Jesus vs. Judgment? July 31, 2022

*Colossians 2:16-23 Series: Jesus: Underestimated*

My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. – Martin Luther

Intro: Unity with the world vs. conformity to Christ

1. Don’t be judged by anything that doesn’t honour Jesus
2. Stand firm in the face of the judgment of people

v. 16a *Therefore let no one pass judgment on you …*

Colossians 2:13 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses …*

Colossians 2:15 *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

1. The world’s judgement will weaponize morality and religion

v. 16b *in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath*

Galatians 1:9 *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

1. You are free because Jesus alone defines our faith and practice

v. 17 *These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Galatians 5:1 *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

* What has Jesus done that allows us to stand firm in the face of people’s judgment? (See Colossians 2:9-15)
* What are ways in which individuals, groups, or systems seek to use moral arguments or religious language against Christians?
* Why is it freeing to know that the substance of religion “belongs” to Jesus (v. 17)?

1. Don’t be judged by anything that doesn’t come from Jesus
2. Judgment might come from the uber-religious

v. 18a *Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions …*

1. Evaluate moral and religious claims against the Bible

vv. 18b-19a *puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head*

1 Thessalonians 5:21 … *but test everything; hold fast what is good.*

Acts 17:11 *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*

1. You are free because Jesus alone provides spiritual growth

v. 19b … *from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*

Luke 17:5 *The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”*

* How can you tell the difference between helpful advice from a mature Christian and unhelpful judgment from an uber-religious person?
* Why is it freeing to know that spiritual growth comes from God through Jesus alone?
* How can you seek this “growth that is from God” (v. 19)?

1. Don’t be judged by anything that doesn’t help like Jesus
2. Freedom from the world is freedom to follow Jesus

vv. 20-22 *If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?*

1. Living according to the world’s judgment hinders you

v. 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. Living according to God’s judgment helps you

Psalm 18:30 *This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.*

Psalm 119:1 *Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!*

1. You are free because Jesus alone saves you

* John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*
* Are pressure and judgment always bad things? What is the difference between good and bad forms of pressure?
* What are some of the good and helpful things that God calls us to do?
* How is the truth that God alone is Judge good news to some and bad news to others?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Colossians 3:1-17

Notes