Captive to Christ

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] I want to talk to you for a moment. Around our house, whenever my wife hears these words!

And what I've been thinking about is all of you. And I've done that because over the last few weeks it's been your pastor's great privilege to work with the baptismal candidates that we have coming forward in August, Lord willing.
And one of the things that we require of these folks is they stand before you and read or give their testimony. And that's something that's kind of unique to Christianity, to evangelical faith that you would give a testimony about how God saves you, about how God brought your heart from spiritual death to spiritual life.
How He brought you from not looking to Jesus for salvation and forgiveness for sins to now trusting in Him alone for the forgiveness of your sins.
How'd that happen to you? And so I've been working with these folks alongside of Greg to help them form that testimony. And what we do is we tell them you have...
[1:33] Now if you've joined our church you know this because we require this of every member of our church as well. So we tell them it has to be one page. You can write it. You can type it.

You can double space it. Single space it. You can put it in any font you want. One page. That's it. So you've got an 8 1⁄2 by 11 about 3 minutes to tell people the miraculous reality of how God brought you from life to death in His Son.
Now that's a challenge. If you've done it it's a challenge. So I want to ask you this morning for those of you who have done it for those of you who are looking at me now and thinking you know I've never really been challenged to do that before.
It makes you think very carefully and with great economy about what Jesus did for you. It makes you put a fine point on what you understand God did in your soul to bring you to His Son and forgive you for your sins.
It's not easy. Now you may sound like oh I think I could knock that out in a few minutes. Okay give it a shot. and turn it in. Let me see. Let me take a hard look at it. I don't think we've ever had one that we didn't suggest edits for.
[2:54] I don't think we've ever had one like that in my memory. I know when I sat down as a young Christian and started thinking through this and took my first shot at it like my sermons was quite long and I had to pare it down.

I had to get it down and get it down. You say Jeff what is the point of someone being ready who's a Christian to share their testimony. You know that's not a word that other people throw around and the concept other people out there unbelievers deal with.
you probably don't run into many folks that walk up to you and say what's your testimony? Right? They don't know. I didn't know. But when you think about doing this particular exercise when you come to think about what you would say in this the goal of every Christian testimony is simply this. By the time you finish telling people what God did for you you want them to understand how to come to Christ. How to get saved. How to trust in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of their sins. Whatever else you tell them you need to tell them how to come to Jesus. That's your testimony. If they listen to you and walk away and have no idea what coming to Christ in faith means you need to rewrite your testimony.
[4:21] Now one of the reasons that I'm talking to you about all of this again is because this has really been on the forefront of my mind as I've dealt with these folks and I'm very proud of the work that they're doing I'm very proud of the efforts that they're making to ready themselves to stand before all of you and give an account of what God did for them in Christ.

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So this isn't meant at all to be some type of left-handed way of saying anything negative. I want to do the opposite. I want to build you up in this and help you think about it.
Now one of the reasons I'm going to bring this message to you this morning is in thinking about this topic of your salvation I want to help you clarify thinking through when it was in your life that you came to Christ.
Now look you don't get to do this like Greg and I do so you don't get the advantage of what I'm about to tell you. You would be amazed at how many Christians really don't have a pinpoint understanding of when it was that their soul came to the radical change of Jesus living in you. You would think that when Jesus comes to live inside the human soul that radical transformation would be something that all of us would go oh yeah I can tell you now I can't tell you the day that that happened to me I can tell you the season I can because I was on my face before the Lord quite a bit during that time in my life and I was praying continually God forgive me God forgive me because in 20 years I'd managed to live a good bit of sin.
[6:04] So I can tell you that in that season of my life my life dramatically changed. the word of God came alive to me. The people of God became precious to me. It became important to me to share with other people what God had done for me to change me and give me hope.

And I was enamored with this God who had erased all the sin of my past present and future died for me and gave me hope for eternal life with Him forever forever eternal life.
And so I changed and it was obvious to everybody around me and even to myself I want to help you better understand I think I think in my experience people who have been raised in a Christian home they tend to struggle with this a little more because they're raised up now I'm going to quote what people say I couldn't say this because I wasn't raised in a Christian home but this is what I hear I've always believed in God now do you understand that I always believed in God and saving faith are two different things you understand that many many Christians don't and so they get confused about when they came to Christ because of that well I've always believed in God I was raised I've always gone to church I've always had the Bible read to me or read the Bible but the demons know all that hear me the demons believe in Jesus the demons go to church the demons pray the demons know the Bible better than you do better than I do and they're demons so this is an important topic have I sobered you have I sucked you in alright that's my goal is to suck you in this morning and say we better listen up yeah now I want to tell you as I throw up am I ready to do the there it is the title of my message for this morning is Captive to Christ and we're in Colossians chapter 2
Captive to Christ every single human being in their soul in their heart is captive to someone you say yes Suzanne my heart is captive to Suzanne because I've been married to her she's my wife and we understand what we mean by things like that when I told you that Amelia captured my heart we understand that what I'm talking about right now is the human soul will either belong to one of two beings Jesus or Satan it's a reality that we all live with and have to face so let me take you to Colossians chapter 2 and we'll read through at least half of it if not all of this chapter so that you can gain the context for verse 8 Paul writes to these Christians and he says I want you to know how great a struggle
I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea Laodicea was a church just down the road or a city just down the road from Colossae and for all those who have not personally seen my face he realizes I'm writing to a bunch of people in these two cities and two churches who've never met me and I want you to understand that pastorally I'm struggling on your behalf he's not saying that because he's trying to endear them to him in some kind of obligatory way he says this in verse 2 that their hearts may be encouraged that's the point of him saying all this to them I want your hearts to be encouraged having been knit together in love attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding you see what he's concerned with here I want you to have a wealth of wonderful treasure from the full assurance of understanding resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ himself he wants these people to understand what God has done for them in Christ and when he did it in whom
[10:35] Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument for even though I am absent in body nevertheless I am with you in spirit rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ there's some things here pastorally that he looks for he's recognized and now he's affirming therefore as you have received

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Christ Jesus that's a way of saying as you have been saved by faith in him and in him alone so walk in him that is lead your life in him make it about him having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Christ and established in your faith in Christ just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude now verse 8 see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men according to the elementary principles of the world rather than according to

Christ that's the key whatever it is rather than according to Christ is not good for in Christ all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and in him in Christ you have been made complete you see how that's a past tense reality about you if you're a Christian and he Christ is the head he is the spiritual authority over all rule and authority as it pertains to our lives and in Christ you were past tense also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands this is a spiritual circumcision that is the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Jesus having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised Jesus from the dead when you when you were dead in your transgressions your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh he
God made you alive together with Jesus having forgiven us all our transgressions you see that all of them having cancelled out the certificate of our sin debt consisting of what decrees against us that would be the list of sins that we had done in rebellion against God and that was hostile to us to our souls he Jesus has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross and when he had disarmed the rulers and authorities he made a public display of them having triumphed over them through Christ therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day in other words no one is to act as your judge in relation to what true religion is if you're living for Christ you're living true religion things which are a mere shadow these are religious kinds of things that people put their hope in rather than
Christ these are a mere shadow of what is to come but the substance the reality the truth belongs to Christ therefore let no one keep defrauding deceiving you of your prize by delighting in self abasement and the worship of angels taking his stand on visions he's seen inflated without cause by his fleshly mind not holding fast to the head that is Christ from whom the entire body being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments grows with a growth which is from God the only way you can grow in your life your spiritual life is for that growth to come from God through his son Jesus Christ that is my theme in Poland for nine sessions what I just read you is my theme for Poland you cannot grow in
Christ apart from being made alive in Christ for something to grow it has to be made alive if you're not alive in Jesus you won't grow in Jesus and that will show in your life your life will be full of pretense and you will be living under spiritual deception I can't think of a worse fate for you because I care for you and love you I don't want that to happen in your life verse 20 if you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world why as if you were living in the world do you submit yourself to decrees such as this don't handle this don't taste that don't touch this no those things all refer to things destined to perish with use they're worldly they're earthly in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men men made all that up these are matters which have to be sure the appearance the look of wisdom in self made religion and self abasement and severe treatment of the body but all of that is just looks there's no real there that is of no value against fleshly indulgence sin all of that religion man made wisdom and religion is of no value to you against sin and what is your greatest enemy the greatest enemy of your soul as a human being sin sin even when you're saved and living in the
[16:53] Lord Jesus you still have remaining sin to deal with don't you there's not a one of us in here right now as a Christian that can say oh I didn't sin last week so I'm tuned out in fact I'm going to go get something to drink I'll be back in a few minutes let's see if we can wrap this thing up none of us are like that two kinds of spiritual captivity and God's single only cure for both so does it matter which type of captivity you're going to be under as I described them it does matter you need to evaluate this very carefully this morning but I want you to know that regardless of which type of captivity you find yourself under this morning spiritually speaking God's answer is the same for both and you're not going to be surprised to find out who that answer is now the first type of captivity

I want to outline for you I'm going to call spiritual imprisonment because that's how the Bible speaks of it Paul in our text for this morning in just verse 8 alone says this see to it that no one takes you captive see to it that no one takes you captive now if I was to ask you for those of you who are into

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grammar and syntax English grammar and syntax if I was to ask you what's the subject of this sentence you would say the subject is you you and and I might say to you but you is not written in there no it's inferred the implied subject of this sentence is you see to it!
that no one takes you captive in other translations you would read it this way you beware you be on your guard you be constantly looking out so this is an emphatic admonition or an urgent fervent forceful warning now think about that with me this morning alright already you're being challenged I'm being challenged is this an aspect and characteristic of my Christian life is this something that I soberly adhere to in my walk with Jesus throughout my week am am I bewaring am I on guard am I constantly looking out for am I seeing to it that no one takes me captive because
I'm already captive to Christ I don't want to become captive to something else plus Jesus that doesn't work Jesus won't adhere to or hold to two masters it's going to be one or the other if you were to use these warnings with someone you would clearly be conveying to that person a sense of urgency and concern a personal concern for them a call for them to exercise some vigilance in their life toward maybe what you see to be a serious threat and it would be so frustrating to you if you cared for this person to see that person not take you seriously and you're trying to impress on them no no no!
listen! this is real this is real this is an ardent call to spiritual alertness and that is not something that we subscribe to and live in by default our default is quite different from that our default is not to be spiritually alert to the issues of life that threaten our soul that threaten to take us captive deceive us away from faithfulness to Jesus Christ he is saying here as the NAS the new american standard translates it he is saying with an insistence in his soul you see to it now why the urgent warning because without this spiritual awareness something very very bad will happen to you you will be taken captive by the evilest being in the universe and the only way for you to escape that captivity is by the miracle of
[21:39] God's intervention man doesn't have an answer for your release the word translated as takes you captive is only used here in the new testament by the apostle Paul and it speaks of being kidnapped it means for you to be taken hostage enslaved or taken prisoner so these are powerfully negative concepts taken captive it's a very descriptive!

term and many commentators said it has the fuller meaning of you becoming someone's prey now that's a terrible thought isn't it? to become someone's prey or if you are taken by by someone and you become their spoils their plunder I hate that idea because they have made a conquest over you you ready to be a victim you want to live as a victim I hope not I don't want you to be a spiritual victim I want you to experience what Jesus promises!
You can be made more than a conqueror in Christ it's not your physical prowess it's not your intellectual prowess it's not your ability to persevere through difficulty and gut it out and sweat it out that makes for spiritual release from this kind of captivity none of that's going to do you any good this kind of captivity here can only be done by heaven itself in your soul it's that serious and Paul is really laying it down does the idea of becoming prey to someone alarm you does it help you sit up in your seat a little bit and say you know what I need to think about this kind of sober approach to my Christian walk because the pastor here is making it very clear I am under threat and you are you are under threat why well Peter says it this way!
you're very!! we often quote it here at grace be of sober spirit be on the alert why? your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour pray pray I don't want to be looking out into this congregation and see pray I don't want that for you I hope you don't want that for yourself I hope you don't want that for the people that you love and care for now remember we're talking about this on a spiritual level there are other things that we can do responsibly in Christ to make sure that those whom we love are protected in physical ways emotional ways ways to help them guard some of their intellectual ability so we're not throwing all of this nonsense in front of them or we're teaching them how to recognize nonsense that comes from the world like all this gender identity mess that you see all over the news right now again
I say to you and every chance I get I'm going to say it is a false concept from the pit of hell you cannot transgender yourself all right now I'm going to get off that soapbox and come back to what I'm saying that's one of the ideas though that we can talk to our people about and say don't take that into your mind don't let yourself get into those conversations as if that's something legitimate it's not so yeah there are ways we can do those kinds of protection there's only one way we can take care of spiritual protection here for our own souls and for the souls of those whom we love there's

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only one way it shouldn't surprise you to hear that there are forces of evil in this world which actively seek your harm they are actively seeking!
[25:49] to exploit abuse and deceive you actively demonic work through all kinds of different mediums through human beings through music through the media there are all kinds of avenues for dispensing falsehood and lies and deceiving you now there are two kinds of spiritual enslavement common to human beings this is very important I want you to be able to understand this there are two kinds of spiritual enslavement common to human beings one kind applies to non Christians sorry I forgot to put that up there one kind applies to non Christians and the other kind applies to believers Christians Paul is only dealing with the Christian kind of enslavement or spiritual activity in Colossians 2 8 however I want to walk you into the

Christian kind by talking to you about the other kind what's the difference between how unbelievers as we call them we don't mean anything prideful by that when we talk about unbelievers that can be very offensive to people who aren't Christians right you meet people and say that I believe in God what are you talking about kind of thing we don't we don't mean to be derogatory in that we're just stating a spiritual reality all unbelievers and Christians believers experience spiritual captivity what's the difference this is where I see a lot of people struggling in their testimonies this is one of the reasons I'm clarifying this for you I even thought about preaching this message on the Sunday that I get back from Poland which will be the Sunday we do the baptism but I decided I'm going to do a different one then all right here here is the non Christian who is spiritually owned by
Satan because that's the reality that we all come into the world with all of us are born this way look with me in Colossians 1 if you would please 13 and 14 we'll come back to 8 in just a minute chapter 1 13 and 14 for the Father God the Father rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins now what do I want to show you here we were delivered from and transferred to and so you have to hang on to that reality about what we were brought from delivered from how does this deliverance happen to someone who's in bondage to sin and Satan you belong to a certain realm you belong to a certain kingdom a certain sphere a certain reality on a spiritual level and that reality that sphere was the domain of darkness that is
Satan's domain you were not living in the light of Jesus Christ you were living in the darkness of satanic deception how can you be brought from spiritual death and enslavement to Satan into spiritual life and freedom to God that is the question for the human soul this is what pastors live to preach!
If you look at verse 14 again in whom there's the key in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins those two little words in whom refers to God's beloved son the Lord Jesus Christ so Jesus alone offers you freedom from sin death and Satan through his tender loving gracious forgiveness it says forgiveness for all the sins which you've committed against God for all the sins you will commit against God forever this is the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ it's a once for all sacrifice for sin that you might be forgiven we were taken then listen now to the language we were taken from Satan's domain of spiritual darkness and we were placed in a very different kingdom with a very different king the kingdom is that of
[30:29] God's beloved son the Lord Jesus Christ we rehearse this and rehearse this with people because we want people to understand the words here are conveying something radical do you understand you were enslaved to one realm and domain living in that deceptive darkness not knowing the better of what was happening to you and you were brought out of that taken from that rescued redeemed freed from that and you were put in he didn't just rescue you and then say go do your thing he rescued you and brought you over and he put you in took you from put you in a different realm!

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love and and put into this radical and wonderful kingdom of his beloved son but not much about our life changed I didn't really love the Bible I didn't really love Jesus I really didn't make it about Jesus I really didn't seek God in fact there's a lot about my life in that time that season whatever you're thinking of where it was really a lot about me and I did stuff that I know didn't have anything to do with God with Christ with loving the Lord with being put into his new kingdom do you see what I'm saying I'm trying to preach to you a radical transformation because that's the way the Bible talks about I'm not making this up friends you have to do business!

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with God this way you've got to do it on his terms harder than I preach the gospel when I'm talking about the human soul being taken from darkness to light because that's the nitty gritty of our faith and that is what's being taught to us here he has just spent all this time working up to chapter 2 verse 8 talking about our only hope being in Jesus Christ and he told us in chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 you've been taken out of a deceptive darkness belonging to Satan and sin and God put you into the kingdom of his beloved son by putting you in Christ it's as if God took you and just hid you the language of the scriptures actually uses he took you and he hid you in his son and now your whole life is in his son he hid you in
Christ and now look you're protected you're safeguarded you're in the hands of almighty God as his son lives in your soul don't you think your life should look different than it did before what if it doesn't should you be concerned yes beloved God forbid that under our watch as co-pastors of this fellowship any of you would get to heaven and have to face Jesus and say to you depart from me you lawless when I never knew you and you lived under that deception God forbid that your blood would be on our hands and so be sobered precious people my beloved friends be sobered in the gospel be affirmed if you're sitting there today going hallelujah praise God this is exactly what I know God has done in my soul do you know when he did it do you understand how to talk about what he did and share it with others so that they have hope we were!
[35:14] taken from! Satan's domain of spiritual darkness and placed in a very different kingdom with a very different king now Paul also told us if you look at chapter 1 verses 21 and 22 and although you you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind engaged in evil deeds that's everybody's dilemma who's born in sin yet verse 22 he has now brought you near reconciled you in his fleshly body Jesus with his body through death has brought you near in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach God did all that for you Christ did all that for you so that he could present you to the father holy and blameless and beyond reproach look up here on the screen every human being is spiritually enslaved to

Satan and in need of God to free them from spiritual captivity how God sent his son Jesus Christ to do God's work of freeing his people from sin the issue then is that you stand guilty before God separated from life with God spiritually dead towards your unforgiven sins against God this is you without Jesus hopeless terrible but you can be transferred from one spiritual kingdom to another by the only person with the power to do this for you it is by God through the person of his son Jesus Christ we're just going to keep saying it over and over again your spiritual freedom comes at the cost of Jesus Christ dying in your place Jesus died in your place to give you spiritual freedom the cross was where Jesus suffered the punishment you deserve for your sins against
God by dying in your place Jesus paid your penalty for you folks we should never tire parents please hear me guys please hear me we should never tire of that message to our children don't ever tire of rehearsing what I just said to you about Jesus dying in your place being your substitute unfortunately for me when I was saved genuinely born again some of that message didn't come through as clearly as it should have now some of that might have been on me some of that might have been on the people that I was but eventually that became crystal clear to me I had to grow into my understanding of Jesus being that substitute for me that's deep theology but I knew that Jesus died for me I knew that I didn't understand all that that meant but I knew he died for me and he was my only hope boy I ran to that right I ran to him and he did a tremendous work of salvation in my soul only through the sacrifice of
Jesus dying for you could God justly legally declare that Jesus paid your penalty for you because this is a forensic activity that is it's of the law it's a legal reality you were a criminal guilty before the bar of almighty God the great judge of the universe for you to be able to not live in that condemnation of guilt something had to change legally for you you had to be brought out of criminal status and into not guilty before the Lord or made holy you understand you with me that's what Jesus did for you Jesus became the criminal for you Jesus took the curse of that criminality on himself and as it were became a criminal before his own father on your behalf and he paid your punishment for your criminality before
God the father he paid the debt you owed to God for being a criminal and rebel against him and what was that debt the debt of death and so Jesus died he received capital punishment from God the father for your sins and he went to the grave and God raised him from the dead to show us I am giving you the way of life through this man he is your hope for life beyond death the death of sin and self and rebellion you see that's what we get in Christ and this is what he is doing for us as he died

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in our place to purchase our freedom when we say purchase our freedom we use the word redemption to redeem something is to purchase it back when you redeem something they purchase it back from you and you get something
[40:37] Jesus redeemed us he freed us from the power and penalty and presence of sin in our life sin no longer has to have the power over us so when you trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord God credits the blessings and the benefits of Jesus life and death to you and declares you freed from the power and tyranny and guilt and shame and penalty of Satan sin evil he forgives you for all your sins past present and future forever ever that is one kind of spiritual captivity and God's only way of freedom we all start out life captive to that kingdom of darkness because of the rebellion of sin at home in our heart that's our default but

Paul's not giving his warning about spiritual captivity to non Christians this is very interesting I've said all of that to lay the ground work but here's the reality Paul is not talking about spiritual captivity as it concerns unbelievers he's talking about it in terms of Christians he's warning believers people who've already experienced this once for all freedom and forgiveness through their faith in Jesus Christ alone Christians who've been delivered from Satan's domain of darkness cannot be returned there do you understand the power of God putting you in the new kingdom there is no power in the universe that can pluck you from his hand hallelujah and so in this new kingdom with this new life and in this new Lord there is no power outside of who God is and what God is that can take you out and put you back into that kingdom so then what happens to you in terms of your captivity and enslavement when you're in this kingdom of
God already then what are you talking about what kind of spiritual captivity could that possibly be if it can't mean that I go back into Satan's captivity if that can't happen the kind of imprisonment captivity enslavement Paul is warning against here is something which only Christians can experience it's unique to us and this brings us to the second kind of spiritual activity that we'll talk about what is it spiritual impoverishment some of you have this in your testimony and I want to help clarify it for you spiritual impoverishment alright listen to the question can non Christians can unbelievers be spiritually impoverished no no they cannot why those who have not been transferred from spiritual death darkness deception to spiritual life those who do not trust
Jesus Christ alone to be their Savior and Lord remain spiritually dead now listen carefully friends if you are dead your condition is not impoverished you don't lack a quality of life you lack life now are you with me did that seal the deal for you okay that's the difference so we cannot look at unbelievers in our life our family members friends and co workers and look at them and pity them in a way that says they're spiritually impoverished they just need to!
their spiritual! act together! that's not true at all don't say things like that that gives them the wrong impression it makes them think they can just get a little bit of a spiritual bath and they're fine they don't see it as a transformation no you need a new life a new life it is a very different thing to talk about spiritual!
[44:54] impoverishment from spiritual death death death again if you are dead in your trespasses and sins separated from the life of God your condition is not impoverished you don't lack a quality of life you lack life so look spiritual poverty happens to Christians when we fail to seek our treasure in Christ alone in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge Paul says so in our context here as Paul intensely warns the Colossian Christians the word captive is used figuratively figuratively of carrying someone away from the truth into the slavery of error it's a figurative expression and what's he talking about well that's what we want to carefully unpack together we're talking about the slavery please hear this the slavery of error falsehood lies deceptive lies that masquerade camouflage themselves as truth they don't walk up to you and say I'm right out of the pit of hell and I think you should take me into your life they walk up to you looking like light they look like life they promise great things they glitter and glow they puff you up and make you think that was borderline genius right there the whole while you're being he's getting ready to set the hook who would want to live as a slave to falsehood and lies you'd be surprised who would want to suffer the grief and shame and loneliness and guilt and heartache depression scandal and all around despair of living according to empty lies you would be surprised who'd want to live like that people living in spiritual deception live like that friends spiritually deceived people hoodwinked people spiritually live like this even

Christians can live in the deceptive counterfeits of Satan schemes this is why throughout the New Testament we have the apostles and the teachers of the scriptures telling us repeatedly be careful

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be on the lookout!
Watch out! Be sober minded! Stay in the word! Right? Live in the Lord! Walk with Jesus!
Why? Because they know how easily we are pulled away from that kind of fidelity to Christ and you know it too if you have lived any time in the Christian life you know this is very real isn't it it's very real but now I'm not preaching without hope here I'm telling you the answer look we'll explain it this way all it takes in any given moment there it is all it takes in any given moment is for you to move from desiring to worship and please the Lord to desiring something other than or more than the Lord so that you obey what Paul calls your lusts of deceit or deceitful lust I want you to read that again and let that sink in we're not talking about you losing your salvation here that cannot happen what
God puts you in he keeps you in he keeps you in you can't get out and if you squirm and struggle and rebel while he's put you in your father will spank you right yes he'll discipline you because he loves you because he's a good dad he's a good dad but you'll never be able to leave him and go back to where you were I remember early in my Christian life there was this really prominent teaching coming from several prominent Christian leaders that I could name and you would know and they taught the idea of carnal Christianity Greg you remember this being a carnal Christian you guys remember that and I remember when that was all debunked for me once I got out and got under expository teaching under John MacArthur and he taught me literally said from the pulpit there's no such thing as a carnal
[49:53] Christian you either live in the light or you live in the darkness now can you sin as a Christian yes but to live and rank carnality as a Christian no no and so that's where the idea some of you raise your hand if you know this term that's where some of you will have encountered rededicating your life to God how many know that term rededicating your life that was me I thought I rededicated my life to God when what happened to me was I got saved right I didn't rededicate anything I went from death to life but it was later in my Christian life when I matured in the Lord that I could look back on that experience and go oh wow that's when I got saved that's when I got that's when my life changed and then I got baptized because all that happened to me before when I thought I was a Christian when I got baptized was I just got wet I got very wet and that's all that happened it meant nothing my life didn't change is it possible for you let me ask you this now stay with me is it possible for you to have knowledge of something and for that knowledge to actually be false yes or no okay stay with me yes is it also possible for you to have knowledge of something and yet not understand how to apply it to your life yes so it's possible for you to live a lie and it's also possible for you to have a certain understanding of something but not exactly know how to make it work for your life how to apply it in your life right and we understand that there's a difference to those things so Paul says in verse 4 chapter 2 verse 4

I say this so that no one will delude you defraud you fool you deceive you with what persuasive argument persuasive argument and then he builds on this concern in verse 8 as he spells out what it is that threatens to spiritually enslave these people to spiritually impoverish these people be on the alert that you don't believe what is rubbish counterfeit unfit lies don't do that see to it that no one takes you captive by these clever sounding arguments whether it's religion or some interpretation of what's going on in life whatever it is I want to share this with you philosophy here in our text in verse 8 see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy what are we talking about philosophy is literally love of wisdom now you notice not love of Christ love of wisdom this is an idol but it came to be used as a general title for various systems of thought different approaches to life various religious ideas so if it dealt with God the world living life it came under the title of philosophy what Paul is concerned about is the philosophy which is not according to
Christ and that's the bottom line the bottom line if you would go back up into the latter part of verse 8 with me and see what I honed in on when I read it what's the very last part of verse 8 rather than according to Christ that's the problem that's the problem rather than according to Christ empty deception identifies the problem with the philosophical system that Paul has in mind it's empty deception and it can also be rendered hollow pretense futile trickery or futile trickery any way you cut it this is a bad news place to be so Paul is obviously using philosophy in a negative way it may sound it may seem weighty it may sound and seem intellectually deep sophisticated legitimate even trustworthy a lot of these things that come down the pike do and it may even fascinate you it may stimulate the brain cells it may make sense to you listen to this one it may stroke your pride isn't that what a lot of these lies do they puff us up they stroke our pride it may do all of that and it may

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even seem to be helpful to you at first see that's that's satan jeremy's a great bass fisherman i fished with him many times and i use this illustration because as i fish with my brother i think about stuff like this and i watch jeremy and he's he's very good at teasing these fish i poor fish he just teases them so well they just can't resist but then i watch him do this and then they're in the boat too late little fishy he took the bait and jeremy set the hook and that's what satan does this stuff sounds good this stuff promises a lot this stuff glitters and glows and it may even be helpful at first i can imagine that fish's mind as he takes that big old mouth and he thinks this is gonna be good oh yes breakfast and then the hook gets set and it's a whole different story but in that moment it seems good it seems right it seems helpful otherwise we wouldn't do it so there's there's an allurement here that we need to recognize about ourselves we're vulnerable to this kind of stuff no in reality what we're talking about is something that has a hollow deception to it leading you away from Christ now you're in the territory of rather than according to Christ so I'll put it up here on the screen so you can see it with me whatever leads you away from Jesus impoverishes you okay again you're not losing your salvation here but you are being spiritually impoverished why because you're turning your back as it were on your life now Jesus continues to live in you but you're not acknowledging that affirming that surrendering to that yielding to that see you've kind of become stiff necked like Israel in that moment and so what you're going to experience in those moments in those seasons and situations of your life is a spiritual impoverishment to face those situations faithfully in the Lord you're going to feel the weight of that and that's what we're talking about here let's see if this one will come up no

I'm going to go back and read it hold on don't go there listen the source the source of this empty philosophical deception is twofold one he says is the tradition of men do you see that it's what people form as their beliefs and receive from each other concerning how to think about and live life but it is not according to Christ it is rather than and those traditions kill churches those traditions kill joy in the Christian life we burden ourselves down boy I could start listing them off because when I first came to the Lord there were things like this that I saw in spades when we first when Suzanne and I first took on our first pastoral ministry and I was going to be the guy behind the pulpit every Sunday when that became my first there was so much tradition that church was founded in 1800 and something they had a graveyard and anyway and it just went on and on and on and my biggest fight there was not a fight to help people embrace

[58:45] Jesus with greater fidelity because they struggled through the week and they just felt beaten down that's not what it was at all my greatest struggle in that ministry was trying to get people to believe that Jesus Christ was their only hope for salvation and spiritual life can you believe it including the deacons who ran the church well their wives ran the church but that's another story we're not going to go there not going to go there listen to me say this whatever is not according to Christ impoverishes!

whatever is not according to Jesus impoverishes you do you believe you can be married in Jesus yes do you believe you can be a plumber in Jesus yes do you believe you can be a warrior in Jesus yes we have them in our congregation do you believe you can be widowed in Jesus yes do you believe you can face some of the hardest most difficult things a human soul can face and can you face it in Jesus yes making life about Jesus is just that you know that whatever you face whatever you're doing whatever you're called on in your work or whatever you're making it about!

So I won't cheat you I won't talk to you in ways that are deceptive I won't malign you I'll try to be trustworthy whatever my role in life is look this is a philosophy that was conceived in the mind of man and did not come by means of divine revelation it may well be compatible with and confirm human traditions and make sense when looked at from a this worldly perspective but it has nothing in it of God that's what Sam Storm said commentator Sam Storm second this philosophy has its source in the elementary principles of the world not only in the traditions of men man's wisdom but in the elementary principles of the world there are two main interpretations for this phrase

I felt like I needed to tell you about them because I'm going to tell you where I land all right two interpretations of this phrase what does he mean when he says see to it you see to it no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men we just dealt with that one according to the elementary principles of the world now we know these are bad because it's rather than according to Jesus so what does he mean first interpretation it refers to the basic ways that unsaved people think about the things of life in ways that while they sound and appear sophisticated are actually beggarly impoverished childish immature and even counterfeit or

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false they amount to rules and regulations that are based on worldly wisdom where man invents his own way to deal with life it's the way that Proverbs talks about and Ecclesiastes talks about doing what's right in your own eyes this is how one interpretation says about elementary principles of the world it's basically the world doing what it wants to do what's right in its own eyes that's one the second interpretation has to do with angelic spirits little bit more complicated angelic spirits who have gone bad these are demons and they spin their falsehoods in the minds of those they've blinded right now for my own part
I see within the context proof for both views to have some validity I think sometimes these commentators get to where they split hair so finely they kind of lose themselves in the forest for looking at the trees too much kind of thing and I think that's what's happened here Paul mentions worshiping angels in verse 18 if you look at 2 18 let no one keep defrauding deceiving fooling you of your prize by delighting in self abasement and the worship of angels angels he is mentioning that those would be demons then in verse 20 if you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world why then are you living your life like that again why are you submitting yourself to these principles of religious dogma like well you can't eat this you can't touch that you can't do this and they're all man made they're all man made look folks please hear me in love say this some of you are former
[63:47] Catholics some of you have friends that are Catholics family listen to me it is a terrible thing when Catholicism tells their priests you can't be married when they tell their nuns you can't be married when God says marriage is good don't deny people that do you see what that's caused in that church when a Catholic priest walks up to you and says to you for your sins to be truly forgiven of God you need to come into this little closet with me and you need to spill your guts to me and I will absolve you do you hear that that's that's where this takes us that's man's wisdom now those are blatant but aren't there many many many people who think that's the way to go that is rather than according to Christ and that's the problem in this particular view

I think that he is telling us both ideas fit the context of what he's teaching so the point of all of this is simply that all of this whether it's man made or demon made it doesn't come from God and no matter how wise it may seem because it does not come from God it will not lead you to God or to the spiritual riches and wealth of his son the Lord Jesus Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures not a few not some not part all of them you don't have to go anywhere else apart from Christ to receive the treasures for life in other words if you want to live a meaningful life if you want to live a purposed!
life that purpose driven thing if you want to live a purpose driven life then give your life to Jesus and make your life about Jesus and you won't miss you won't miss so you can pray for me what I'm sharing with you in this little bit of time right here this morning this is nine sessions in Poland this is what they're going to get nine times so pray for them because it's basically me saying make it about Jesus every single time I teach these people make it about Jesus beloved look mark it down mark it down what springs from God leads back to God if what you believe doesn't lead you to God it didn't come from God that's why I say you can be a plumber and make it about Jesus you can be a wife a homemaker making it about Jesus you can be a parent raising little kids and make it about Jesus it doesn't whatever and this brings us to the point of verse eight if it's not according to Christ it will deceive you it will rob you it will use you it will abuse you and then it will spit you out to suffer in your spiritual poverty and you will step back as I did in my life at one time when everything just about fell apart and where many people have testified in my ministry how did
I get here I just told you how you get there one of two ways you're either not saved you're not alive in Christ and so you're pursuing your own way or you've been born again in Christ and you are so spiritually impoverished you don't know which way is up and it's sometimes hard to tell takes a lot of wisdom a lot of work when you put your faith in man's answers and in man-made ideas of life and truth to include your own ideas you're embracing empty deceit and the doctrines of demons and there's only one trustworthy and lasting answer to all the human problems of spiritual imprisonment and impoverishment it is to be in Christ now just give me one more minute and I'm done in Christ the point of all of this is in Jesus Christ you have all the treasures of life you have spiritual wealth riches wisdom for decisions you have assurance of understanding in terms of the best ways to live you have true knowledge of God you have freedom from the power and penalty of sin forgiveness of God for all your sins and you have genuine closeness to God now you may say

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Jeff I struggle with joy in my Christian life I struggle with joy Jeff I've got this sin in my life that just it has just been spanking me bad and it's been something it's been in my life for a long time I'd never seem to be able to just leave it behind it always sneaks up talks to me and I end up succumbing you know folks it doesn't have to be sexual sin that's the first thing we think of when we hear words like that it could be gossip I'm just an incessant gossip I just can't seem to stop I've met that person it could be a host of things Peter says whatever we give ourselves to that is what will enslave us and overcome us that's what Peter said 2 Peter 2 19 what you receive what you receive from men cannot compare with what you receive in the person of the Lord so will you take from men or will you take from Christ the man made rules rituals ideas philosophies diagnoses about your life can't compare to the freedom and forgiveness that you find in the
[69:46] Lord so will you be listen will you be fettered to men or will you be free in Christ alright I'll end with this quote here look carefully then how you walk so walk in Christ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude I just combined a couple of passages there you see to it that no one takes you captive beloved when you got Jesus you didn't get gypped you got all the treasure and richness of almighty God and his son let's pray together father god we honor you and thank you and give you the glory for these texts of scripture that have encouraged our hearts to see ourselves rightly whether we are in Christ or not and we pray father that for those of us struggling with spiritual impoverishment that is spiritual anemia the weakness of not making it about

Jesus help us to discern in our hearts what's really going on there only your word can dig down into the joint marrow and show us what's really happening but because I love these people father because I know you love them immensely and have given us Jesus and your word please please help them to discern truly and genuinely the condition of their souls!
working through this testimony for baptism that they will come to confident terms with who they are in Jesus Christ what you've done for them and they will stand forward on that day Lord willing to humbly and confidently declare this is what Jesus has done for me in changing my soul from death to life thank you for Jesus and his gospel thank you for the good news of the!
and resurrection and thank you that we have hope for eternity in him in Jesus name we pray amen

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