

## A Christ centred reality

Have we ever heard the term “chasing shadows”? It means to chase something that isn’t real. It wastes our time on abstract ideas than reality. Imagine if someone fell in love with your shadow and not you! Every time you met he would stare at your shadow all the time. We’d consider that weird. Or if we’re on a trip and we never get to our destination because we develop a fascination with the signposts along the way.

This is what we’re like when we get side-tracked by following the law and legalism rather than developing a wholesome relationship with Jesus.

Colossians 2: 16 – 23

### 1) The shadow of the reality

- When we see “therefore” we need to ask ourselves what it’s there for.
- We have been set free from the legalism of the law and rooted in Christ and have our fullness in Him
- We therefore have the liberty to continue doing certain things and we have the liberty to stop doing them.
- Romans 14: 1 – 3 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling (passing judgement) over disputable matters. One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.
- There are matters that are indisputable that everyone needs to repent from and if they continue in those practices they are subject to discipline.
- However there are matters that are disputable:
  - Food: eating and drinking.
  - Religious festivals: Is it right or wrong to continue religious festivals?
    - Passover
    - Feast of the Tabernacles
    - Day of Atonement
    - Eid
    - Diwali
  - A Sabbath day. How should a Christian observe the Sabbath if at all?
  - Others are things such as circumcision, sacrifices.
- Whether we observe them or not we need to understand that these are all mere shadows of the reality which is Christ Himself.
- Galatians 3: 23 – 25 Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian (tutor; instructor; schoolmaster) until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.
  - If we live by the law we are living in relationship with the shadow and not the reality. We have a relationship with the signpost and not the destination.
  - The reality – the destination – is Christ.

### 2) A Christ centred reality

- Christ is all in all. The focus of our faith. Once we’ve met Him all else makes sense.
- In Him we find true humility
  - Though He knew that He was God He never used that to His advantage.
  - He humbly submitted to the will of the Father by being humiliated, suffering and dying on a cross as a criminal.

- He never utilised the legions of angels at His disposal to get out of it.
- He never walked around boasting that He was God in the flesh although He did make the claims within certain contexts.
- True humility follows in Jesus' footsteps
  - It accepts the will of God regardless of the cost.
  - True humility makes us see ourselves in the light of Christ.
  - True humility makes us accept ourselves for who we truly are knowing that God accepts us that way.
  - True humility acknowledges our strengths as much as our weaknesses but also acknowledges that they come from God and not ourselves.
- False humility has a religious appearance but focusses on the person and not on Christ.
  - It boasts about how well and how much they pray.
  - They want everyone to see how spiritual they are when they worship.
  - They want everyone to know how committed they are to their religion.
  - However they normally won't do anything that will cost them much.
  - It's all about them and not about Jesus
- In Him is found true worship where the worshippers of God can worship God in spirit and in truth.
  - People at that time worshipped angels.
  - When John bowed down to worship an angel the angel stopped him and told him to only worship God. (Revelation 22: 9)
  - It may not be an angel but if we worship anything other than God I Jesus Christ it is false worship.
- False knowledge – idle notions
  - This comes from false knowledge and idle notions – thinking that's according to the flesh and not according to God's thinking and will
  - When Jesus spoke about going to the cross Peter said that it will never happen. Jesus rebuked Him because his thinking was according to the flesh and not in accordance with God's will.
  - We need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Romans 12: 2
- The reason for false humility, false worship and false knowledge is that we are disconnected from the Head – Christ.
  - We have a form of religion but we don't live in a Christ centred reality.
  - The church as a whole needs Christ to be the central focus of all things for us to function and be the body that He intends us to be.

### **3) An appearance of wisdom**

- Legalism has an outer appearance of wisdom but that's centred on ourselves and not on Christ.
- Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1: 24)
- So many messages nowadays have wise words without Christ. They give good instruction on what we should and shouldn't do. However they lack power over restraining us from satisfying the flesh.
- It is only through the cross of Christ that we can truly be saved and have, not merely the appearance of wisdom, but the real life of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 1: 18 – 25