

“See To It That No One Takes You Captive”

Sermon Notes

- **Beware the poverty of extra-biblical philosophies and believe in the richness of Christ-saturated soul care**

**Our church’s vision for the care and the cure of the soul is driven by...*

1. ...the emptiness of this world’s “wisdom” (v.8)

2. ...the fullness of the gospel of Christ (vv.9-10)

Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of November 28th-December 4th

Getting Started

1. Our church's ministry of soul care that we call the Harbor Center for Biblical Counseling (HCBC) is about two years into its soft launch. By soft launch, we mean that though we have a number of men and women actively meeting with counselees (as well as a waiting list), we have not yet sought to engage in any formal public promotion. Over these last two years, as a part of our fellowship, how have you engaged in this ministry? Have you prayed for HCBC? Served as a biblical counselor, a biblical counseling advocate, as a part of the HCBC launch team or Committee? Have you taken any biblical counseling training or perhaps ever referred a family member or a friend to this ministry? Reflect on these things as a group, thanking the Lord for his faithfulness to our church over these last years.

Digging Deeper

2. David Powlison once defined counseling as having "wise, candid, fruitful conversations about things that really matter". That's helpful (not to mention disarming) isn't it? Consider each part of that definition. Do you (or would you like to) have interactions with others like this? Powlison also says that the alternative to this is having "foolish, evasive, barren conversations" about superficial things that don't ultimately matter. Stands to reason, doesn't it? Ever have any conversations like this? Of course you have. What sorts of practical steps can we take as a fellowship so that our interactions with one another look a little more like the former and a little less like the latter?

Open Your Bible to Colossians 2:3...

3. We learn in Colossians 2:3 that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". It's a stunning statement with absolutely no qualification. In fact, it's emphatic: *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge reside in Christ. Do you believe this to be true as it relates to soul care? Might there be some domains of wisdom and knowledge in the personal problems sphere that are better addressed apart from Christ (suffering, depression, anxiety, addiction, abuse, marriage, parenting issues, etc)? Why or why not?
4. So Jesus has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, nevertheless...these treasures are "hidden" in him (see verse 3). Why are they hidden? Who are these treasures hidden *from*? Who are they hidden *for*? Why are these questions (and their answers) of such importance?
5. In Colossians 2:8, Paul goes on to explain why it is that the wisdom of this world is unable to afford us the cure for our problems. There are at least five different reasons he offers in verse 8. How many can you spot? Which one speaks most clearly to you as you seek to navigate the philosophies of our surrounding culture?

6. When we turn to the next verse in this letter, we learn precisely why it is that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ. Read Colossians 2:9 together. Why does Paul say this right here? If verse 8 is the problem, why is verse 9 the solution? To put it another way, why is the answer to the emptiness of this world's wisdom not another theory or therapy but instead a *theology*?
7. Notice the all-important connection between verses 9 and 10. According to Colossians 2:9 - "in [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily". Accordingly, what does Paul assure his Christian readers of in the very next verse? Why is this of such shattering relevance for us as a church with a ministry of biblical counseling to one another as well as to our broader community? While Paul doesn't explicitly spell out to us as believers what we're filled with in verse 10 (though we've indeed been filled "in him" - i.e. in *Christ*), consider how some of these New Testament passages shed light on the question: Philippians 1:11; Galatians 5:22-23; John 1:16; Ephesians 3:19. If you are in Christ, what sort of confidence does this give you as you think about his ability to provide help and hope for the most difficult suffering and besetting sins in your life? By extension, how about your God-given capacities to provide help and hope for others?
8. Close your time together as a group praying for the Harbor Center for Biblical Counseling (our biblical counselors, counselees, the HCBC Committee, etc). Pray also for every member of our church, using Romans 15:14 as a prompt for your prayers...asking the Lord that he would increase the depth of our biblical counseling convictions, character, competencies, and community as a local fellowship.