

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week Sept. 18, 2022

WELCOME:

PRAISE SONGS: This is the day, Above all

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART -- Rita

SONG: Jesus Loves Me

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRAYER:

SCRIPTURE – Colossians 2:4

I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments.

MESSAGE:

Telling you this. Telling you what? Paul has just given them a few important **pointers** in the previous verses.

- Be tied together in love.
- **know** Christ, who is our deep and endless source of wisdom and knowledge.
- **There** is no true wisdom outside Christ.
- **To know** Christ is to live.

It's all about Christ. Believing in him, knowing him, living for him, dying (to ourselves) for Him and perhaps even dying in the flesh for Him.

“For to me, living means living for Christ . . .” -- Philippians 1:21

“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.” -- Philippians 3:10

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person.

The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Being the church is about being part of a person, not an organization.

Paul has his act together. There's a more colourful way of saying it. You know what I mean. To have it all together – be centred on Christ and submitted to Him and be open to receiving God's power – is the best way to live. Few people ever achieve it in a substantial way. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

And his mission, as a messenger from God, was to teach others – and to hammer home this one essential truth. God's plan, through Paul, was to set the foundation of the church so that in the centuries to follow, we will be reminded of the need to get back to basics.

As with anything that's worthwhile, it takes a bit of effort. Discipline. When we decide to live a more disciplined life, we might begin each day with a sincere **prayer**. Pray as we're working. Stop once in a while and ask God if what you're doing or thinking is in **His will**. And when we are faced with a critical decision, to do in a spiritual sense what we teach to do if their clothes are on fire – stop, drop and pray. And we hope and pray that life will have more meaning. We will experience greater peace. Life will be more enjoyable. **And that** we will be sure of what we believe.

It's that last thing that's the starting point for today's scripture and message.

There is no shortage of alternative truths in this world for the simple reason that the enemy has his way. God has allowed Satan enormous power. Of course, it's not ultimate power. God the Father can intervene – and He does – if it's in His will and helps achieve his plan or protects his people. Not all the time, because sometimes, God's chosen ones are meant to go down. Again, it's part of the plan. We are all small players in a large drama – a never ending story or series – that has a new installment every morning.

Paul's purpose is telling his churches to be tied together in love, know Christ, who is our deep and endless source of wisdom and knowledge, that there is no true wisdom outside Christ and to know Christ is to live is so we won't be deceived **“with well-crafted arguments.”**

And they're out there. Nothing new. Always have been. The enemy has whispered in our ears from the beginning of time, "did God really say that?" WE can ask the same question, because there are a lot of common beliefs that come across as scriptural but aren't.

"God helps those who help themselves." Sounds good: get off your lazy butt and do something. God will see this and give you what you need. It's a take on those proverbs – there's at least 17 of them – which teach against laziness. But "God helps those who help themselves" is actually a contradiction of everything scripture teaches us, which is to rely completely on God. Those who "help themselves" are trying to do life on their own, without God. This world is filled with do-it-yourself disasters. Even the Son of God was powerless on His own. God help Jesus? Hardly. "I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will." John 5:30

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness" sounds like a proverb and sort of fits with all the Old Testament laws regarding cleansing but it appears nowhere in scripture.

"God won't give you more than you can handle." What it actually says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 is "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." The false saying is actually the opposite of the truth – God WILL give you more than you can handle, which forces us to rely on Him. I return to last week's example of the young Elizabeth becoming queen at a young age – not everyone took her seriously. So she turned to God who provided wisdom.

"Money is the root of all evil." No, it's the love of money. "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10. No sin in being wealthy, or even aspiring to be rich. It's what you do with it. And how you go about it. God, in fact, blesses some of his people so they can be blessings to others and build the Kingdom.

This is why it's so important to know the Bible. Don't have to be a biblical scholar. Just look it up. We live in an age where all you have to do is Google something and out pours a wealth of info. Some or much of it may be misleading. But if you know where to search, then you will find the truth.

Beware, is what Paul is saying to the churches, echoing the words of the Lord: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." Matthew 7:15

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds." 2 Cor 11:13-15

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." 2 Tim 4:3-4

And so on.

Back to Paul's words of instruction.

"I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments."

There's a test we can use against some teaching or wisdom which sounds Biblical.

1. Does it exalt Jesus Christ?
2. Is it consistent with the intentions and character of God as revealed in scripture?
3. Do other people who are filled with the Holy Spirit confirm it?
4. Is there confirmation in objectively verifiable events or facts. In other words, does life back it up?

Source: Presbyterian-Reformed Ministries International.

If we truly believe that Christ is the way to God – not just one of many ways – and He spoke the truth – not just one of many truths – and He is the ultimate example of how to truly live – and not just one of several ways – then no other way, truth or life will compare. No other well-crafted argument can bring Christ down in our hearts. Nothing I see, hear or experience, nothing anyone else can say or do will knock me from my faith.

It might make me pause and think about it a bit – take into consideration what I'm hearing from other sources – but if our faith is real and solid, then it should not waver.

HYMN: 471 We are one in the Spirit