

“The Shadow & the Substance of Christ”

Sermon Notes

➤ **False teachers come and go, but false teachings remain - the former are mere trivia, the latter are a massive threat**

**Only in our union with Christ do we have the grace to resist...*

1. ...the lure of legalism (vv.16-17)

2. ...the magnetism of mysticism (vv.18-19)

3. ...the allure of asceticism (vv.18a, 20-23)

Community Group Study Guide
For the Week of December 12th-18th

Getting Started

1. Looking out over the landscape of the contemporary church, what are some false teachings you see weakening God's people at the present moment beside those mentioned in this week's sermon?

Digging Deeper

2. Looking back over your walk with the Lord, are there any false teachings which you once embraced but no longer believe? By God's grace, who or what served the catalyst for your change of mind and heart?

Open Your Bible to Colossians 2:16...

3. In Colossians 2:16, we are urged to "let no one pass judgment on" us as it relates to the legalistic scruples of others. How do we do that exactly? What qualifies as legalism? What's the difference between legalism and obedience to God?
4. Paul says in verse 16 that food, drink, festivals, new moons, and sabbaths "are a shadow of things to come" in Christ. Consider how the following Scriptures demonstrate this to be so: John 6:35 (food and drink), 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (festivals); Galatians 4:8-11 (new moons / months); Matthew 11:28-30 (sabbath rest). Is Colossians 2:16 forbidding Christians to abstain from certain dietary items or celebrating particular days? Why or why not?
5. In verses 18 and 19, Paul warns of what we might summarize as mysticism. What are the marks of the mysticism described in verse 18? What are the dangers of the mysticism described in verse 19? Can you think of any modern day mysticisms that seem to have gained traction in our broader culture (or even in the church)?
6. Verses 18 and 23 call out the error of asceticism. What is asceticism? In what sense is asceticism similar to legalism? In what sense is it distinct? While it may be comparatively rare, what forms of asceticism exist in our culture today? According to verse 23, what is the main concern we ought to have with ascetic lifestyles and practices?
7. If legalism, mysticism, and asceticism are "of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh", what is of value in the mortification of our sinful nature? If you're stuck, consider where Paul heads next in Colossians 3:1-17.
8. We are now half way through our study of Paul's epistle to the Colossians. Take a moment to scan back over the first two chapters, reflecting on what you find. As you close your time in prayer, make a particular point of thanking the Lord for specific truths that we have seen and savored thus far in our sermon series.