

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

December 23, 2020

Colossians 2:16-19

Let No Man Judge

In referencing the passage just prior to today's we see that Christ has blotted out the restraints of the law as well as the power of evil. Today we move forward to address what sadly follows these wonderful benefits. Why is it that when we gain freedom in life someone lies in wait to judge and condemn us? Human nature never takes a holiday. The short list of censured items in verse 16 could easily be expanded to an exhaustive document. Seriously, we can judge one another in a myriad of ways, from what we watch to where we go or don't go to who we associate with and to what our hobbies are! Paul keeps it simple though. Food, drink and observance of days. He tells us elsewhere that all things are blessed by God and we are free to enjoy. 1 Corinthians 10:31, Genesis 1:29, 1 Timothy 4:4. The caveat to this though is that we must be cautious not to let our freedom cause others to stumble. Paul digs deep into this in Romans 14. Take time to understand it and stop judging others! The focus of verse 16 is that since we have been set free from the power of the law and that of demonic forces we must fend off the ignorance of meddling brothers or sisters. Ok that's a bit harsh but as he had claimed we will stand before Christ Himself, not our Christian siblings. We may believe we must keep the law and banish spirits while still acknowledging that Jesus did all the fulfilling and conquering. Why should anyone assume the right to feel obliged to correct us? Enjoy your freedom while respecting that of others! It seems from verse 17 that any food, drink or holy day that we decide to include in a religious observance is meant in some way to inspire us in our remembrance or worship of our Savior. All of which will one day pass on when we finally fellowship with Him personally. 2 Corinthians 5:6-9, 1 Corinthians 13:10-12.

Verse 18.... Grab your shovel.....

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

To beguile is the Greek word, *katabrabeuō*, to lay down an award of arbitration. The idea here is that a self imposed judge will hear your case as it were and then pronounce the level at which you are entitled to salvation and perhaps even just how saved you are! Audacity! The 'reward' here is the same word used to quantify that judgment. The phrase "voluntary humility" can be rendered as being "oh so happy to offer a contrite opinion". What we're seeing here is someone, who in feigned or false humility, seeks to straighten you out on what they perceive to be a mistake in your worship. Picture this...."oh my friend, it is so sad that you don't know that you shouldn't celibate Christmas. It's not really Jesus' birthday and was originally a pagan holiday". All of that might be true but this simple minded person is implying they know your motive and heart condition. Here's the crux. The sincerity of your worship can only be judged by God alone Who knows your heart and its motives. No one else has that ability or right! In fact this verse goes on to imply that it is their own worshipping of angels (read; listening to demons) that compels them to correct you. Understand this. It is in no way wrong to debate the origins of the use of food, drink or holiday's. It is wrong to condemn others who truly worship God even if we disagree on how. Look back to the debates on circumcision, baptism and the Lord's supper. Oh the time we waste on attacking fellow Christians! Please stop! Paul finishes this verse

claiming intrusion. The Greek calls this 'embateuō' which is a reference to mythological gods interfering with the outcome of ancient sporting events. Interesting, yes? Do you ever pray for your Yankees to beat the Mets? Or your candidate to beat mine? Hmmm. Pray for God's will and how you can line up with Him. How much worse for someone to intrude on your worship! Remember to speak truth in love not in false humility. Consider Ephesians 4:14-15. We are blessed to correct others in error (James 5:19-20) but never to judge their motives. Proverbs 16:2, John 7:24. Finally let's peruse the depths of the "fleshly mind". Sarx nous in the Greek. This flesh is the meat stripped of the skin and the mind speaks of the thoughts, feelings and will within the intellect. We can understand this to be the deepest natural, animal instincts stripped of any covering. The uncovered mind operates in the ignorance of social or moral restraint. The vain, deceptive people we are warned of in verse 18 must be quickly discerned and disarmed. We are but weak sheep for the most part and the job of the spiritual person is be vigilant and responsive to these abuses of godliness. Stand up for others. Think right. Do right. Be right. Please!