

Session 7: JOINT

Colossians 2 v 16-23—You have Jesus

Big idea:

Do not be taken in by the lies the world tells about having to *do* things to please God. Stay connected to Christ, the head—in him we will grow.

Guidance on questions:

1. Paul reminds them that Jesus is fully God.

He also reminds them that they had been dead in their sins, and had now been raised with Christ. And that their sin had been fully forgiven by Jesus. Jesus has triumphed over all powers and authorities.

2. Don't let anyone judge you, by what you eat or drink or how you celebrate festivals or Sabbaths.

3. As a shadow of the things to come. The reality is found in Jesus.

4. Now Jesus had come, he was the reality, so they no longer needed to look back to the past. They could see everything through Jesus, who had saved them and forgiven them.

5.

- *People who may try to disqualify them for the prize* by making the Colossians feel like failures.
- *People who delight in false humility*—this is sometimes translated as asceticism (abstaining from worldly pleasures with aim of leading a more godly lifestyle). So maybe people don't indulge in things of enjoyment, of luxury or rest, as they think it makes them more holy (they've lost sight of Jesus).
- *People who worship angels*—this is a tricky one to explain; there are different ideas. It could be describing the way that people were worshipping. People who thought they were joining with the angels, and worshipping in a very spiritual and uplifting way, and therefore making other people whose worship was more simple (trusting in Jesus, loving him and looking forward to heaven) seem lame in comparison.
- *People who describe in great detail what they see*—this is also tricky to understand. Paul is probably talking about people who have had “visionary experiences” that make them intimidating to others. This isn't to say that these can't/don't happen. But that if you're a Christian who hasn't/doesn't, you mustn't let these people intimidate you and feel like you don't qualify for the prize.
- *People who are puffed up with idle notions* by their unspiritual minds. (The ESV reads: “puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind”). Another way to describe these people is arrogant—they appear humble, but it's false humility.

None of the the things they're doing or experiencing give them any reason to be puffed up—it's an idle notion. The Christian life is all about Jesus. But for this person, who seems so super holy—his behaviour comes from his sensuous mind/unspiritual mind—it's all from the flesh. It's worldly and not godly at all.

Beware of those who look super-holy/spiritual however they express it—unless it's rooted in Jesus, it's not good, even dangerous.

6. He's worried that they might be disqualified for the prize (see Jargon buster).

7. They might disqualify them by making them feel that they're not good enough, not spiritual enough, not holy enough as Christians—so that they give up.

8. He's puffed up, thinks he's more important than he is, but most importantly, he's lost connection with the Head—with Christ. So it's become all about that person, rather than all about Jesus. Colossians 1 v 18 showed us that Christ is the head of the body.

9. We're part of the body, that is supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, growing as God causes it to grow. *God* makes us grow—not other people.

10. Because it's all about Jesus, not other humans. We shouldn't compare ourselves to other people, to other Christians—but look to Christ. If we look to Christ, and keep trusting him, we will never be disqualified from the prize.

11. The Colossians died with Christ.

12. If you died with Christ, and are free to live for him, why do you keep trying to live by rules?

13. These rules are related to earthly things that won't last. They're based on human commands and teaching. They appear wise, but they can't restrain sensual indulgence. Rules might change behaviour for a time, but they don't change our heart attitude.

14. You might think your language is better, that you're more regularly at church, you know that you read your Bible more, or read other Christian books. You don't watch certificate18 films, mostly listen to Christian music—and this makes you Ok.

or

You might worry that other people live a better life than you, find it easier to live as the Bible says, seem better at sharing faith etc... so you feel like a lesser Christian.