

Captive to Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Beloved, we're in Colossians today. I'm going to take you to Colossians, a good old favorite, one of mine at least. We're going to be in Colossians chapter 2.

Josiah, are you guys getting a signal from my... Okay, I didn't check it, so... How's the temp in here? It feels hot to me, but is it warm?

Can we cool it off a little, Jeremy, so I don't lose them? I'll try to keep you in... I know how it is, a hard week, maybe weekend, and we get in here and it gets toasty, and I get it.

Well, what I'd like to deal with today from the book of Colossians builds on what we've been doing in Ecclesiastes. That's not hard to do because the Bible is a unity.

But I want to build on some themes that we've been covering over the next few weeks, and here's my plan. My plan and my hope, my prayer, is to start in the book of 1 Peter, verse by verse through the book of 1 Peter, probably more toward the middle of November.

[1 : 1 7] So between now and the middle of November, I'll be doing some other messages for you. And today, the title of my message is Captive to Christ. Captive to Christ.

And that's the theme of the message is captivity, which is kind of strange that the Bible talks about that, but it does. And it's very important that we understand what kind of captivity the Scripture is speaking of here.

So I want to deal with two kinds. I'll put this up on the screen for you. Two kinds of spiritual captivity and God's single cure for them both.

The first point that I'll be making as we dive right in is spiritual imprisonment. The first type of captivity that we'll deal with, and I'm going to jump right in, because we have a lot to cover, spiritual imprisonment.

And why is this so important for us to understand, even as Christians? Spiritual imprisonment. Let's look at Colossians chapter 2. I'm just going to read one verse, and that's verse 8.

[2 : 2 3] That's where we'll be zeroing in, and I'll give you more of the context as we go along together. Colossians 2, 8 reads, See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception.

That would mean according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

The most important clause in that verse is at the end, rather than according to Christ. Now folks, hear this please carefully as we begin.

Everything in life is measured by, rather than, according to Christ. That's the Christian standard and measuring stick for everything that has to do with the matters and issues of life.

Is it according to Christ or not? Anytime we're struggling with sin, we're struggling with things that are elevating themselves above Christ, or at least seeking to.

[3 : 37] Paul calls them ideologies. Here he's calling them the traditions of men, the philosophies of men, the elementary principles of this world.

And what that tells us is that there's a spiritual struggle that's real to life. It's real to your life. It's real to my life. It's real in the world.

There is a spiritual struggle going on. And so spiritual imprisonment is part of that struggle. Paul begins in verse 8 saying this, See to it that no one takes you captive, which means, by implication, that can happen.

You can be taken captive. The subject of this verse is implied. It isn't written. It's implied. And the subject is you.

You see to it that no one takes you captive. In other translations, you see it this way. Beware. Be on your guard.

[4 : 46] Be constantly looking out. This is a call to vigilance, spiritual vigilance. It's an emphatic admonition or an emphatic, urgent, forceful warning.

That's the grammar. So Paul is being stern and serious here because he knows what's at stake as he deals with this.

For example, if you were to use these warnings with someone in your life, you would clearly be conveying to them a sense of your urgency for them in this, a personal concern for them, a call for them to exercise vigilance in their life towards a serious threat to them.

So this is Paul telling us there is a very real threat to your life that involves spiritual imprisonment.

This is an ardent call then to spiritual alertness. It's very easy, unfortunately, in this life to live apathetically.

[5 : 57] It's very easy, don't you find, to live absentmindedly about your faith? It can happen. It's so many distractions, so many reasons for us to be pulled away, not just discouraged, but just distracted by the busyness of life, even in good things, and almost go on autopilot in dealing with the matters of life and forget there's a God in heaven that we're worshiping in everything we say and do.

in all of that, beloved, this spiritual reality doesn't go away. You may not be aware of it in any given moment or situation of your life, but you are constantly in this spiritual reality of spiritual warfare and battle.

So this is a call to spiritual alertness. Now, that's why the New American Standard that I use translates this with the insistent, you see to it.

You see to it. Why, again, the urgent warning? Because without this spiritual alertness, this spiritual awareness, something very, very bad will happen to you.

Not can, will. That's just how serious this is. You will be taken captive by the vilest being in the universe, even in a moment.

[7 : 30] The word that's translated as take you captive is only used here in the New Testament.

And it speaks of this. Listen to this. When I read this, it was alarming to me. Takes you captive can be translated and understood this way. Kidnapped. Taken hostage.

Enslaved. Or taken prisoner. Hence the first point. Spiritual imprisonment. That's what we're dealing with. These are powerfully negative concepts.

Taken captive. For me, that's a very descriptive term which many commentators said has the fuller meaning of you becoming someone's prey.

So now we're taking it even a step further in Paul's meaning here in this little verse. It could mean you being taken as the spoils of plunder in a conquest over you.

[8 : 36] The victorious army gets the plunder. So you become prey. And I hope that you understand that you being prey in this world is a very real concept that you live with every moment of every day.

because you have an adversary who doesn't rest or sleep. And for long, long, long periods of time he has practiced his art of patiently waiting to pounce.

And he's super good at it. Does the idea of becoming prey to someone alarm you? It should. It shouldn't surprise you as a Christian especially if you've been in this church for a little while to hear that there are forces of evil in this world which actively seek to harm, exploit, abuse, and deceive you.

And so 1 Peter 5.8 Let's put this up on the screen. 1 Peter 5.8 reads Be of sober spirit. Look now.

Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. That was Peter's admonition to the Christians he wrote to.

[9 : 59] Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Or you will become prey. Pray to this deception from this evil being that has your ruin at heart.

Now, there are two kinds as I mentioned earlier of spiritual enslavement common to human beings. Common to every human being.

One kind applies to non-Christians. Unbelieving people. The other kind only applies to Christians.

Paul is only dealing with the Christian kind of spiritual captivity in Colossians 2.8. However, I want to deal with this.

What is the difference between how non-Christians and Christians experience spiritual captivity? Christianity? How does it differ for a non-Christian to experience this work of the devil as opposed to a Christian experiencing this work of the devil?

[11 : 15] Here is the Christian kind or the non-Christian kind. Let me start with that one because I think it will help make more sense when we get into the Christian kind. What is the non-Christian kind?

We begin with a person who is spiritually owned by Satan. Now, pause. When you sit in a church and you hear preachers talk like this, there is always a risk when you listen to Christians speak like this or you go to the Bible and you hear language like this and you hear things like Satan and the devil and God and heaven and hell.

and you hear people talk about sin and spiritual captivity and imprisonment to spiritual things and even an evil being who is set on your ruin.

And if this is new to you, you don't have a reference for where to put all of that. And it sounds strange. It sounds weird. And you might even ask, could this be real?

Is what this guy's up here talking about with the devil and God and the devil out to get me and take my soul captive?

[12 : 33] Is that real? Now, let me ask you a question to help you evaluate this as you listen to it now over the next few minutes. How do you explain the wrong that you do?

How do you explain the evil that you think and do in your life? Where does it come from? Why is it there?

Is there evil in the world? Is there evil in you? Why do you do wrong things? You ever lied?

You ever stolen anything? You ever kept something from someone? Hurt someone? Anyone intentionally said something about somebody that was designed to hurt? To pain them?

There's a whole host of things we could talk about that we do. Where does evil come from and why do we do it? So when we talk in terms of spiritual warfare, these are the kinds of things that we're trying to deal with in life.

[13 : 35] How do we push through life and navigate life the reality that there is this spiritual warfare warfare that is going on in my life?

Not just in the world, in my life. And how do I answer that? So again, we begin with a person who is spiritually owned by Satan.

What in the world is all of that about? Well, if you go to Colossians chapter 1 and look at something very interesting that Paul has noted for us in verse 13, we can begin to answer this.

What does it mean that someone is spiritually owned by Satan and how does all of that work? For he rescued us from the domain of darkness.

All right? So there's a rescue operation going on here and God is doing it. And he transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

[14 : 46] Now what this is telling us in very brief language is that there was a deliverance that took place. We, the Christians that are being spoken of here, we were delivered from and transferred to.

This is positional. How does this deliverance then happen to someone who is in bondage to sin and Satan?

Now I'm not making a big case right now to prove to you that you're in bondage to sin and Satan. I've simply challenged you to think about the fact that evil is in you and you do evil.

How have you addressed that in your life? What are you doing about the wrong that you do? All people are born into this world in sin.

Now hear this carefully, beloved. You sin because it's your nature to do so. You don't become a sinner when you get to a certain age in your life and commit your first sin.

[15 : 53] You commit your first sin because you were already a sinner by nature. You just needed an opportunity to prove it. And if any of you have raised little kids, you didn't have to teach them to be little sinners.

They came prepackaged that way. So all of us just need an opportunity to let it out because it's in there. This is what it means to be owned by the devil.

You have a nature bent on sin. You are separated from God by that sin. And you are headed to a devil's hell because God cannot receive you into heaven in that spiritual condition.

And we all start out life like that. You say, Jeff, that's awful. I know. And so God had to do an awful, miraculous thing to help us deal with that.

And the awful thing that he did was sacrifice his own son in our place. I'm going to tell you about that. It's also a wonderful and miraculous thing.

[17 : 06] How can you be brought from spiritual death and enslavement to Satan and into spiritual life and freedom to God?

That's the most relevant, important series of questions any human can ever face. The answer is found in verse 14 of chapter 1 in two little words.

words. I don't know how your translation reads. Mine says this very simply and matter-of-factly. In whom? In whom should be capitalized.

In whom? It refers to God's beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So it could read this way. For God rescued us from the domain of darkness we lived in in Satan and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In whom we have redemption, freedom, and the forgiveness of sins. That's all packaged in what he's saying here.

[18 : 16] Jesus Christ offers you freedom from sin, death, and Satan through his tender, loving, and gracious forgiveness for all the sins which you've committed against God.

Say, Jeff, when did I commit sins against God? From the time that you were born, you began living out of the sin nature within you. The makeup, the DNA of your life is to sin because you're born in sin.

And so, when you committed your first sin, you were committing sin against your creator. We were not created to sin. We were created to live righteously before our creator.

And that righteous life was a reflection of the goodness of God at work in our lives. Our lives before sin in Adam and Eve reflected God's goodness in every way without any marring, without any flaws.

The good character of God was seen in Adam and Eve before the fall into sin in a perfect way. And that's the way God designed it. So now we are in need of being recreated.

[19 : 32] We are in need of being born again out of and from our nature of sin and into sinlessness and righteousness.

Say, Jeff, what are you talking about? Your nature. Your being. The change of who you are. Jeff, can somebody actually, can a human being actually experience a change in their very nature, in their very being?

Can a human being be taken from being this kind of human being and be made into another, completely different, opposite, antithetical kind of being? And I say, yes, according to the Bible.

That's what Paul just said. You were transferred from one domain into another. Beloved, you were owned and operating in one domain under one master and you were taken from that and put into another one under an entirely different master.

Death to life. Satan to Jesus. It's that marked. It's that serious. It's that sober. Living in spiritual imprisonment over on this side with Satan means death.

[20 : 47] Death. So those two little words in whom refer to the Lord Jesus. We were taken again, I say, taken from Satan's domain of spiritual darkness and placed in a very different kingdom with a very different king.

The kingdom is that of God's beloved son, the Lord and king, Jesus Christ. To him be all the glory. Paul also told us in chapter one, look at verse 21.

With me, if you would. And now he's going to add to this. Stay with me. And although you were notice the language formerly, formally alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, alienated and engaged in hostile deeds toward whom?

God. Formally, that was your life, he says in verse 21. Yet, verse 22, he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

That's what you get. In Jesus Christ, you are presented to God holy, blameless, and beyond accusation. How did you go from being spiritually dead and imprisoned by Satan, owned by him, to now being holy and blameless and above accusation by the God of the universe, standing before him pure and clean in your souls?

[22 : 22] How? I told you. I asked you and I told you just a minute ago. Can a human being be taken from that and brought over and made that? And the Bible says absolutely.

In whom? In whom? That's how? Through Christ. You get a new life. Now listen, not a new chapter in the same book.

No. That's right. You get a new book. A fresh page. And guess who's writing this one? The hand of God himself on the tablets of your heart.

You get a new life, friend. This is why preachers love preaching this. We have to talk about all the bad news and tell you just how rotten you are to the core before we can tell you what God's done to take care of that problem.

It's his son, Jesus. Let me put this up on the screen so you can see it. I want you to see this in writing. Now trace this with me if you would. Every human being is spiritually enslaved to Satan and in need of God to free them from spiritual captivity.

[23 : 33] How? God sent his son to do God's work of freeing his people from sin. This is all God. The issue here is that you stand guilty before God separated from life with God and spiritually dead towards God due to your unforgiven sins against God.

the issue for every person would be their unforgiven sins against God. That is the issue that separates you from the holiness of the Lord.

You can be transferred from one spiritual kingdom to another only by the person of the Lord Jesus Christ because he's the only person with the power to do this for you.

So by God through the person of his only son Jesus Christ you can be freed and forgiven from sin. Your spiritual freedom however comes at the cost of Jesus dying in your place.

the cross was where Jesus suffered the punishment you deserve for your sins against God.

[24 : 56] Now I'd like an exercise real quick. You can do this. I'd like for you to just think in your mind right now when was the last time you knowingly sinned? Knowingly sinned.

Whether you've asked God to forgive you for that sin yet or not. When was the last time you knowingly sinned? I know I did this. This was wrong. This was sin against the Lord. This was sin perhaps against another person.

Now maybe you've asked for forgiveness. You've confessed it and it's done. It's under the blood of the Lord. I just want you to reflect and remember when was that? What did you do?

Just think. Don't answer out loud. That one sin put you in desperate need for Jesus Christ to go to the cross and suffer a humiliating torturous death to free you from that one sin because that sin was enough to keep you out of heaven and get you at devil's hell.

It only took one one time that is the power of corruption and that is the greater power of God to cleanse it and to give you a new life.

[26 : 19] But it took the death of his son and his blood being drained out of his body for that to happen. You say, Jeff, just that one sin I'm thinking about right now, I mean, it really doesn't add up as one of the biggies.

Yeah, that one sin. Does that help put it in perspective for us? This is an amazing reality. By dying in your place, Jesus paid your penalty for that one sin which was enough to keep you out of heaven.

And what was the penalty that you deserve for even just that one sin? Death. You deserve for God to kill you and punish you in hell forever.

Now, folks, I didn't make these rules. I'm just telling you this is what it says. This is God's economy. And the good news is that he's done something about it for us.

Only through the sacrifice of Jesus dying for you could God justly and legally declare that Jesus paid your penalty for you.

[27 : 32] Somebody has to pay for what you've done. Jesus paid it. Jesus dying in your place purchases your freedom. So, when you trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, listen, God credits the blessings and benefits of Jesus' life and death to you.

And, he then declares you freed from the power, the tyranny, the guilt, the shame, the penalty of Satan's sin and evil and God forgives you for all your sins, past, present, and future forever.

So, that nothing in the universe has the power to erase his forgiveness from your life. Is that hallelujah? Knowing you the way you know you, doesn't that astound you?

That God would do that for you? It does me. Folks, I couldn't get over my salvation, much less God calling me to preach.

Me? Now, as astounding and wonderful as all of that is, I've done all of that for this reason. Paul isn't giving his warning about spiritual captivity to non-Christians in this passage.

[29 : 07] It's not what he's talking about. he's warning believers. People who have already experienced this one for all freedom and forgiveness through their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

That's what verse 8 is aimed at. You understand why I went through all of that with you. It's very important that I establish with you the reality of your need for the forgiveness of God for your sins.

before we begin to talk about the kind of captivity that Paul now turns to. In verse 8, Christians who have been delivered from Satan's domain of darkness cannot be returned there.

Hallelujah. Because they have been permanently placed by God himself in the kingdom of God's holy and beloved son where they are kept secure forever by him.

That would be the end of Romans 8. If you want a passage, look at the end of Romans 8. And it will fill you full of hope and goodness in your security.

[30 : 23] The kind of imprisonment then, the kind of captivity and enslavement Paul is warning against here is something which only Christians can experience. So please listen carefully.

Let's put this up on the screen for Michelle. This brings us to our second kind of spiritual captivity. The first was spiritual imprisonment where non-believers, unbelievers, are kept imprisoned in their sin nature to Satan, separated from life with God.

Now we have spiritual impoverishment. Spiritual impoverishment. Hear me carefully. Can non-Christians be spiritually impoverished?

Technically, no. They cannot. Why? Those who have not been transferred from spiritual death to spiritual life, those who do not trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior, listen, remain spiritually dead.

big difference. Please hear this distinction carefully. If you are dead, your condition is not impoverished.

[31 : 40] You don't lack quality of life, you lack life. Big difference. And that's why Paul's urgency, both for people who are imprisoned in sin, to be released through trust in Jesus Christ.

And now for Christians who know Jesus and live with Jesus, not to be deceived and brought back into spiritual impoverishment as if they'd never been saved and delivered.

Okay? That's what we're dealing with. Let's put this up there. This is the next one in the screen. Spiritual poverty is something that happens to Christians when we fail to seek our treasure in Christ alone.

In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That's Colossians 2. In whom are hidden. There's that in whom again.

In our context, as Paul intensely warns the Colossian Christians, the word captive is used figuratively of carrying someone away from the truth into slavery of error.

[32 : 56] Into the slavery of error. Now let that term settle in on you for a second. Don't run by slavery. Slavery to error. What does that mean?

Because he's talking to Christians. That got my attention. The slavery, what a horrible thought. who would want to live as a slave to falsehood and lies all their life?

No matter how much pleasure seeking they're doing, no matter how much apathy is involved in their life, how would you like to have to go to bed every night and push the thought out of your mind that really what you're doing is living in slavery to error and lies?

Ugh! Who would want to suffer the grief and shame and loneliness, the guilt, the heartache, the depression, the scandal, the all-around despair of living according to empty lies?

And yet, millions and millions of people throughout our world live like this all day, every single day of their lives. Many Christians are suffering under the deception and lies of Satan every day of their lives, falling prey to these things.

[34 : 16] Christians, robbed of joy, gratitude, hope, robbed of the wonderful meaning in life of living your life back to God as a gift in service to other people, robbed of that because they're so dialed into themselves.

This is the work of the devil. This is the work of our own hearts. Now, you might ask, Jeff, come on, who would live like that? Who would live like that?

Listen, people living in spiritual deception live like that. And as I say, even Christians can live in the deceptive counterfeits of Satan's schemes.

Let's put this up there for them, Michelle. 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 and obeying what Paul calls your lusts of deceit from Ephesians 4 22.

That's all it takes in the moment, Christian is for what you're desiring most in your heart in that moment to be something that you're desiring more than you're desiring to please and honor the Lord in just in that moment.

[35 : 37] That's all it takes. And so Paul is saying you see to it that you are not taken captive to that. Serious business.

Is it possible for you to have knowledge of something and for that knowledge to actually be false and yet you think that this is this is the way there is a way that seems right to a man and in the end it leads to what death.

is it also possible for you to have knowledge of something and yet not understand how to apply that to your life?

Yes, absolutely. So this is what Paul says in verse 4. Look at chapter 2 verse 4. I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.

Colossians 2 4. I am telling you this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. Wow.

[36 : 57] He tells us up in verse 2 that he wants their hearts to be encouraged and knit together in love because he wants to see each of them attain to look all the wealth wealth yes spiritual wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery.

What is that mystery? Tell us what it is Paul. We can't stand it. Christ himself. That's the treasure. And I want you to attain to the full measure of the treasure of Jesus Christ himself.

But there's things that work against that in your life. And if you're not careful you'll be taken captive to it. And you'll miss the point of living for God. How tragic would that be?

So now he builds on this concern that they not be deluded and drawn away. He spells out what it is that threatens to spiritually enslave them.

So be alert. Be alert that you don't believe what is rubbish. What is counterfeit. What is unfit. Unfit.

[38 : 18] So the effect here if we go back to chapter 1 verse 13 the effect here is this. He 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. So it's this. You see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception because you see to it and understand that God has done this rescuing work in your life.

God has transferred you. God has secured you. God has delivered you and forgiven you. That's how God has now established you in life.

And so root yourself in what God has established you in and don't look away from that so that you aren't drawn away from those roots and the treasure of who Jesus is and believe these deluded lies, these false impressions and traditions of men that really have as their author Satan.

sobering. Can you imagine how people who don't read the Bible and don't follow God would react to what they're hearing right now if they heard this?

[39 : 41] I don't know. They wouldn't like it. But if God was working in their heart to open their eyes to these realities, it could draw them. that's the effect here.

Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind and engaged in evil deeds in your spiritual imprisonment to Satan, yet now God has reconciled you.

Reconciled means to bring together. Now God has taken you from over there and brought you together with him. You two are now knit, whereas you were separated, now you're knit.

That's reconciled. Why would you ever want to go back? Say, Jeff, I don't, but you do. You do go back. I do too. But what do we do?

Even in a moment? Well, Paul continues because he wants us to understand. Look again with me at 2.8. See to it, you, you the implied subject, you see to it, that no one takes you captive through, notice, philosophy.

[40 : 56] Philosophy. What is he talking about? Here, literally, it's the love of wisdom. Now this is what people do. I've been guilty of this, you may have, the love of wisdom.

It came to be used as a general title for various systems of thought in the ancient world, for different approaches to life, even various religious ideas.

So if it dealt, listen now, did I put that up there? Let's put that up there. I think I have a slide for that. There it is. If it dealt with God, if it dealt with 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. That's the bottom line. Philosophy that is not according to Jesus Christ.

This is the wisdom of man that is not according to Christ. It's very important that you tag that onto the end. Not everything that men say is necessarily wrong.

[42 : 12] You've read poets, you've read philosophers that have said some bright things, maybe even some helpful things. But whatever is not according to Christ is empty.

That's where he goes next. Empty deception. Do you see that in verse 8? Don't be taken captive through philosophy and empty deception. Let's throw that one up there, Michelle.

Empty deception identifies the problem with the philosophical system that Paul has in mind here. What's the problem with the philosophy? Empty deception can also be rendered hollow pretense or futile trickery.

That's what's going on behind the scenes. That's what Satan doesn't want you to see as the hook. He camouflages the bait, right?

Or the hook with the bait. He doesn't want you to see the hollow pretense, the futile trickery that's going on here. So Paul is obviously using philosophy in a negative way.

[43 : 14] this is not good. So it's very likely possible that this has even happened to you because this goes on all the time.

This philosophy comes down the pike at you. We have textbooks full of this. We have training manuals full of this. We even have lots and lots and lots of stuff that tells you about how to navigate life, how to parent your children, how to be married, how to do your job, how to live a successful life, blah, blah, blah, ad nauseam.

There's so much out and a lot of it has a Christian stamp on it. And I learned a long time ago that just because it's in the Christian bookstore doesn't mean it's good. Doesn't mean you need to read it or study it or give your life to it.

There's lots of philosophy out there, tons of it. It may sound and seem weighty, weighty, oh yes, intellectually deep and stimulating to you, sophisticated, legitimate, even trustworthy.

It may fascinate you. It may even make sense to you, stroke your pride, and even seem to help you at first.

[44 : 35] But in reality, Paul says it is a hollow, empty deception leading you away from Christ. That's, oh, I hate that stuff.

I'll tell you straight up, there are things I hate in the world and this is one of them. I'm passionate about this. I can't stand to see God's people duped. This is the shepherd standing out in the wilderness, leading them to good pasture, and like a good shepherd, he's standing there with his staff and maybe he's got his dogs around him.

I've seen these guys do this. It's awesome to watch. And he's watching and he's vigilant. He's got hawk eyes, right? And he's looking. And he sees a threat in the distance. The sheep don't know it.

Why don't the sheep know it? It's because they're stupid? No. Why don't they know it? They're not looking for it. Why aren't they looking for it? Because they're eating and drinking. They've got somebody else looking out.

So he sees it. Now what does he do? He passionately intervenes. What's he going to do? Just let him come in and tear him apart? No. His adrenaline kicks in.

[45 : 42] He immediately begins to get a plan together. He's willing to put himself between the danger and what he's protecting. That's what God's word does.

This is what the truth does for us. Now you don't need me and Greg to do this for you all the time. We do this on more of a macro level. We enter into your lives and do it through encouragements, admonishments, rebukes, counseling, discipleship.

In all these ways we enter into your life and act as shepherds helping to provide guardianship from these things that would take you captive. But you can do this every day of your life and you should. Why?

Because the Holy Spirit lives in you and you have the truth. So that's what we're encouraging you to do now is to take this truth and live it out and not be taken captive in your life to these things.

It doesn't matter if it fascinates you. It's a hollow deception leading you away from Christ. Let's put this up there, Michelle. Whatever leads you away from Christ impoverishes you.

[46 : 46] I just want you to see that. Whatever leads you away from Christ impoverishes you. There are times in your life when you go through an ordeal or a situation and you don't feel close to Jesus.

It's as if God doesn't even exist in that moment. Something has taken you captive and led you away from Christ in that moment. And whatever is doing that is impoverishing you.

It's not your friend. No matter how much it fascinates you, stimulates you. Now, the source of this empty philosophical deception is twofold.

Paul tells us in the verse, see to it, you see to it, that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the traditions of men.

The tradition of men. 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.

[47 : 59] Again, believer, beloved, that is the point. It's not according to Jesus. Whatever is not according to Jesus impoverishes you as a Christian.

Stay away from it. And then this, let me put this up here. This is a wonderful quote by Sam Storms. This is a philosophy that was conceived in the mind of man.

The tradition of men is what he's talking about and did not come by means of divine revelation. So he's saying this is not from God. It may well be compatible with and confirm human traditions and even make sense when looked at from this worldly perspective, but notice it has nothing in it of God.

And that's the issue. Now, don't you think that Satan hides the part where it says, but it has nothing in it of God. That's what he hides.

He doesn't want you to know that. He's actively prowling, looking for prey. He wants to ambush you.

[49 : 14] So he sets the trap. And if you didn't have a greater grace in the God of heaven, you'd have no hope. But you do have a greater grace in a greater God who loves you and lives in you, and he's given you the weapon of warfare that can defeat all of that.

The question is, will you pick it up and learn to use it? Will you become skilled? I especially would say this to all the fathers and husbands in the room, because it's our responsibility to take up this weapon of warfare and fight on behalf of our families.

Second, this philosophy has its source. I told you it was twofold, the tradition of men and the elementary principles of this world. The elementary principles of this world.

You see that right there in the text. Now, there are two main interpretations. I will never do this interpretation thing with you unless I need to make a point about why there are different interpretations.

Sometimes I'll just tell that to you and then tell you what I've gone with. That's normally what I'll do. I'll try to land and just take off with it. But sometimes I need to give you a little more. This is one of those times.

[50 : 41] Just a little bit. Two main. One, one interpretation of elementary principles is this. 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 really beggarly, impoverished, childish, immature, even counterfeit and false. They amount to rules and regulations based on worldly wisdom where man invents his own way to deal with life.

So it's doing what is right or wise in your own eyes. The second interpretation has to do with angelic spirits gone bad.

This is a little harder to discern and work through. So this is my shot at it for you. It could be referring to demons in this spiritual warfare, demons who spin their falsehoods in the minds of those they've blinded.

God. So which one is it? Well, for my own part, I see within the context proof for both. Now, I'm not copping out on you. I'm telling you the truth.

[51 : 52] I see proof for both views to have some validity. I really didn't understand some of the commentators who wanted to make a dichotomy out of this instead of seeing in the context.

Both of these interpretations have validity and seem to make the same point. Paul mentions worshipping angels in verse 18, which would be demons.

And then in verse 20, he once again picks up on worldly ideas and rules and regulations being prescribed on Christians. So both ideas are in the text and both fit the context.

So I'm going to adopt both. I think we're dealing with angelic spirits and demonic spirits here. And I think we're dealing with the way that all of this gets fixed in the minds of people so that they're led astray from what is in the treasure of Jesus.

They're distracted away from. You understand subterfuge. You've seen this in various movies and probably read it in books and stuff.

[52 : 53] You know, that's a common tactic. A what do they call it? When you're going to create a create a thing over here to distract when the real things going on over here.

Help me with this. Diversion. Create a diversion. That's what's going on in a lot of this. You see, look, Satan, as a Christian, Satan can't take your salvation from you.

But he sure can get you to do this. Squirrel. And that's what he wants. That's what he wants. And that's, Paul doesn't want that for you.

The point, look, the point of all of this and these interpretations that I've thrown out, is this. It's man-made. Traditions of men and elementary principles of the world are man-made wisdom.

And God calls that foolishness. And it will lead you to ruin, heartache, despair. It will keep you in bondage to the things of this world.

[53 : 55] world. It doesn't come from God. And no matter how wise it may seem or sound, because it doesn't come from God, it will not lead you to God.

Or to the spiritual riches and wealth of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So I'm going to put this up here again for you to see the next slide. Beloved, mark it down. What springs from God leads back to God.

God, if what you believe does not lead you to God, it did not come from God. And you should be very concerned about that. This brings us to the point of verse eight.

Paul says, if it is not according to Christ, see that tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Jesus.

it will deceive you, rob you, use you, abuse you, and then it will leave you to suffer in your spiritual impoverishment. When you put your faith in man's answers, in man-made ideas of life and truth to include your own ideas, you're embracing empty deceit and doctrines of demons.

[55 : 13] Is that sobering enough? Do you want to live by the doctrines of demons or the doctrines of Christ? There's only one trustworthy, lasting answer to the human problems of spiritual imprisonment and spiritual impoverishment.

It is to be in Christ. That's my third point I'll put up here. I'll just make a few comments and we'll be done. In Christ. We're going to do more with this third point over the next couple of weeks, so I felt like I could just say it, introduce it, and then we're done.

All right? In Christ. The point of all of this, the point of all that I've been doing with you in verse eight is in Jesus Christ, you have spiritual wealth, riches, wisdom for decisions, assurance of understanding in the best ways for you to live and approach life and answer the hardships and difficulties of life.

If you haven't already experienced, you're going to experience death in this life. What are you going to do with that? People and things that you love and care for are going to die because that's the way of this world.

What are you going to do with that? Living in Jesus Christ gives you a true knowledge of God and it gives you freedom from the power and penalty of sin, gives you the forgiveness of God for all your sins, and it gives you real closeness, relationship with God.

[56 : 41] Only through Jesus can you have all of that. Now, what you receive from men cannot compare with what you receive in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you take from men or will you take from Christ? It comes down to that. The man made rules, the rituals, the ideas, the philosophies.

Even the diagnoses about about your life cannot compare to the freedom and forgiveness found in Jesus. So will you be fettered to men or be free in Christ?

I'm talking about in the way you live. The way you parent. The way you are married. The way you go about your daily life as you drive and interact with people.

As you check out at the stores. As you interpret the evil in the world. And all the things that are coming at us. Here's my final quote I want to put up here from scripture and we'll end with this.

[57 : 56] 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.

So Paul insists you, you see to it that no one takes you captive with anything that is not according to Jesus Christ. Walk with him.

Let's pray. Almighty God and father, it's always a joy and a treasure to speak of the joy and treasure that is Jesus Christ, our Lord and savior.

So we thank you for your son given to us on the cross, raised on the third day to become the proof of the first fruits of our own resurrection.

if we will continue and persevere in faith, looking only unto Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of that faith so that we can deal with the issues of life and not become entangled by all of these schemes of Satan and these.

[59 : 12] Empty lusts. And deceitful lusts that want to draw us away from walking with Jesus. Sober us, God, allow us to sit under these kinds of messages and be sobered in our hearts and be drawn into a deeper devotion to you so that we can serve you more faithfully so that we can build up treasure in heaven and make the most of this life for you.

Burn that into our hearts and souls, God, that that would be the highest motivation of who we are and what we do and why we do it. We thank you again for the love and forgiveness that we have and find in Jesus Christ and in him alone and it's to his glory that we pray all these things.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.