

For some of us, once we begin something, we cannot rest until that project's completed, and then, once it's done, it's done, and we're ready to move onto the next thing...

Now, folk who operate that sorta way, cannot understand "the other type of person" – the procrastinator – The one who might begin a project and never finish it...

So,:

- *a lady might have 4 different cross-stitches on the go (all at once, and none of them are finished); or*
- *you might build a new garden bed, but you never get around to finishing the watering system; or*
- *you might build a shed, but for some reason, you never get around to putting the gutters on (flashing);*

Am I describing anyone yet??? If so, you might be what we call, a "Procrastinator"... ("I **will** get around to it",,, but somehow, it never gets finished...)

Or maybe you might be the opposite of that – you might be the person who:

- when you start a cross-stitch, you stick at it, until it's finished. And then you'll consider starting another one; or
- you might be reluctant to even **begin** to build the garden bed today, because you know you mightn't have time to finish it this afternoon, and you know it'll 'drive you nuts' if it's only half-done...; or

- when **you** build a shed, you made sure the **tanks** were on-site, because it would be so annoying for the shed to be built and the gutters are on, but the downpipes aren't yet connected to a tank...

Am I describing anyone now??? That's me (I hate leaving things half-done)...

Now, Being a Christian,,, – it's not a project we begin, achieve, and move on. Nor is it something we can leave half-done for that matter...

'Becoming a Christian' **isn't** like achieving a qualification ("Right, I've become a Christian – I've ticked that box – I'm good for eternity. So now I can move on to my next life-goal").

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ, is a way of life.

Paul said: ⁶ **Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him...**

And he gives us a string of mixed metaphors to show us that that's like:

- We're **walking** in Christ like we're journeying with Him; but
- (in Christ) we're **rooted** like a tree that can stand firm in Christ, and draw nourishment from Him;
- (in Christ) we're being **built up** like a house that's still being constructed; and

- we are **established** (or confirmed and settled) [in our faith] like a solid legal document, that cannot be misunderstood; and
- our thanks giving to God is in **abundance** (like a cup running over), because gratitude to God, is a key trait of being a disciple of Jesus....

Being a Christian (you see), isn't merely a concept we've agreed to – it's a way of life. It's a way of life we embrace/committed to, because our **old** life is crucified with Christ/buried with Christ, and God has made us **alive**, together, with Him, in this new life.

Is that sounding familiar at all???

Last week, we had a combined service with RiverLife CofC, and they were up to Romans 6, so that's what I preached on... And last week's message is so similar to what we read today (talking about being baptised into the death and into the resurrection of Christ.).

Now, Colossians, is unashamedly about Christ. Back in Chapter 1, we encountered:

- the grandeur of Christ; and
- the pre-eminence of Christ... ;
- He's No.1 – there is no other before Him
no other above Him;
- creator of the world;
- sustainer of all things...

And the death and resurrection of our Lord, is the **centrepiece** of the Christian faith, and it's central to **our** faith – completely, because we enter into it (baptised into His death and resurrection)...

Now, when it comes to our faith in Christ, it's important (for every Christian) to be aware, that there's always going to be pressure on us, to add something extra to our faith, and we need to **resist** those pressures, because Christ is **everything** – He's everything we need... And that's what Paul alerts us to today...

V⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit....

The word “philosophy” literally means “love of wisdom”... And when we're talking about Godly wisdom, that's a **really** good thing.

Proverbs 3: (ESV)

¹³ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who gets understanding,
¹⁴ for the gain from her is better than gain from
silver
and her profit better than gold.

James 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Godly wisdom, is a wondrous blessing, and to love Godly wisdom, is something we should do...

But worldly wisdom' – well, that's a different matter.

In the Greek, V8 would be better understood like this: ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by [empty and deceptive] philosophy.... (The words "empty deceit", are really the description of the type of philosophy...)

Now, if "philosophy" (the love of wisdom) itself, isn't a 'bad thing', what kind of philosophy is **empty and deceptive**?....

Well, it's to do with the **source** (Where does our wisdom come from?) ...

The source of Godly wisdom, is **according to Christ**... The source of empty and deceptive philosophy, is "human tradition" and what Paul calls, "the elemental spirits of the world"...

Every single human-being on the face of this planet, has a 'world view', which impacts everything they think, do and

say... And how we think, is very much affected by what contributes to our world-view... Is our world-view shaped and formed according to Christ? Or is our world-view shaped by human tradition and the elemental spirits of the world?

Let me clarify what human traditions are: Human traditions are not “Old ways from a by-gone era”... Traditions are the accepted norms of our people-group, and those traditions will change, depending what people group we are in. e.g. the world-view of city folk and country folk, are very different... All these strange and weird ideas city folk have – we don’t understand them, and they don’t understand us...

But, “human traditions” are what we as a people (Australians):

- what we hold dear;
- the way we do things;
- what we value;

But the thing is, if our traditions haven’t been shaped according to Christ, what **has** shaped our traditions???

In my short life-time, I’ve observed, what many describe, as the decay of our society...

In years gone by, our historic values, were once shaped by a Christian world-view... But even in my short life-time, the human tradition of our society, has shifted significantly:

- I remember when pokies and casinos didn't exist in QLD. Now they're everywhere;
- The killing of unborn babies, is now not only legal, but it's very common;
- Brothels have been legalised;
- Homosexual behaviour used to be illegal. Now there's government programs to encourage its expression. And our nation has overwhelmingly voted to allow 2 men/women to marry;
- When it comes to gender, a boy used to be a boy, and a girl used to be a girl, but now, you decide what you want to be, and you can decide something else tomorrow, because now we're being told that 'gender is fluid'...
- And now... now we kill our old people, and the sick and dying...

Human traditions – the accepted norms of our people-group have changed significantly/exponentially, in such a very short time... How is that even possible??? I'll tell you how – human tradition (the accepted norms of our people-group) is influenced by the spirit world...

Human traditions are formed according to **the elemental spirits of the world** – demonic spirits – satanic powers...

When I was in high school, my best mate (at a SU ISCF camp) gave his life to Jesus.

And then, when he finished High School, he went shearing. And shearing out around Quilpie, of a night time there wasn't a lot to do, and so he started reading philosophy, and studying the philosophers (not normal for a shearer)... And during that time, the teaching of the philosophers was taking him away from his Christian faith.

And then he went to university and studied psychology, and his quest for wisdom, took him right away from Jesus.

I said "He gave his life to Jesus", well he took it right back again...

And now he's quite honest in that he says he's not a Christian... And it breaks my heart...

And for me, I think of Jack when I read this ⁸ "See to it that no one takes you captive by [empty and deceptive] philosophy....", because that's exactly what happened to him – he was taken captive by the thinking of man, and I don't think he yet realises, that what took him captive, is empty and deceptive...

And any (so called) wisdom that takes us away from Christ, is from the evil one.

And even some churches feel, "There's more to say than what the Bible says", and they start teaching philosophy (the thinking of man) from the pulpit. And when the biblical message doesn't line up with the accepted traditions of our

culture, do you know what they do??? They change the message, so that it **does** line up with the traditions of culture.

If you take this to the extreme, you end up with what they call “Progressive Christianity”...

This is what (so-called) progressive Christianity says:
They: *“Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey”ⁱ...*

They obviously didn’t read Colossians, because this is exactly what Paul is warning us about. **There is no other source**. The only Godly wisdom to be found, is found in Christ. ⁹ For in him **the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily**, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In Christ, is the **fulness** of God – everything of God, is found in Christ Jesus. And we, have been filled in Him – the Holy Spirit in us... The fullness of God is in Christ, and we can be filled with **all** Godliness through Christ...

There are no “diverse sources” of Godly wisdom – the only Godly wisdom, is from God Himself, and Christ is God Himself... All other religions/spiritualities/philosophies – they’re not “different paths to the same God” – they’re “deceitful diversions”, and they’ll only serve to take us away from God.”

Now, as we continue on (later on in this letter), it's going to become obvious that one of the human traditions that he's warning the Colossian church about, is getting caught up in Jewish religious cleanliness rules... and he sorta pre-empts this in V11, where he brings up "circumcision"...

You see, under the old covenant, circumcision was the sign that you belonged to the people of God. But in Christ, it's not a physical circumcision we have – it's a spiritual circumcision. Paul refers to it as **putting off the body of the flesh** .

And the reason he's telling them this, is because at one time, these people in Colossae, they didn't belong to the people of God. They weren't Jewish; They weren't circumcised... They were completely estranged from God; they worshipped other gods. But now, in Christ, through baptism, their old allegiances to false Gods, and human traditions and worldly wisdom has been put to death. And the power of God, who raised Jesus, has raised them (and us), to a new life in Christ.

But for that to happen, – there was a big problem – an enormous barrier, that needed to be dealt with — Sin...

There is a "**record of debt**" (you see) that stands against an unbeliever... That's horrifying...

I know some folk are horrified to think that their 'footprint' on the WWW is being tracked... Pretty much every web-site you visit, can be tracked... IP records and DNS records are kept,

for tracking purposes... But there's a much greater record of debt – it's a record of wrongdoing, and that record is kept in heaven.

On the Day of Judgment, there's 2 books that are going to be opened on that day – well actually, there's many books, and then there's the book of life. There's a book for every person who's ever lived. And Revelation 20:12 (ESV) ¹² **And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.**

That sounds terrifying, doesn't it... Every sin – every evil deed that we've ever done, is recorded...

But there's a second book, that'll also be opened that day – the Lamb's book of life. The saints – the holy ones of God – the saved – the redeemed – Christians – disciples of Jesus: have their names in that book, and we will be saved...

Revelation 20: (ESV) ¹⁵ **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

Did you know that when we repent of our sin, and call out for the mercy of God, and give our hearts to Jesus, everything in your book – every record of wrong, is rubbed out – it's erased... When you become a Christian, your name gets very carefully written into the register of heaven (The Lamb's Book of Life),,,

And the record of debt that stands against us, is cancelled, along with its legal demands – (What are its legal demands)??? The wages of sin is death/judgment. But that's all cancelled.

Every 'record of sin' in the book of a believer, rubbed out – it's nailed to the cross – And it's erased by the blood of Jesus...

And not only that, it is at the cross, that Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of evil. At the cross, Christ triumphed over Satan.

V¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

There is nothing to be added to our Christian faith by embracing worldly wisdom that originates from evil spirits... Christ has roundly trounced them. He's put them to open shame...

Isn't this an intriguing image:

The Cross was supposed to be the image of ultimate shame for Christ. He was stripped naked, and nailed to the cross for the whole world to mock and jeer... But the tables have been turned. And at the cross, Christ put His enemies to shame...

....

Today, in our society, there will be times when people mock you and mock your beliefs. They'll mock you because you hold **firmly** to Godly wisdom... And when that happens, the temptation's going to be, to "Add a bit of worldly wisdom, and you mightn't be mocked so much"... "Get with the times"...

But we will not be taken captive by hollow and deceptive worldly wisdom, because we know its point of origin – the evil one, is where that comes from. And we know that our shame (in the eyes of the world), although we might be shamed today, it will be turned to glory on the day of Jesus' coming,, because we know, that when Christ rose from the dead, the very ones who mock us now, were put to open shame...

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Where are you at with Jesus???

- Have You given your heart to Jesus???
- Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life?
- Has every record of your sin, been blotted out from your book?

Perhaps you might be ready to do that for the first time today. And if so, you come straight up to me after this service, and we'll pray together... (Bongeen, go to an Elder)

But for others, you might've been walking with Jesus for a while, but:

- Have you been just a little bit embarrassed, that the way of Christ doesn't line up with the ethics of the world???
 - Have you been embarrassed that the traditions of your people-group despise what you've been taught in Christ?
 - Are you under pressure, to add other wisdom (incompatible wisdom) to what you've learned in Christ???
- And perhaps that pressure might be coming from other people who you believe to be Christians...

It's a temptation for young and for old. Be aware of where this other source of wisdom originates – **the elemental spirits of the world**. It's not from Christ.

To finish, I think we'll finish on the opening verse:

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Christ is all we need.

Thankyou Jesus..

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,

You are completely sufficient.

How could you not be, when the fullness of God, is in
You.

Lord, forgive us for embracing other sources of wisdom.
Forgive us for when we've ever tried to add anything
other than Christ, to our faith.

And Lord,
help us to stand firm in You,
and to be built up in You.

And Lord, we pray for those whom we love,
who have been captured by hollow and deceptive
philosophy,
that's been dragging them away from You.
Lord, pull them back.
And help them to be content with the fulness of God in
Christ Jesus.

Father,
We thank You that on the cross,
You have erased our record of wrongs;
You've given us a clean slate;
And now, we have new life in Your Son.

Help us to walk in this newness of Life,
Always overflowing with thanksgiving.

in Christ Jesus, our Lord,

Amen.

ⁱ <https://progressivechristianity.org/the-8-points/>