

“Philosophical Phraillties”

Colossians 2 v1-10

Scripture Ref: 1 Cor 1:27; Prov 10:14; Eph 4:11-14; 1 Cor 3:10-11; 1 Cor 1:4-9

1. In this next section of his letter, Paul draws us to four different perspectives...
 - a. Philosophy
 - b. Legalism
 - c. Carnality
 - d. The new nature
 - e. Today we cover the first – Philosophy.
2. Remember Paul was dealing with a situation where a “new wind of change” was blowing through the church...
 - a. People were coming in and attempting the change the church, give it a new paradigm, new ways of thinking...
 - b. ...Not unlike what is happening today...
 - c. We have not seen it here yet (I don’t think) but winds of change are blowing in churches where men are seeking to deconstruct church as we know it, and reconstruct it in a new “better” form.
 - d. Where the word of God is not paramount, but is secondary to the “new thoughts of men”
 - e. Where the gospel message is not the foundation, but humanistic methods to facilitate church growth and personal ‘revelation and experience”
 - f. This is what is known as “the philosophy of man”

Philosophy in the Church...

3. First, let me say that all philosophy is not BAD
 - a. Definition: the rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct
 - b. Nothing wrong with the investigation of truth and principles..
 - c. So let’s establish that Christianity does not mean shutting your mind to the investigation of truth through philosophy.
 - d. But where is truth to be found??? That is the question that defines the issue.
 - e. What are some of the philosophies that have invaded the church?

Agnosticism –

4. Offshoot of Naturalism, Immanuel Kant, stated in his highly influential Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason (1793) that “God is unknowable (even by revelation) and that the nature of religion is moral”

- a. May not be familiar with Kant, but you can see the influence
- b. e of this philosophy to this day in churches...
- c. It promotes a denial of the importance, if not the existence, of the factual and historical record in Scripture
- d. And places emphasis only on the moral and religious aspects of Christianity
- e. It reduces Christianity to a set of moral principles to live your life by.

Evolution (Darwinism)

- 5. The result of the philosophy of evolutionism has been catastrophic for biblical and theological studies.
 - a. The historicity and scientific accuracy of the Genesis record has been denied.
 - b. The doctrine of creation has been discarded with serious moral consequences on our dignity and society.
 - c. Hitler, for example, applied the Darwinian view to society with horrendous human consequences, arguing that,

"If nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with the stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one; because in such a case all her efforts, throughout hundreds of years, to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being may thus be rendered futile."

- d. He then went on to say that,

"Such a preservation goes hand-in-hand with the inexorable law that it is the strongest and the best who must triumph and that they have the right to endure."²⁴

- e. With that he slaughtered some estimated 12 million human beings which he considered to be inferior breeds.
- 6. The damage done by Darwinism in the church, spread through millions of innocent school children in public schools...
 - a. Is a slow degradation of the foundational truth of our reality...
 - b. That God exists, He is the creator, the designer, very reason for our existence.
- 7. And attempts to mix these two together – Darwinism and creation – simply creates a handicapped theology that leads a Christian away from the truth and power of God

Progressivism

8. I think this is the most sinister... because it appeals to much to modern man
9. Progressivism is simply the advancement of change in society, and in context of government and social progress is not so much an issue...
 - a. But in the context of theology is can be a huge trap for Christians...
 - b. Basically “theological evolution” – IOW the church needs to change in order to be relevant, to be effective
 - c. The “old church” is irrelevant, ineffective...
 - d. Not that change is bad – but it depends on how you define change...
 - e. If our mission and purpose remain, and our foundation remains Jesus Christ, then I am all for change – AS LED BY GOD
 - f. But it becomes “man-made philosophy” when men determine what should change in the church and how we should change it.
10. Not unlike what the Willow Creek community has come to terms with...
 - a. They started out 30 years ago to be “seeker sensitive” and developed programs to meet the needs of people...
 - b. And people flocked to it. It was a raging success... or so they thought.
 - c. The church measured success by how many people came, and how many people were “participating” in their programs.
 - d. But – this is straight from WC leadership forum – they have found that... programs and seeker sensitive methodology is NOT effective in growing people closer to God.
 - e. IOW – the foundation of programs and entertainment does NOT a good foundation make.
11. I cannot think of a better application of the following truth...

1 Cor 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise

Prov 10:14 Wise people store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

12. Some of these philosophies are like bacteria in Cape Fear River...
 - a. A while back UNCW found high levels of bacteria in the Cape Fear River near Castle Hayne...
 - b. Think if might be coming from a sewer main going under the river...
 - c. Think about it – there is raw sewage in the river...

- d. But only few hundred parts per million – teensy amounts
- e. But – do I want to drink up teensy amounts of sewage? Swim in teensy amounts?
- f. Hey – raw sewage has a place – but NOT in my drinking water!

First line of defense - Encouragement, Unity, Understanding

2:1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be **encouraged**, being **knit together in love**, and **attaining to all riches** of the **full assurance of understanding**, to the **knowledge of the mystery of God**, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**.

13. Encouraged: “The word he uses is *paraklein*.

- a. Sometimes that word means to *comfort*, sometimes to *exhort*,
- b. But always at the back of it there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and gallantry.”

14. “Knit together” – UNITY!

- a. Paul knew that when believers are in fellowship..
- b. ...there is encouragement ...ministry to one another
- c. ...prayer for one another

15. ...*attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God*

- a. For Paul, real riches were found in the believer’s full assurance.
- b. Some lack full assurance about the character of God and are unconvinced that *He is really good and loving*.
- c. Others lack full assurance of their salvation and wonder if their *Christian life is for real*.
- d. Great freedom and confidence comes when we come to this full assurance

16. “*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*”

- a. In the roman times a wealth man had become estranged from his son.
- b. When he dies, he put in his will that he left all his worldly possessions to his slave, Marcellus.
- c. Yet, being a man of grace, he allowed in his will that his estranged son could choose ONE of his possessions to inherit.
- d. “I’m sorry” said the testator to the son, “what possession would do you choose?”.
- e. “I’ll take Marcellus”, said the son!

17. EXACTLY! When you take Jesus Christ, you get ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God!

- a. Why is this important? Because it will keep you from getting sucked into the philosophies of man
- b. NO Paul said – be steadfast...

The Second line of Defense – a Strong Stand...

(so) 4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your **good order** and the **steadfastness** of your faith in Christ. 6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 **rooted** and **built up** in Him and **established** in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

18. Good order – Steadfastness

- a. **Military terms: Order paints a picture of the arrangement of soldiers in ranks – each soldier in their proper place**
- b. **Steadfastness paints a picture of the soldiers maintaining a tight formation in the face of the enemy**

19. Rooted: This is an agricultural term, giving us the thought of a tree that is firmly rooted into the ground.

- a. **You might think of a large oak tree, hundreds of years old, with roots that run deep into the soil, soaking up nutrients**
- b. **VS a tumbleweed that is blown about by the wind...**

Eph 4:11-14

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...

20. Built up: This is an architectural term, and it deals with setting a firm foundation.

1 Cor 3:10-11

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

21. Established: Or, confirmed in the faith.

1 Cor 1:4-9

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- a. **IOW – You were saved by grace – you didn't earn it...**
- b. **You were enriched – give a ton of stuff that you didn't have before – valuable stuff!**
- c. **This is a CONFIRMATION of the testimony of Christ that we are saved!**
- d. **As we wait for the revealing of Jesus in the last day...**
- e. **God is continually working to confirm you – always working, always growing, always moving through you...**
- f. **To the end – till that day that we stand before Christ!**

22. And look – this defense is really important... because there are cheaters out there!

8 Beware lest anyone **cheat you** through **philosophy** and **empty deceit**, according to the **tradition of men**, according to the **basic principles of the world**, and not according to Christ.

23. What is the answer to philosophy? GOD.

24. God is the MASTER PHILOSOPHER,

- a. **He is the author of all truth**
- b. **He is the establisher of the principles of life**
- c. **He is the giver of the conduct that man should live by**

One day Michelangelo went into the studio of the young painter Raphael, and finding him gone, left without leaving his name. But before he went, he took a piece of chalk and wrote on the canvas of the poor and meager design of Raphael a bold and sweeping line with the word "amplius" [wider). When Raphael returned and saw this, he knew immediately who had been there and done this. He thus changed his style, and created a masterpiece. So it is that God points to the shallow and meager philosophies of the world and man, and challenges us to partake of His fullness

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Copyright © 2008 Pastor Clay Ritter. This data file is the sole property of Pastor Clay Ritter. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain this copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Pastor Clay Ritter. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor Clay Ritter, c/o Calvary Chapel of Wilmington, 2831 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington NC, 28412.