

THE PREEMINENCE
AND
SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST



Sermon Series Notes



“How To Be Spiritual” (Col.3:1-17)

Danny Hodges - 3479

INTRO: Well, it didn't take long to get a negative email from last week's message. Someone suggested that I was somehow belittling Messianic Jews who still observe the OT feasts. Someone else wrote and scolded me for making it easier for young people to drink alcohol by mentioning that Jesus not only turned water into wine, but that He drank an alcoholic beverage at some point in His time here on planet earth (Matt.11:18-19). I said last weekend that if you heard Part 1 without hearing Part 2, you may leave with some misunderstandings. What was the point of last week's message? That we will never become biblically spiritual by observing religious dietary laws, religious feasts, festivals, or even by strict self-denial. OT dietary laws, etc. are shadows. The realities of what they shadow are found and fulfilled in Christ. Last week was “How Not To Be Spiritual.” This week is “How To Be Spiritual.” Now, when I refer to biblical spirituality, what I mean is having a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, and growing in that relationship. Growth will be manifest by us becoming more like Christ. Certainly He is the most spiritual person who ever walked the planet! And yet when He was here he came into conflict with the people who were considered to be the most spiritual of the day, Pharisees and Teachers of the Law. The Pharisees fasted twice a week, tithed even on their salt and pepper, observed all the religious feasts, didn't hang out with publicans and sinners, and diligently studied the Scriptures. Yet Jesus said they looked good on the outside, but on the inside they were full of greed and self-indulgence. He said the devil was their Father, not God. So despite how religious they were, they were not spiritual.

Jesus was condemned by these same people because He “hung out” with publicans and sinners. He repeatedly broke the religious rules of the day (Sabbath days, touching dead people, lepers, talking to women in public - even a Samaritan woman! His disciples eating with unwashed hands, breaking all kinds of religious traditions.). He did not follow the Pharisaical two day per week fast, and He seemed to really enjoy eating. He accepted a lot of dinner invitations, and He was not a teetotaler. (He came “eating and drinking” and was accused of being a drunkard and a glutton.) His first miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding feast. Sometimes biblical spirituality does not conform to the religious standards of the day. Our passage for today will not only tell us the path to biblical spirituality, but it will also give us a glimpse of what it looks like.

Note: The false teaching that had infiltrated the church at Colosse made spirituality something only the spiritually elite could attain (which is exactly what the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law did). The truth is, biblical spirituality is attainable by anyone – rich, poor, educated, uneducated, red, yellow, black or white. Our text gives three overall points of biblical spirituality; then four practical points of maintaining it.

I. THREE POINTS OF BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

A. Setting My Heart and Mind on Things Above (vv.1-4)

* Read vv.1-4 from atop a ladder; When I received Jesus Christ as my Lord & Savior, my perspective on everything changed dramatically. I lost my love for the things of this present world, and a love for the things of heaven was birthed in my soul. See I John 2:15-17; II Cor.5:17. Ever since being born again, my progress in the Christian life has been dependent on keeping my mind set on things above. See Rom.8:5.

* To “set” is in the present imperative, meaning a continuous, ongoing effort. My heart is my affections, passions, etc. My mind is my focus, my reasoning, etc.

* Heb.12: 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

* The first and most vital requirement for being biblically “spiritual” is to get my heart and my head “in the clouds.” This begins when I am born again.

B. Put to Death My Earthly Nature (vv.5-10)

* 1. Sexual immorality = “porneian,” from which we get pornographic; 2. Impurity = the imagination of a filthy mind; 3. Lust = uncontrolled sexual desire; 4. Evil desires = “inordinate affection,” an affection for something or someone that is against the will of God; 5. Greed = the love of money/material possessions; 6. Anger = a slow, simmering emotion; 7. Rage = a volcano; you blow your top; 8. Malice = a good feeling about someone else’s bad fortune; 9. Slander = blasphemy, evil speaking; 10. Filthy Communication = vile conversation; 11. Lying

* When I received Jesus Christ as my Savior, my flesh died and my spirit was made new (Eph.2:1ff). My old desires were crucified. My old attitudes were crucified. The daily challenge since has been to keep the “old man” in the grave. Note: This is not done by strict self-denial, nor do I chip at each particular sin one at a time.

* Read from “The Changed Life” (pp.2-3).

* Note: I am not saying no to the flesh in order to get closer to the Lord. I am saying no to the flesh because I am close to the Lord. And I cannot mortify the flesh in my own power or by my own will. The flesh is put to death as I am consumed with Christ.

* Illustration: Ever notice what happens to people when they fall in love? They are consumed now with the object of their love. All their affections are now focused on this person. The challenge through the years in keeping that love relationship alive is to never allow anything or anyone to damage or destroy it. Our third point is crucial in this regard.

C. Clothe Myself with Christ (vv.12-14)

* Compassion = “bowels of mercies” (goes beyond feelings, involves actions); Kindness (it describes wine which has grown mellow with age and has lost its harshness); Humility = the absence of self-exaltation; Gentleness (meekness); Patience (longsuffering); Forbearance and forgiveness (which tells us that even spiritual people are not perfect); Love (which binds them all together).

* John 13:35; Verse 11 speaks of tremendous barriers that have been removed when a person comes to know Christ. **No Greek or Jew.** This does not mean that you became the same culturally. A Jew in Christ may still choose to have his kids circumcised, eat kosher, celebrate religious feasts. But if spiritual, he will not pressure his Gentile (or Jewish) brothers and sisters to do so. And he will not think of himself more spiritual as a result of these things. These things do not make him more holy/spiritual. **No slave or free.** Paul’s letter to Philemon had astounding social implications. Read Philemon 1:15-16. We cannot appreciate the truth behind this as they could in that day! **No barbarian or Scythian.** This is fascinating. To be barbaric is to be brutally cruel. Barbarians had no civilized standards. The Scythians originated in ancient Iran and are the worst barbarians in history. They would scalp their enemies, then use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims! The idea here is that in Christ people that were separated by culture, social status, lifestyle, belief, etc. etc. are now one in Christ (Eph.2:14). And to be spiritual means that I accept others who are in Christ despite our sometimes extremely different pasts, natural and cultural differences, and personal views on non-essential religious things. A biblically spiritual person will not break fellowship with another Christian over any of these issues. This is a key characteristic of a spiritual person. And it is the exact opposite of the Pharisee. The Pharisees were separatists (Pharisee = “set apart one”).

* Rom.5:5...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by *the* Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

* Read Eph.4:22-24; 5:1-2

* Illustration: I used to imitate Roy Rogers. Saturday mornings on TV from 8-9 am I would watch Roy Rogers, go out and saddle my pony and ride all morning, looking for bad guys. I had a saddle and a bridle that looked like the one Roy used for his horse Trigger. I had double holster cap guns. My horse was named Nancy, and she was not a Palomino in reality, but I imagined her as Trigger. Earlier in my life I imitated Superman. Superman – faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings with a single bound. As a young boy I would hold my hand out of the car window pretending my hand was Superman. I took a t-shirt and drew the Superman insignia on it. I made a cape. I imagined I was almost done in by one of my evil neighbors coming against me with kryptonite. Obviously I survived because I'm here to share these wonderful stories with you today! Go back a few more years and we come to my Tarzan era. Lots of actors have played Tarzan over the years, but my favorite is Johnny Weissmuller. His Tarzan yell has been dubbed into pretty much every Tarzan since. Nobody could yell quite like him. (Show video.) Tarzan was one hero that perhaps captivated my life like no other. I really wanted to move to Africa because I believed I was Tarzan reincarnate. I believed there was a Jane waiting for me there, and we would live happily ever after in the jungle. Me, Jane, Cheetah, and our only son. We would name him "Boy." Folks, near our house at this time in my life were some woods that were covered with vines. I would safety pin two wash cloths around my waist (a Tarzan outfit is pretty easy to come by!), go to these woods and swing on the vines, trying my best to imitate that famous Tarzan yell. I was telling this story a few years ago and someone in the church was so moved that they sent me a gift (show Tarzan wash cloths). You want to know the most unbelievable part of this story? I was so consumed with the Johnny Weissmuller Tarzan that sometimes today my body actually takes on his form. (Show power point of me as Tarzan preparing to do my Tarzan yell.)

II. FOUR POINTS FOR MAINTAINING BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY (vv.15-17)

A. Let The Peace Of Christ Rule In Your Heart (v.15)

* The word "rule" describes an official at an athletic event, similar to a present day umpire. If one is walking in step with the Spirit, then the Spirit will be calling the game of your life!

* Rom.8: 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

* Gal.5:25

B. Let The Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly (v.16a)

* NOTE: Peace is not the **only** criteria for discerning God's will. Many people say they have a peace, yet ignore the clear Word of God. Peace that ignores the Word of God is called deception!

- Jer.17: 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? 10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind.

- Heb.4: 12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

* Rom.12:2

* Psalm 119: 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

* Note: If I am going to be spiritual, I MUST be filled with the Word of God. This means that we must be meditating on the Word daily, talking to others about the Word regularly.

* Deut.6: 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

* Deut.11: 18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

20 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates...

* Joshua 1: 8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

* John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

C. Sing and Be Sung To (v.16b)

* How many were ministered to just through the singing today?

* When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they sang; Num.21: 16 ...Gather the people together and I will give them water."17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Judges 5:1 On that day (victory over the king of Canaan) Deborah and Barak sang; King David was not only a singer but a songwriter; In II Chron.5 when Solomon had the Ark brought to the temple, they all sang to the Lord; II Chron.29: 30 King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness... Ezra 3: 10 When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. 11 With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love to Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid; Nehemiah 12: 42...The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah. 43 And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away; Acts 16: 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose; Matthew 26: 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" (Note: Jesus was troubled this night more than he ever had been at any Passover meal. How that hymn must have ministered to him during this dark hour of His life!)

* Eph.5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

* What a tremendous ministry you have to me as you sing. I can come in here feeling down, even defeated. I sometimes come here feeling like I have nothing to say in the message, or at least no "oomph" to deliver it. And so many times, during

the song service, my spirit is lifted, I am encouraged. I am filled. Thank you for your ministry to me through your singing!

* Spiritual people sing. And spiritual people receive the ministry of song.

D. Saturate Everything You Do or Say with Christ

* Does this mean I announce before I do or say anything that I am doing or saying this in the name of Jesus Christ?

* 3686. onoma, on'-om-ah; from a presumed der. of the base of G1097 (comp. G3685); a "name" (lit. or fig.) [authority, character]:--called, (+ sur-) name (-d).

* In the authority or character of Jesus. If everything I do or say is "in the name of Jesus," then no rules will be needed...Titus 1: 15 To the pure, all things are pure...

CONCLUSION

* The Greek terms throughout our text are in the present imperative, meaning I am to keep on doing these things day after day! Set my heart and mind on things above, don't feed the flesh, clothe myself with Christ, let the peace of Christ rule in my life, let the Word of Christ dwell in me richly, sing and be sung to, and do everything in the name of Christ. And if I continue to do these things, I will be a biblically spiritual person. I will be like Christ.