

A plea to steadfastness

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[0 : 00] You do now turn with me for a little time as we meditate together in a portion we have read from God's Word. Paul's letter to the Colossians on the second chapter, reading again at the eighth verse.

Beware any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him.

It would seem that there were many and serious problems agitating the Colossian church at this time, and the apostle is writing to counteract some of these problems.

The so-called Colossian heresy had at its aim the undermining of the completeness of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so in chapter 1, the apostle goes immediately to the heart of the problem when he emphasizes the supremacy of Christ.

[1 : 16] For he, he says, he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven.

Verses 17 to 20. The heresy that was rampant in Colossae, the same was the subverting of this completeness, to which the apostle makes reference in the words, the undermining of the all-embriseness of the redemption of our Lord, by augmenting that work.

And so insisting that more was necessary than what Christ had accomplished. Now we didn't trouble ourselves with the details of that heresy at the present moment, and in any case the consideration of it would be less than profitable.

But I merely mention it to explain the emphasis which we have throughout the letter, throughout this epistle, on the completeness and the totality of the work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[2 : 50] And so the apostle says it necessary, seems it necessary, to speak cautionary words to these believers, with reference to what was happening in their midst.

So we have the caution that is being administered in these verses, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. And here the apostle comes to the very heart of the problem, which he knew was agitating the church and the people of God there.

There were spoilers abroad in their midst. And he is reminding them of the dangers confronting them in this respect.

And he is here in a context, in his verse, he is particularizing some of the things that were, some of the items in the midst that were tending to spoiling them.

Beware. He is putting them on their metal. He is setting before them the dangers confronting them. And these are dangers which are constantly, constantly confronting ourselves in different forms as we go through the world.

[4 : 10] The apostle mentions, first of all, philosophy beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy. Now then, through philosophy is a noble exercise of our mental faculties.

The apostle is not placing a blanket condemnation on all philosophy as such, or on this pursuit among men. We must all, whoever we are, we must all have a philosophy of life.

And it is a philosophy of life that will govern the way in which we live, the way in which we conduct ourselves in life. And the question, of course, that we must face, the question that we must grapple with, is, what is that philosophy that we have?

What are, where, what is it anchored to? Is it anchored to, to our own minds, and to our own minds only?

Well, if it, if it's only anchored to, uh, our own minds, it is, something that is extremely precarious, indeed.

[5 : 28] This was clearly, the problem, one of the problems, at least, at Colossae. And, in a sense, there's always been, the problem, in the world of men.

And it is because these problems have existed, that, a false teaching and heresy has entered, into the church, and among the people of God. Men, men have refused to, anchor their philosophy of life, to the infallible revelation, that God has given to them.

They have departed from that revelation, and they are at no anchor at all. This is what happened at Colossae. And so, the apostle, by the spirit of God, uh, cautions God's people on this matter.

Beware, lest any man spoil you, through philosophy. A philosophy that is not anchored, uh, securely, to the word of God, and to the revelation, uh, that God has given, uh, to man.

And then he mentions, they in deceit, beware, lest any man spoil you, through they in deceit. Notice the vanity of the, human mind, that will make a man, launch out in a, direction in which he is, not at all sure, where he is going, or where he will eventually, land.

[6 : 47] It is not being adventurous, to do this. It is not, sitting to be free. It is sheer, downright, pride and, and arrogance. It is an avowed, dissatisfaction with the, limits.

that divine revelation, are setting upon man. It is a rejecting, of those limits, and therefore, of the divine wisdom, which saw fit, to impose such limits, on man.

No, quite perhaps, in the ancient world, was this, vain deceit, more evident, than among the Greek philosophers, with all, uh, their, massive, intellect, and, profound reasonings.

Yet, with all this, they failed miserably, to attain to the knowledge of God. They would not, anchor, their minds, to anything, except the vanity, of their own minds.

And consequently, they, never arrived, at any true knowledge, of God. God. And this danger, it's dangerous, constantly, consenting, of God's people, within the very, citadel, of God's church.

[7 : 56] not only, was this true, in Colossae, it is true, of Ode, and of Ode, beware, lest any man spoil you, through vain deceit. He could, also, and he mentions, the traditions of men.

Beware, lest any man spoil you, after the, tradition of men. In many cases, tradition is, something that is good, something that is excellent. But in many cases, also good traditions, can become subverted, and positively harmful.

Such was the case, among the Jews themselves, and Paul knew this, better than most men. Being a Pharisee, of the Pharisees, he knew how, the religious, bigots, among the Pharisees, how they had, tradu, the good tradition, of the fathers.

And, how, these had, become, degenerate, because, they had, been misused. And there were those, in the early, as we know, the early Christian, church, Jews, who had been converted, to Christianity, who wished, to impose, the rites, and the ceremonies, of a degenerate Judaism, on the church of God.

As we know, this was particularly, the case, amongst the Galatians. It may well, have been the case, also, in Colossae. At all events, the apostle, by the spirit, he sees fit, to caution, the people of God, against, the traditions, of men.

[9 : 35] And then, he mentioned, the rudiments, of the word. Beware, lest any man, spoil you, through the rudiments, of the word. That is, after a system, that is not according, to the gospel, and is grounded, in the wisdom, and the opinion, of men, and of the word.

It has always, been a danger, in the Christian church, and among, God's believing people. The insinuating, of the opinions, and practices, and principles, of the word, into the affairs, of the church, and into the life, of the believer.

The rudiments, of the word, are simply, worldliness. And worldliness, has always, been the bane, of the church. The greatest danger, to the believer.

Worldliness, has been a subvert, and the underminer, of the church. And the effectual, destroyer, of the authority, and the power, the true power, of the church, of Christ.

And so you see, the apostle, sees fit, to caution, God's people, of Colossae. And that's through them, with respect, to these things. Now then you ask, perhaps, how can the Christian, how can a believer, be spoiled, by these things, and significantly, the apostle, doesn't say, beware lest, any man, destroy you, through these things.

[11 : 02] What he says, is beware lest, any man, spoil you. You see, he is speaking, he is writing, to the people of God. He is recognizing, something of, fundamental importance.

That the true believer, cannot be destroyed, but he can, be spoiled. And this is a great danger, confronting the believer, constantly, of being spoiled, by, these things, by worldliness, and, by false philosophies, and false teachings, and false principles, of men.

The danger is being spoiled, in old Christian commitment, and in old Christian, witness. This is a practical problem, that confronts us, in these words, of being spoiled.

And so then, we ask the question, how can a man of God, be spoiled? Well, let us keep in mind, what the apostle, is cautioning us against, here.

And what he is cautioning, the believer against, is simply this, admixture. Admixture. Admixture.

You see, if we keep this in mind, we shall see, how easily, we can, make the transition, from, what is temperate, or is spiritual.

[12 : 20] By mixing, certain metals, for one thing, you can, weaken the whole. You see, you don't destroy it, but you do, weaken it, very seriously.

That mixed metal, is no longer, what it was, before it was mixed, with something else, elements, they have been, joined together, which simply, cannot reside together.

These elements, refuse to blend, and therefore, the whole is weakened, by virtue, of what has happened. Now, the uneasy transition, this can be carried, clearly, into the life, of the believer.

Error will, never blend, with truth. The effort, the effect it will have, is that, truth will be, seriously compromised, and weakened, and undermined.

Truth will be, impaired, because, falsehood, has come, into, its environment. Truth is no longer, able to shine, with the luster, which it formerly, displayed, because, of the, restrictions, and the limitations, which error, is placing, upon truth.

[13 : 36] It is no longer, able, to assert, its authority, with its former, confidence, and with its, former assurance, because, its authority, has been, seriously undermined, by, an admixture, of error.

There is weakness, all around, in the realm, of truth. And truth, always suffers, when it is, mixed with error. This, I think, for one thing, is the caution, the importance, of the caution, that the, apostolate, setting before us here.

Admixture, beware, lest you are, spoiled, not destroyed, but spoiled, by this, admixture. Because, when, truth, and error, mixed, then the, hole, is, seriously weakened, and greatly, undermined.

But, not only, will it, weaken, but, this admixture, will also, mar the vessel. When, certain metals, are mixed, of, as you know, of different kinds, then, spots, and blemishes, will appear, here and there, which, would never, have been the case, if the material, had been kept, unadulterated.

For instance, a silversmith, will tell at a glance, if a, certain vessel is, silver, if it is, pure, or if, there is, admixture, an admixture, of other metal, with it.

[15 : 06] His expert eye, will pick out, the blemishes, in the vessel, that is mixed, with, something else. And again, it is easy to see, how this can, happen, in the life of a Christian, the life of a believer.

When that mind, or that life, when it imbibes, or when it practices, errors, and teachings, and principles, which are at variance, with the divine, revelation, then that life, becomes spotted, it becomes marred, it becomes weakened.

Sadly, error always, cancels out, the truth. Well-meaning, Christian people, are often deluded, into believing, that, if they go along, with, worldly principles, and worldly practices, then they will, influence their, worldly friends, in due course.

But tragically, the converse, is always true. It never happens, that when a believer, goes along, with the word, that it will, that he will, influence the world, rather, will the world, at length, influence, and overcome him.

And so the vessel, is marred. It is spoiled. Beware, lest any man spoil you, through these things. And then of course, when this happens, the, vessel will be impaired.

[16 : 32] It will impair, its usefulness. And it will, limit it, in many directions. The plated vessel, is never given, as you know, the place of honor, which is reserved, for, the pure vessel.

The solid silver, always has pride, of place, for instance, at the most, important functions. And it's, greatly admired. And how tragic, that, the solidity, of the gospel, of the grace of God, should ever be, impaired.

Or should ever be, marred, by the admixture, of error, in a believer's life. And when it is, its usefulness, will be, greatly impaired, in a vineyard.

It no longer, shines forth, as a, light, in a dark place. It no longer, attacks and draws, but rather, repels, and alienates. It no longer, it is no longer, letting its light, shine before men, so that men, may see, the light, that is there.

And so the great, burden of the apostle, is that, the people of God, at Colossae, the great, burden of the spirit, is that the people of God, in this age, and in every age, should not be spoiled, by these things, the admixture, of error, into their Christian, minds, and their Christian lives.

[18 : 01] He is anxious, that the vessels of grace, should be pure, that they should be entire, that they should remain, unspotted from the world, that they should not, be besmirched, and marred, by worthy elements, and by worldly principles, with whom they, rub shoulders, from day to day.

Beware, says the spirit, lest any man, spoil you, through these things, lest you are marred, by accepting, and swallowing, these things, which are contrary, to the gospel, and to the principles, of the gospel, this I say, is a great danger.

This is what we have to, guard ourselves against, just as much today, and more perhaps today, than ever before, in the history, of God's church, and of God's people.

Beware, lest any man, spoil you, says the apostle, because, he goes on, you have a fullness, in Christ.

For in him dwelleth, all the fullness, of the Godhead bodily. And this fullness, is yours. Why should you seek, more than you have?

[19 : 16] In him dwelleth, all the fullness, of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete, in him. That is, if the apostle, the very nature, and the essence of, God, is found in him.

There is, as we know, of course, a presence of, Godhead, in the holy angels, in redeemed men, in glorified saints. But all these dwellings, they fall far short, of what is asserted here, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Godhead dwells, in him, personally, and uniquely. In them, it dwells in regard, to, assistance, and energy, we receive, out of his fullness, and grace, for grace.

He, the Lord Jesus Christ, he is that fullness. He is the, he is not only, partaker, of the divine, nature, but the very Godhead, dwells, in him.

And so, we have, in Christ, says the apostle here, a fullness, of, divine, righteousness. Why, should we look around, for anything, to, augment, or to supplement, what we have in Christ?

[20 : 31] Christ. And you are a, splendid, in this righteousness, says scripture. The righteousness, which he imputes, to his people, is a righteousness, of God himself.

And that is something, of his total, that is, full, to overflowing. That I may, win Christ, says Paul, in Philippians chapter 3. That I may, win Christ, and be found, in him, not having, my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that, which is through, the faith of Christ.

The righteousness, which is of God, by faith. And on the basis, of this, there, is no condemnation, to those, who are in Christ.

They have been justified, by God. God, is well pleased, with them. They have been accepted, in the beloved. They are clothed, completely, clothed, with the righteousness, of Jesus Christ.

They have the fullness, of his righteousness, imputed to them. It's also, of course, of a fullness, of divine knowledge. We have all, that, knowledge, to desire, in the Lord Jesus Christ, because, he, is the wisdom of God, as well as, the power of God.

[21 : 52] And in him, are hid all, the treasures, of wisdom, and knowledge, as the apostle says here, in verse 3. And as he, says in, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, at verse 30, he is, made, wisdom, to us.

He is made, unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. and therefore, he, cautions, the Colossian believers, in chapter 3, at verse 16, and says to them, let the word of Christ, dwell in you, richly, in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing, one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, with grace, in your heart, to the Lord.

There is his fullness, of divine, of divine knowledge, given to you, in and through, the Lord Jesus Christ. But you have also, he, says here, a fullness, of divine grace, in Christ.

There was never a time, when, there wasn't a fullness, of grace, in the Godhead. God is the God, of all grace. And we know, that from the commencement, of time, there was never a moment, when God was not, projecting his grace, into the human being.

His works of creation, and providence, they are, works of grace. They are manifestations, of the marvels, of the grace of God. But there came a time, when, that grace, was uniquely, and magnificently, projected, in the work, and in the person, of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 36] In the fullness, of God's time, the fullness, of God's grace, was seen in the world. And when, by the grace of God, a man, a person, comes, to, know, Christ, in his own soul, he is made, possessor, he is made, a recipient, of this grace, of the fullness, of this grace.

Why should he, seek more, beware, lest any man, spoil you, for yours, is the fullness, of Christ. And of course, it speaks of a fullness, of divine love.

As God is, and always has been, and always will be, the God of grace, the God of all grace, so he is, supremely, and superbly, the God of love, the God of all love.

and as he has been, projecting, his grace, in the world, of nature, of providence, and the gospel, so he has been, projecting his love, for behind, every divine activity, there stands, the divine love.

And there came, a time also, when, the fullness, of that love, was displayed, in the world, and to the world, there came a day, when the day, spring from heaven, visited the church, and visited the people, of God, in the person, of the Savior, when, there was, beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten, of the Father, full of grace, and of truth.

[25 : 12] And those, who have come, into, vital contact, with him, they have come, love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, so that they might be, filled, with all the fullness, of God.

Beware then, lest any man, spoil you, through things, that are, that may be, in themselves, in their own realm, well enough, but, when, a man, seeks, to, bring them, so as to, improve, what he has, in Christ, they are, positively, harmful, and, spoil him.

Beware, lest any man, spoil you, because, yours is a fool, in Christ, and you are, completely, says, in him. You have, everything, in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Why then, should you spoil, that which you have, because, of that completeness, which is yours, in the Lord, Jesus Christ? For one thing, your salvation, is complete, in essence, and in substance, it is complete, in its essential properties, it is now, as complete, and as perfect, as it will be, in heaven.

Its outworking, life, of course, has yet to be accomplished. You are to work out, your own salvation, with fear, and trembling, knowing that it is God, who works in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure.

[26 : 46] You are to, press on, day by day, to the mark, for the price, of the high calling, of God, in Christ Jesus. You are to, crucify the old man, with his affections, and lust.

But you see, so far, as adding, anything, to your salvation, that is altogether, preposterous, because that salvation, is gloriously complete. And of course, this was the, particular problem, at Colossae, the salvation, which Christ, procured, in the estimation, of certain, false teachers, in Colossae, that salvation, wasn't a complete salvation, and so it had to be, improved upon.

And because it wasn't, a complete salvation, his people, weren't completing him. This was essentially, the error, that was, being taught. And over against this, the apostle, by the spirit says, you have a fullness.

You have, a fullness in Christ, and you are complete, in that fullness. Your salvation, is complete. It cannot be added to. It is as, wonderfully, full, and complete, and finished, now, as it ever will be, throughout eternity.

Your salvation, is complete. And your justification, is complete, because it is God wrought, and it is God bestowed. It is a, judicial act, undertaken by, the judge, of all the earth, and it is an act, that has, solidity, and right, and justice, on its side.

[28 : 24] There is no, there is no, unrighteousness, in God, or with God. You can, He cannot, and He will not, clear the guilty, except on the basis, of His law, being magnified, and justice, being satisfied.

But there is now, no condemnation, to them, which are in Christ Jesus, to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, because God, has justified them, by His grace.

There is no, condemnation, for them, who are, in Jesus. This is a measure, of your justification. You will never, be more justified, throughout eternity, than you are, at this moment.

Your justification, is total, and it is complete, because you are, complete, in Jesus Christ, out of whose, fullness, you have, received. And what is more, your personality, is complete, for this is a, fulfilling, and a completing, of a sinner's, personality, to be found, in Jesus Christ, and not having,

his own, righteousness.

It is to be, united, to Jesus. It is to be, rooted, and grounded, in Him. Apart from this, my friend, the personality, of the sinner, is incomplete, because it is, isolated, from its, true element.

[29 : 55] element, its true element, being, God, himself. It is, alienated, from the head, of all, principality, and power. It is far off.

It is, cut off. It exists, under a perpetual, state of condemnation, and wrath. But our being, in Him, being, in Christ, your personality, along with, everything else, is gloriously, complete.

For it is, submerged, in its true, and in its, proper element. And that personality, stands in a, proper, once and, once and for all, stands in a, proper and, saving relationship, in a, reconciled relationship, to the God, who at one time, was, alienated, from it.

And so then, this is the, basis, of the, the thrust, if you will, of the teaching, of the apostle, of the teaching, of the spirit, to yourself, and to myself, as well as, to the Colossians, in those, far off days. Beware, lest you are spoiled. Beware, against the, principles, and the practices, that endeavor, to spoil, what you have.

[31 : 10] This is the work, of the great spoiler, of our souls, of Satan. This is what he is, constantly, seeking to do, to subvert, what the Christian, what the believer, has, in Christ.

The completeness, and the totality, of that work, which he has. The glory, and the wonder, of that, which has, taken place, in him. And it is against this, that, we are cautioned, it is, and it is when we are, watchful, and prayerful, that we shall give, a proper place, to this cautionary, word of, the spirit of God, as it is speaking, to us here, it is when we are, eyeing ourselves, and watching our goings, and watching our thinking, watching our conduct, and praying, that by the grace of God, we might be kept, close to Christ.

There is only one, safe place, for the believer, and that is in, near, in close, proximity, to Jesus Christ, every day he lives, the closer your walk, is to Christ, the safer you will be, my friend, against the spoilers, of your life, and the spoilers, of your soul, and the more, you realize this, and the more, you will realize, the importance, of the caution, beware, lest any man, spoil you, for the spoilers, are on every hand, seeking to subvert, and seeking to mar, and seeking to besmirch, that beauty, which ought to, be in you, as one, who professes, to be a follower, and a lover, of the Lord, Jesus Christ, may God, by his spirit, enable us, to watch and pray, lest we fall, into the trap, of the evil one, amen, shall we unite in prayer.

O Lord, O God, we bless thee, that thou, that thou, that so graciously, and condescendingly, speak to us, in thy word, and we pray, that we may heed, the caution, the cautionary, words, of the Holy Spirit, as they come to us, through the, infallible, page of truth, Lord, give us to recognize, that we have, spoilers, meeting with us, and attacking us, on every hand, may we be kept, by the grace, and the power of Christ, and may we be drawn, closer, into closer, proximity to him, in soul fellowship, as we go, on our way, through this, dangerous, pilgrimage, and this world, we pray, thy blessings, to accompany, thy word, as we have sought, O God, to meditate upon it, may we be given, to receive it, into our hearts, and to practice it, day by day, in our living, seal it, to our consciences, with power, so that it may, produce in us, fruit that would be, unto holiness, and the end, life everlasting, go with us, and remain with us, during the day, come forth, into our midst, again in the evening, and make thy glory, known, as we gather round, thy word, and all that we ask, with the pardon of sin, we ask it in Jesus name, and for his sake,
Amen.