice...

In Christ, the Colossians have put off the power of sin and the flesh (v. 11),
have received new life (vv. 12, 13),

have been forgiven, have been delivered from requirements laid down by human traditions (v. 14),
and have been freed from the powers of spiritual beings (v. 15).

There is nothing that the Christian needs to add to what they have already received by faith in Christ alone.

Paul emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ in order to refute the Gnostics and the Judaizers who respectively believed that special knowledge or works were necessary to make a Christian complete.

Colossians 2:16 ¶ So (with that) let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Colossians 2:17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Because Jesus won such a glorious victory on the cross, we are to **let no one judge us in regards to** matters related to legalism.

A life that is centered on Jesus and what He did on the cross has no place for legalism.

The point is clear: days and foods, as observed under the Mosaic Law, are not binding upon New Covenant believers in Christ.

It isn't that those laws were *bad*, no, it is just that they were **a shadow of things to come**.

Once the **substance** - Jesus Christ - had come, there was no need for the **shadow** any longer.

I can't imagine going on a trip for a while and coming home looking forward to seeing my beautiful wife Amy. Only to have here run to greet me with open arms and at the last second before embracing each other. She falls down on the floor and starts to hug and kiss... my shadow.

You see, for Christians, the shadow has passed, the reality, Jesus Christ, has come.

So for the Christian, *all* foods are pure and *all* days belong to God.

Romans 14:5 One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Therefore...

Colossians 2:18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Colossians 2:19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

People who do not cling to salvation in Christ alone may appear to be very humble.

But their search for a new spiritual experience or advocacy of some work as necessary for salvation is actually human pride.

In reality, they do not want to submit to God's plan of salvation revealed in the Bible.

Remember what Paul said to the Galatians...

Galatians 1:6 ¶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

Galatians 1:7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Now it is interesting how that so many times people feel that they have a insight on this scripture that no one has ever seen before. Well if you have discovered an insight into a particular scripture that no one has ever seen before rest assured... you are wrong.

2Peter 1:20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any **private interpretation**,

There aren't special little mystic insights that no one else has ever seen before.

You don't have some kind of an exclusive understanding of Gods truth.

People will say,

"Oh I have just discovered something that makes everybody else wrong.

All the churches are wrong.

All of the biblical expositors are wrong, I have discovered the light and the truth.

Up until now this truth has been hidden from man, but God is now revealing these secrets to me."

That's exactly how the Mormon church was started you know...

An Angelic being named Moroni came to Joseph Smith and told him that all the churches were wrong and gave him a new revelation.

What did Paul say?

Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

2Corinthians 11:14b "...For Satan himself transforms himself into an **angel of light**."

So, watch out for that kind of stuff, because no scripture is of any new Angelic or personal private interpretation. God said what He meant, and He meant what He said.

Colossians 2:20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations--

Colossians 2:21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"

Colossians 2:22 which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

Colossians 2:23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Since believers have been released from ritualistic observances why should they let others bind them down again?

No human work can be added to what Christ's has already done. His work on the Cross is the only acceptable work in God's eyes.

The legalistic commands of others are a self-imposed religion and are of no value for salvation.

Our salvation is found in Christ alone!