

Be Careful Before You Call Someone Antinomian

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Before we start to sing, just give some thought to this for a second. You heard David's message if you were here during Sunday School, "Be Holy As I Am Holy." We could think of various places in Scripture where obedience, holiness, Christlikeness, goodness, these things are the fruit of what takes place when we're new creations, when we've been regenerated, the power of God at work within us.

What happens is inevitably people start to think, "How do we force, or how do we encourage greater righteousness?" And inevitably somebody says, "Well you know what, I don't like the fact that brother so-and-so wears shorts to church." "And you know what, quite honestly, I typically sit behind a family, and I don't like the length of her hair, it's too short." "And I don't like this." "Or I don't like that." And you know what happens? Standards - and people begin to measure holiness by these standards.

And if you listen, Colossians chapter two is one of the most instructive chapters in your Bible for living the Christian life. Because if you go through here you notice what he's fighting against. One, verse 4, plausible arguments.

What is a plausible argument? Well that's something that's persuasive, it sounds good. You've got all sorts of religious people and listen a lot of times this comes from people in religious circles that you respect. But you have to test everything by Scripture, just because so-and-so, a well known preacher, or somebody from the past, and somebody that has written a lot of books, you've got to test things by Scripture. Listen, the guys that are most successful in parading error through the church, through the ages, have not been the guys that have been least plausible. They've been the ones that have been most plausible. "It sounds logical!" Problem is it's not biblical. Logical and Biblical are two different things.

Okay, you look at verse 8, "philosophy", there's a love of wisdom, "empty deceit," "human tradition," the elemental spirits, we don't have time to get into it. But what is it? All these things are, "not according to Christ." You see what he's saying? What he's really saying here is, in verse 6, there's a way you receive Christ, how? Simply by faith. And he says, 'Don't try to go beyond that.' That's what the Galatians did, they tried to be perfected another way than by Christ. Don't go to that. If you keep going through here, you'll find like in verse 18, "asceticism," that's being hard on your body.

Now look, I know that Jesus condones and says that we should fast, that has kind of an ascetic appearance to it, and so we would have to differentiate between the two. There are some things Paul said, "that he buffeted his body." You know what differentiates the two? It's the mindset, the mindset that goes behind it. Are you wanting to buffet the body, are you wanting to fast, because your objective in doing so is to cling to Christ? Or are you wanting to do so out of pride because you're setting up your own standard and you're enforcing it on others? You see what you do with your standard as it pertains to others becomes the issue. If you buffet your body and you expect everybody else to do it then it's not healthy, if you're expecting them to do

it exactly the way you do it. He says in verse 20, "Why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations-- 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch' (referring to things that all perish as they are used)-- according to human precepts and teachings?"

It is very difficult, very, very, very, very difficult, to maintain Scriptural churches without this kind of thing being introduced. Because immediately when you start talking this way people want to label you as antinomian, you know, "You guys just allow everything." No, that's not it, but if you want to press holiness, making your own man-made list isn't going to do it. Because, watch this, verse 23, "They have an appearance of wisdom, and they always do." That's what makes them persuasive, plausible. They have an appearance of wisdom but you notice in the end, it's self made religion.

We had a situation, like just recently I have been pegged as being antinomian because when we were down in Nicaragua somebody was... basically we got talking about alcohol, we got talking about smoking, I think we got talking about tattoos and various things. I will try to give you a thousand reasons not to get a tattoo. I would try to give you lots of reasons why not to smoke. I would definitely have some things to say to you about drinking as well. The problem is this, if somebody wants to be dogmatic about anything you need to be asking questions, "Can you give me a chapter and verse on that?"

Listen brethren: your conclusions about Scripture are not infallible, your rationale deductions and principles that you draw from Scripture, are not equal to Scripture. When you begin to draw principles from Scripture and enforce them on other people, you're beginning to get on ground that is not safe. We should be people who think and come to conclusions about Scripture, but be careful that your logical deductions about scripture, you begin to enforce on other people. And you know what happens, you enforce it on other people, and if they don't hold that standard, then you look down at them. Then you get people oftentimes, you don't want to be on the other side either, who somebody chooses to live a life a certain way and you look at them as though they're being legalistic, because they're living at a higher level than you and they're not enforcing it on you, you just don't like that their holier life, reveals your unholy life. You don't want to go there either.

Notice what he says, "Self-made religion, asceticism, severity to the body, but they are no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh." You see, it accomplishes exactly the opposite. Here were the Galatians, and they thought, "Wonderful, we came to Christ by faith, but now we want to be perfected, we want to step it up, we need a new plan. How can we achieve perfection?" And you know what Paul had to say to them in the end? "Watch out, you guys are biting and devouring one another." Why? They wanted to be perfected, how come they ended up biting and devouring? Divisive spirits and wickedness among them, why? Because the very way they were seeking to be perfected actually didn't lead to perfection, it led to feeding and making provision for the flesh. Be careful, man-made religion will not achieve a crucifying of the flesh and you don't want to miss the heart and soul of this chapter. You know what does lead to it? Clinging to Christ. Christ is the answer. Listen, if you walk close to Christ, your life will begin to become holy and holier, and holier, if you abide in Him, you will produce much fruit. If you walk with Him and talk with Him. That's what this is about. Verse 7, "rooted and built up in Him." Verse 8, "philosophy empty deceit, human tradition, elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." Anything that pulls you away from abiding in Christ. Anything that pulls you

away to other standards than walking with Him and talking with Him and beholding Him, living in the fragrance of His aroma, looking at Him in Scripture all the time. Brethren, that is how holy life comes. Why? Because when you walk close to Christ and you walk in faith, what happens is the Spirit will so work in you as to produce a likeness to him in your life. The Spirit will always bring Christlikeness into your life by you drawing close to Christ, not any other way. He's not going to glorify any other means to holiness, He's going to glorify Christ. Anyway, let's sing.