**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ Over Legalism, Part 2**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 2:16-17**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to realize their freedom in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 vitally important facts that keep believers from falling prey to legalism.**

**Introduction:**

**I. The circumcision of Christ is sufficient. Vv.11-13**

**II. The cross of Christ is sufficient. Vv.14-15**

**III. The substance of Christ is sufficient. Vv.16-17**

**III. The substance of Christ is sufficient. VV.16-17**

 A. The **command** related to legalism. V.16

 Krino (kpivw) – This is the non-judicial context, which refers to passing an opinion or considering an issue. Therefore, do not sacrifice your freedom in Christ for a set of man-made rules. For Christ is the end of all, of man-made righteousness and self-righteousness.

 (**Romans 14-15; 1 Corinthians 8-10**)

 **Romans 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

 **Galatians 5:1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

 **Titus 1:14-15** not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. **15** To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

 Legalism is useless in restraining the flesh. It is also dangerous because inwardly spiritually dead and rebellious people can conform to a set of standards and religiously ritual practices and behavior.

 “The nineteenth-century American pastor Gardiner Spring warned, ‘A merely moral man may be very scrupulous of duties he owes to his fellowmen, while the infinitely important duties he owes to God are kept entirely out of sight. Of loving and serving God, he knows nothing. Whatever he does or whatever he leaves undone, he does nothing for God. He is honest in his dealings with all except God, he robs none but God, he is thankless and faithless to none but God, he feels contemptuously, and speaks reproachfully of none but God. A just perception of the relations he sustains to God constitutes no part of his principles, and the duties which result from those relations constitute no part of his piety. He may not only disbelieve the Scriptures, but may never read them; may not only disregard the divine authority, but every form of divine worship, and live and die as though he had no concern with God and God had not concern with him. The character of the young man in the Gospel presents a painful and affecting view of the deficiencies of eternal morality (see Mt. 19:16-22). He was not dishonest, nor untrue; he was not impure nor malignant; and not a few of the divine commands he had externally observed. Nay, he says, “All these have I kept.” Nor was his a mere sporadic goodness, but steady and uniform. He had performed these services “from his youth up.” Nor was this all. He professed a willingness to become acquainted with his whole duty. “What lack I yet?” And yet when brought to the test, this poor youth saw that, with all his boasted morality, he could not deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ.’”

 [**John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Colossians & Philemon*, p.117.**]

 Because God has completely reconciled believers to Himself through Jesus Christ, believers must realize and abide in the fact, they are now free from condemnation and the practice of customs originally required for God’s covenant people in the past.

 **Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

 There were false teachers and fellow church members who were pursuing some in the church to observe Jewish dietary, ceremonial laws and holy days. The false teachers sought to impose Mosaic law (**Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14:3-21**).

 **Galatians 2:2** And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

 **Acts 15:1-5** And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." **2** Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. **3** So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. **4** And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. **5** But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

 Because there were shadows of what Christ would fulfill, those under the New Covenant, (like believers of all generations) were not obligated to keep the Old Testament dietary, ceremonial and holy day restrictions.

 **Mark 7:14-19** When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: **15** "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. **16** "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" **17** When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. **18** So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, **19** "because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?"

 **Acts 10:9-15** The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. **10** Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance **11** and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. **13** And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." **14** But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." **15** And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

 **Romans 14:7** For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

 **1 Corinthians 8:8** But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

 **1 Timothy 4:1-5** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **3** forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. **4** For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; **5** for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

 **Hebrews 9:9-10** It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- **10** *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

 “The nature of the early Christian and church gatherings – especially for meals – took on added significance when Gentile converts were now included. For a devout Jew to associate with a Gentile, or “sinner,” was a perilous situation.

 It is well observed in the Gospels when the Pharisees criticized Jews for having table fellowship with “sinners.”

 Although law abiding Jews allowed for the possibility of restricted table fellowship between a Jew and a (unclean) non-Jew i.e. with proselytes, resident aliens, and God-fearers, the rules and regulations were so stringent that they did not promote wide associations.”

 [**Dictionary of Paul and His Letters. P.307**]

 1. **Religious festivals** – The annual religious celebrations of the Jewish calendar. (e.g. Passover, Pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, **Leviticus 23**)

 2. **New moon** – The monthly sacrifice offered on the first day of each month.

 **Numbers 10:10** "Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

 **Numbers 28:11-14** `At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; **12** `three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; **13** `and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. **14** `Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this *is* the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year.

 **Psalm 81:3** Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.

 3. **Sabbath** – The weekly celebration of the seventh day, which pictured God’s rest from creation. The New Testament clearly teaches that Christians are no longer required to observe it.

 **Acts 20:7** Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

 **Romans 14:5-6** One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

 **Galatians 4:10-11** You observe days and months and seasons and years. **11** I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

 B. The **concept** related to legalism. V.17

 These previously mentioned practices under the Old covenant were mere shadows, but Christ is the true reality, of which the shadows pointed to. Jesus is the true fulfillment of the laws requirements, and in Him alone are the requirements cancelled. The truth of the gospel is at stake in these matters, some people only want to make a good showing in the flesh.

 **Galatians 6:12** As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

 But “regardless of the false teachers motivation, Paul sees their teaching and behavior as blameworthy and intolerable. In Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any benefit. **Galatians 5:6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

 **Galatians 6:15** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

 And there can be no distinctions based on food, drink, days, ceremonies, traditions, ethnic heritage, social status or sexual male and female distinctions. In Christ all Christians who have experienced the reality of (**Colossians 2:14-15**) are Abraham’s offspring.”

 [**Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, p. 308 (underlined words are added to the quote)**]

 **Galatians 3:26-29** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

 Paul’s point is simple; true Christianity does not consist of merely keeping of external rules, but on having an inner transformed reality and relationship with Jesus Christ.