



ISSUE

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# Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF  
THE OL-  
SEN PARK  
CHURCH OF  
CHRIST

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

## Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## “Beware Lest Anyone Cheat You”

By Kyle Pope

We all have questions: Why am I here? What is life all about? Does anyone care about me? What happens when we die? Is there a God? How can I find happiness and meaning in life? To answer these questions people can look to themselves, look to others (who have no better insight into these questions than we do), or look to God. In Colossians 2:8-15, Paul makes the case that the only true source to answer the questions of life is Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that this is true for two reasons: Who Jesus is and what He can do for us.

I. **“Beware lest anyone cheat you”** (vs. 8a). We must recognize that it is possible to be cheated out of what God offers to us. We can be robbed of the answers He gives us if we look in the wrong places for answers. Paul explains we can be robbed. . .

**“Through philosophy and empty deceit”** (vs. 8b). The word *philosophy* literally means “love of wisdom.” It is a good thing to love wisdom. The problem comes when we love wisdom from the wrong source. Wisdom from God recognizes the awesome nature of God. Job asked, **“From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?”** (Job 28:20) He then explained, **“God understands its way, and He knows its place”** it is **“the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding”** (Job 28:23, 28). We can look everywhere and yet miss the path to wisdom if we don’t start with God. Earthly wisdom can be **“empty”** or **“vain”**

(KJV, ASV), “deceit,” i.e., it is meaningless or worthless.

**“According to the tradition of men”** (vs. 8c). Looking to what man does and says for answers is fine if it concerns things over which man has power. For example, the Bible doesn’t explain how to operate a computer, a smartphone, or a car. These things were created by man, so a guide written by man can explain them. It is different if we look to man for answers in areas outside of man’s control. That is *meaningless deception*. There are many books written on all of the questions we posed at the beginning of this study. If they look to the Bible as their source, they may have some value. If they look to man as their source the best they can offer is a view of someone else’s questioning. If they presume to answer questions outside of man’s control, they are deception. Paul warned the Thesalonians to guard against the **“working of Satan”** and his **“lying wonders”** which captivate souls **“with all unrighteous deception among**

**those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved”** (2 Thess. 2:9-10). Only a love for the truth will spare us from this unrighteous deception.

**“According to the basic principles of the world”** (vs. 8d). This is simply looking to what the world seems to offer. Many try to find wholly naturalistic explanations about the origins of the universe. Trying to explain the origins of the universe by what can be seen is like trying to write a biography of Alexander Graham Bell by looking at a telephone. Why couldn’t we do that? First, because telephones are different than when they were first created. Second, because observing how something functions doesn’t answer all the questions about how it was put together. Looking to the **“basic principles of the world”** will not answer the questions we need answered about life. We can’t look at the universe and determine: Why am I here? What is life all about? Does anyone care about me? What happens when we die? Is there a God? How can I find happiness and meaning in life? In Romans 1:18-20, Paul describes some things we can learn from nature. He explains that what **“may be known”** (v. 19) about God apart from revelation is demonstrated in **“things that are made”** (v. 20b). What does it reveal? **“His invisible attributes”** (v. 20a). What attributes? First, **“His eternal power”** (v. 20c). Any Power great enough to begin the universe had to precede that beginning, with a nature that is **“eternal.”** Second, it reveals His **“godhead”** (v. 20d). A force that created intelligent beings could not be an impersonal force like gravity. It must be an intelligent divine God! These are valuable realizations, but they are limited without revelation from this God of eternal power. Looking to this alone could cheat us if our answers leave Christ out of the picture. Paul continues:

**“And not according to Christ”** (vs. 8e). Drawing any answers to life’s questions that do not look to Christ will cheat us of what God has for us because of who He is and what He can do for us. Who is He? Paul explains this as he continues.

**II. “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”** (vs. 9). Jesus is God. Why is it such a serious error for

religious groups to come along and say, “We like Jesus; He is a good teacher, a good prophet, a good man, a wise leader, but not God!” It is an error because it nullifies everything that He has to offer if He is not everything that the Bible presents Him to be. The Hebrew writer explained that God, **“has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds”** (Heb. 1:2). Jesus is God. He made us. He is our creator, so He knows how we function. Only if this is true can He be a source for answers that are beyond our power. Only then can He do for us what we truly need. Paul goes on to explain what Jesus can do for us.

**III. “And you are complete in Him”** (vs. 10a). The word **“complete”** in Greek is the word *pleroō*, meaning “to make full, to fill up” (Thayer). Some years ago there was a line in a popular movie in which the leading man was trying to win the leading lady and told her passionately “you complete me!” That is a moving sentiment. That is a touching claim. All of us have something missing in us, but it can’t be filled up by things or people or by accomplishments. It can only be filled by Jesus! Why is this? Paul explains further:

**“Who is the head of all principality and power”** (vs. 10b). If Jesus is head over every dominion and every power, He can offer solutions to those things over which we are powerless. Take, for example, death. We live in an age in which we can count DNA sequences, calculate the distance to stars, split an atom, create microprocessors that can hold entire libraries in the palm of our hand—but we can do nothing to undo death! The Hebrew writer explains the victory Jesus attained over death. In experiencing the **“suffering of death”** He was able to **“taste death for everyone”** (Heb. 2:9). Jesus, **“through death”** was able to **“destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil”** (Heb. 2:14). This answers a problem over which

man is helpless and delivers us from the **“fear of death”** (Heb. 2:15). Who should I listen to when it comes to questions about death? Jesus! How does He make one **“complete”**? Paul illustrates this by considering what has happened to the Christian.

**“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands”** (vs. 11a). Circumcision was that covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants that involved cutting off the foreskin (Gen. 17:10). It was done with hands. Paul speaks here of a change that happens that affects man on the inside.

**“By putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ”** (vs. 11b). There is a means by which God offers that doesn’t cut off the foreskin of the flesh but *puts off* the sins of the flesh. Here it is described as a type of circumcision. How is this accomplished?

**“Buried with Him in baptism”** (vs. 12a). This is either describing baptism as

a type of circumcision or the whole process of conversion as the **“circumcision of Christ.”** Paul would not include baptism here is baptism was not considered a part of this circumcision. Paul himself was told, **“Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16b). Someone might argue, “Baptism is done with hands!” Yes, but what God does *for us* in baptism, is not done by our hands but by what God does *to us* when we put our faith in Christ and obey His commands. Peter wrote, **“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”** (1 Pet. 3:21, NASB).

**“In which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God”** (vs.

12b). In baptism a person is buried with Christ and raised with Christ. This is **“through faith”** in what Christ has done and can do for us. What God accomplished in the cross shows what God will do for us. We trust in the God. . .

**“Who raised Him from the dead”** (vs. 12c). The resurrection of Christ is the sign of Christ’s victory over death. Our faith in what God did for us in Christ binds us to the hope that we have for our own resurrection and salvation. Why is a spiritual resurrection in baptism necessary? Because, in sin we were spiritually dead. Paul explains:

**“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh He has made alive together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses”** (vs. 13). The soul who sins is separated from God. The soul who is made complete in Christ **“He has made alive.”** The Christian is born again—not physically but spiritually. This spiritual rebirth means that God has **“forgiven you all trespasses.”** No longer must sin separate us from God. It is washed away by the blood of Christ. But if we have not been **“buried with Him in baptism”** (v. 12) we have not been **“made alive together with Him.”** Unless our sins are forgiven, we are still dead.

Where are you looking for answers to the questions of life? Don’t let anyone cheat you! Only Christ provides the answers we need. Be complete in Him who offers what no one else can..

