

Rooted in Christ So We Won't Be Deceived

Message 2 of 4 in the series "Rooted"

A. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Colosse, Turkey encouraging them to stay rooted in Christ so they wouldn't be deceived by clever arguments.

"I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. **I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself.** In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments.** For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong. And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. **Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him.** Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." Colossians 2:1-7 (NLT)

WARNING: The devil will ensure that there will always be false teachers with clever arguments tempting us to root our faith in things other than a personal relationship with Jesus. "...Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that **his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.** In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve."

2 Corinthians 11:14b-15 (NLT)

Life Application: To stay rooted in Christ, we need to use the Bible as our guide in all matters of faith and practice. **"But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true,** for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.** It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NLT)

B. The deceptive arguments Paul warned the Colossians about are still deceiving people today.

1. We must not be deceived by clever arguments promoting humanism.

"Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and **high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.** For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority." Colossians 2:8-10 (NLT)

Humanism = the belief that humans have the ability and responsibility, without any divine assistance, to live ethical, fulfilling lives and by working together we will be able to solve our world's problems.

Note: Humanism won't work because we are all sinful and fallen. "No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one... They rush to commit murder. Destruction and misery always follow them. They don't know where to find peace." Romans 3:10b-12 & 15-17 (NLT)

Note: Our ONLY hope is Jesus! "I am the light of the world. **If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness,** because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12b (NLT)

2. We must not be deceived by clever arguments promoting legalism.

"So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality." Colossians 2:16-17 (NLT)

"Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead. They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth."

1 Timothy 4:1-3 (NLT)

Note: Strictly observing religious rules or severely denying ourselves pleasure/comfort will never purge sinful desires of our hearts. “You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, ‘Don’t handle! Don’t taste! Don’t touch!’? Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. **These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires.**” Colossians 2:20-23 (NLT)

Note: Only the Holy Spirit can change us from the inside out. “And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. **And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.**” Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT)

3. We must not be deceived by clever arguments promoting mysticism.

“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.” Colossians 2:18-19 (NIV)

Note: We don’t worship angels because they are fellow servants of God who worship Him just like we do. “...I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said, ‘No, **don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!**’” Revelation 22:8b-9 (NLT)

Note: We have a personal relationship with Jesus, so we don’t need special insights from angels. “I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. **In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**” Colossians 2:2b-3 (NLT)

Note: Jesus disarmed and publicly shamed Satan, our accuser, at the cross. “You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, **he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.**” Colossians 2:13-15 (NLT)

“Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself... And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.” Romans 8:33 & 38 (NLT)

Life Application: “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

Read Colossians 2:1-7, and then discuss the following questions:

1. Have you ever been scammed by a clever salesperson or a deceptive ad? If so, how did it make you feel? What have you done to keep yourself from being tricked again?
2. Who is a person you’d describe as a Christian whose life is rooted in Christ and built on Him. What makes you say this? (Colossians 2:7)
3. What do you think Paul meant when he said that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness? (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)
4. Why will knowing what the Bible says keep us from being tricked by the devil? (2 Timothy 3:14-17, Acts 17:11, 2 Corinthians 10:4-6)

5. What's wrong with adding the following philosophies/religious practices to our Christian faith?
 - Humanism – The belief that humans have the ability and responsibility, without any divine assistance, to live ethical, fulfilling lives and by working together we will be able to solve our world's problems. (Colossians 2:8-10, Romans 1:18-32, John 3:16-17)
 - Legalism – The belief that we can purge sinful desires from our hearts and earn God's favor by strictly observing religious rules and severely denying ourselves pleasure/comfort. (Colossians 2:16-17 & 20-23, 1 Timothy 4:1-3, Ezekiel 36:26-27)
 - Mysticism – The belief that we need higher knowledge/special spiritual insight that can only be gained through worshiping angels and/or secret practices. (Colossians 2:18-19, Revelation 5:11-12 & 22:8-9)
6. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus disarmed and publicly shamed Satan, our accuser, at the cross? (Colossians 2:15-18, Romans 8:33-38)
7. Discuss the following quote from George Barna, cofounder of the Cultural Research Center:

“Americans embrace points of view or actions that feel comfortable or most convenient. Those beliefs and behaviors are often inconsistent, or even contradictory, but few Americans seemed troubled by that.”