**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ Over Mysticism**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 2:18-19**

**Sermon Purpose: To warn the hearer of potential robbers in the church.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 2 principles to practice related to mysticism.**

**Introduction: “**Mysticism may be defined as the pursuit of a deeper or higher subjective religious experience. It is the belief that spiritual reality is perceived apart from human intellect and natural senses. It looks for truth internally, weighing feelings, intuition, and other internal sensations more heavily than objective observable, external data. It is light arising from within a person.”

[**John MacArthur New Testament Commentary Colossians & Philemon, p. 120**]

“According to grave inscription in the area Jews had become part of the Asian culture by the first century B.C.”

[**Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, p.147**]

**Acts 19:10** And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

**I. Beware of the dangerous frauds. V.18**

**II. Believe in the deliverance of the Father. V.19**

**I. Beware of the dangerous frauds. V.18**

The word defraud or disqualify comes from the athletic arena where a referee determined that an athlete had related the rules and was barred from competition. The verb means “they rob” “to decide against.”

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. **25** And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. **26** Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. **27** But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15** 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. **12** Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **13** each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. **14** If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. **15** If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

This threat of disqualification relate to avoiding the practice of spiritual disciplines imposed by false teachers. Those who turn away from the preeminence of Jesus Christ will be “robbed” of their reward or prize.

Those who were attempting to turn believers from the reality in Christ (deity, humanity, and sufficiency) to the shadow of false things, cancelled types, and the law requirements, would accomplish the disqualification of them from the prize and reward.

What are some of the characteristics of these robbers?

A. The danger of the practice of false **humility**. V.18a

Paul speaks of some “Ascetic” practices, which can be translated “humility” but in the context of false teaching it most likely refers to harsh treatment of the body [i.e. self- humiliation].

Some of the false teachers who are heretics, and end up turning people away from their completeness in Christ, have a false sense of humility, which is only a form of godliness but deny the power of a transformed life (**2 Timothy 3:5**), that is life in Christ.

**Romans 8:3-4** For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, **4** that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

B. The danger of the practice of **worshipping** angels. V.18b

The worship of angels is always forbidden in Scripture for God’s people, but often a regular practice in false religions and cults.

The worship of angels may be understood as worship improperly rendered to angels, or worship of God performed by angels.

This artificial godliness and unbiblical practice was a violation of (**Exodus 20:3-4; Revelation 22:8-9**).

**Exodus 20:3-4** "You shall have no other gods before Me. **4** "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;

**Revelation 22:8-9** Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. **9** Then he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

In fact legalism, mysticism and asceticism are teachings inspired by fallen angels

(**1 Timothy 4:1**) who as “elemental spirits” (**Galatians 4:3**) would rob and bring men into slavery by their mystical meditation.

1. Forbidden (**Revelation 22:9**)

**Matthew 4:10** Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written,`You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

**Revelation 19:10** And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that*! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

2. Violates the One Mediator

**1 Timothy 2:5** For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,

3. Angels only worship God

**Isaiah 6:1-4** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. **2** Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!" **4** And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

**Revelation 5:11-12** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, **12** saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

C. The danger of the practice of false **visions**. V.18c

These acts of worship tended to be conducted through entrance into the visionary realm. Paul however, identified their visions as egotistical delusions of a fleshly mind. These mystics tend to dwell on what they have seen in visions, dreams, or imaginations, which Paul calls “idle notions” (eike, “vain,” “to no avail”) that which they “really have not seen.”

**Galatians 3:4** Have you suffered so many things in vain-- if indeed *it was* in vain?

These people far from being humble and spiritually minded, such a person is unspiritually minded (lit., “the mind of the flesh”). They are puffed up with pride in their visions, dreams, and imaginations. (**Romans 8:6**)

**Hebrews 1:1-2** God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, **2** has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

This is a description of the unregenerate (**Ephesians 4:17-19**), they are guilty of gross and dangerous spiritual pride, they are devoid of the Holy Spirit, having gone beyond the teaching of Christ alone.

**Ephesians 4:17-19** This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; **19** who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

**2 John 9** Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

**II. Believe in the deliverance of the Father. V.19**

A. Believe by **holding** fast to Christ. V.19a

(**See 1:18 and Ephesians 4:16**)

Paul’s point is that the false teachers unlike the true believer has no real connection to the hard and therefore, have no authority over the church or God’s people.

B. Believe by staying **attached** to the body. V.19b

There is no spiritual growth, nor protection for any believer apart from union with the Head, Christ, and the local church.

**Ephesians 4:15-16** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-- Christ-- **16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

**John 15:4-5** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. **5** "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**2 Peter 1:3** as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

Healthy, vibrant, life changing spiritual growth comes from union with Christ and attachment to the body.

C. Believe by **observing** the fruit of the Father. V.19c

There is a tendency in our human nature apart from God and His Word, to move from objective truth to subjective truth, in order to change the focus from Christ to human experience.

This is sin all day long! Why would people of God do this? Because of the captivity, deception, and defrauding of false teachers and their own human reasoning.

1. They become dull of hearing. (**Hebrews 5:11-14**)

2. They become stagnant and fall away. (**Hebrews 6:1-8**)

**Conclusion:**