Rules That Kill Christian Freedom April 7, 2024

*1 Timothy 3:14-4:5 Series: How the Church Falls off the Rails*

You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the play and the opera. – G. K. Chesterton

Intro: It all started with a sermon on Matthew 10:9

1. Godliness isn’t a race to see who can sacrifice the most
2. Faith calls for a life that glorifies God

vv. 14-15 *I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in* *the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth*

Matthew 7:21 *Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

Romans 1:5 *we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith*

1. Adding rules to the Bible is a rejection of the Bible

v. 1 *the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*

v. 2 *the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared*

v. 3 *who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods*

Colossians 2:23 *These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.*

1 Corinthians 4:6 *learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up*

* When you first came to faith, how clear was it to you that there was a way “one ought to behave in the household of God”? What did you think that way was?
* Why is it tempting for Christians to add rules to the Bible and forbid things that God allows?

1. Godliness is about responding to God with gratitude
2. Life becomes a gift to the person who knows the Giver

v. 3 *marriage and … foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving*

v. 4 *everything created by God is good*

v. 4 *nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1. All of life becomes holy when you see it through God’s eyes

v. 5 *for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer*

Romans 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

1 Peter 2:5 *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*

* How does the fact that God created marriage, food, and even sexuality change the way that we see them?
* How can we give thanks in all circumstances? Why is that important?
* How do you make things *“holy by the word of God and prayer”*?

1. Godliness is about embracing and following Jesus
2. Jesus makes godliness possible

v. 16 *Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness*

1 Corinthians 1:30 *because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption*

Galatians 5:24 *those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*

1. Jesus showed how to live in the world and not be corrupted by it

v. 16 *He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit*

Philippians 2:8-9 *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name …*

1. Jesus offers the hope that is the motivation for godliness

v. 16 *seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory*

Luke 2:13-14 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

Luke 24:51 *While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.*

* In what sense was godliness a mystery to old covenant believers?
* How does Jesus becoming a man give dignity to the world?
* How does Jesus’ vindication and resurrection motivate our pursuit of holiness?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 1 Timothy 4:6-16

Notes