

Colossians 2 - Christus Victor Does Not Need Help

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles to the book of Colossians. We'll be in chapter 2 of the book of Colossians this morning.

Our Advent series for this year involves examining the various models for the atonement that have been described both in Scripture and understood within church history.

Last week we looked at the model referred to as the recapitulation theory held by a man named Irenaeus and others, and it all has to do with the second Adam, Jesus coming as the new Adam, who even as he lay in a sleep in death, a bride emerges from his wounded side, the bride of Christ, as a kind of second Eve where Christ and the church now rule and subdue by making disciples, being fruitful and multiplying.

And so we examined that concept of one aspect of what Jesus has come to do through the atonement, and that is to restore our true humanity, a sense of humanity that was lost when Adam, our first head, fell.

Today we're looking at something referred to as Christus Victor, which has a lot to do with Christ's victory over his enemies. Now, if you've been at Providence for a while, you've actually heard probably more sermons on this subject than the average Christian.

[1 : 42] This is a theme we return to rather consistently, and at least once every year during Christmas time we do at least one sermon about this particular subject. So many of you already know the basic scriptural thread that we work through here.

We would start with Genesis 3:15, the very first gospel promise. And that is not a promise that is explicitly about saving anyone's soul. It's explicitly about crushing a snake.

The first gospel promise is actually just Jesus's victory over Satan. That's the root of the Christus Victor model, and it continues all the way through other passages of Scripture.

We could talk about Psalm 2, where Jesus is installed to be the ruler over the heavens and the earth and the king of all kings. So when we read in our Christmas stories the phrase king of kings and lord of lords, we're talking about Psalm 2, talking about Psalm 110, which is the most cited Old Testament verse or passage in all of the New Testament, where it says that Jesus would sit at the right hand of the Father and reign until all his enemies are made his footstool.

We're talking about Daniel 7, where the Ancient of Days is revealed as the Son of Man, who is the king over all the kings. And typically when we talk about this stuff, we handle it at this sort of cosmic level.

[3 : 09] And today I want to apply this model of Christus Victor, the victory of Christ over his enemies, to us personally. And I want to maybe help you to see how this is good news for you and your personal peace.

Do you ever have these experiences where you remember something, but you're not sure if it happened or if you just made it up? I have those a lot. And I've always had a very vibrant imagination.

And I seem to remember a Farside cartoon, but I'm not sure if this is real or if it's just me. If it's me, I'm hilarious. I think I remember a Farside cartoon where a man is talking to his doctor, and his name is Jim or something like that, and he says, so doctor, you're telling me that all this time I've had a friend who stuck with me in good and bad times.

And the doctor says, no Jim, I'm telling you, you have a tapeworm. Most of the threats to Christ these days are not, and we talked a lot about this in 1 John, are not stark competitors that stand explicitly against Christ.

They are parasites that seek to join in and add to the work of Christ. And so if we're asking a Christus Victor question, what does it mean for Jesus to rule at the right hand of the Father these

days, making everything his footstool, subduing all of his enemies, I'd say, well, most of his enemies are parasites.

[4 : 57] Most of what's happening now in Christendom is kind of on the ivermectin front. That word would have gotten me, our live stream banned from YouTube a couple years ago for other reasons.

All that to say that actually the battle to be done, and this shows up in the New Testament, we saw this a ton in 1 John, the battle to be done these days is primarily to identify those spiritual forces who essentially say, yeah, Jesus said it is finished, but there's a little bit more we need to do. That's where most of Christ's competition lie, in our world anyway. And in your personal life, your personal experience, the joy of Jesus, this is what is going to do you and your personal joy and freedom and liberty the most damage.

So I want to apply these Christus Victor concepts to our personal lives. Now, it just so happens that one of the most prominent Christus Victor passages in the New Testament is in Colossians 2, Colossians 2, 13 through 15.

But that passage is rooted in a bunch of instruction just for average Christians to experience the joy that is their rightful heritage in Christ.

[6 : 19] We're going to actually work through the whole chapter today. I wanted to show you just the structure of it. The structure is pretty simple. Starts with an introduction. And then Paul just alternates between two concepts.

Christ is more than enough. Some parasite making a promise. Some parasitical, I'm over here too and I can help promise. That's a competitor to Christ. A restatement, Christ is more than enough. Back to more of the parasites. And this is just the way that this chapter plays out. You'll see it as we work our way through it. So starting in Colossians 2, verse 1.

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, be knit together in love.

Introduction. Now we get our first Christ is more than enough. By the way, in these sections, look for these universals like all or fullness or look for those big words because that's Paul saying Christ is it.

[7 : 24] Everything. To reach the riches of full assurance of understanding the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Where are all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge located? They're in Christ. You don't need to go anywhere else, Paul's saying. Now he deals with the parasite problem in verse 4.

I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. Now he goes back to Christ in verse 5. For though I am absent in the body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

He's talking about stay put, firmness, order. Don't flake out. Therefore, as you've received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

You don't need to go anywhere else, Colossians. You have Christ. You can stay rooted in him forever and grow as much as you'll ever need to grow. You don't need to pick up roots or send one tendril into another source.

[8 : 31] Christ is enough. Now back to verse 8 and a parasitic promise. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world.

Now the big section, a big Christ is more than enough section. Verse 9 through 15. And not according to Christ, for in him the fullness of deity dwells bodily. And you have been filled in him. Fullness, filled. This is enough, guys. This is enough. Who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses, in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God has made alive together with him, having forgiven all, having forgiven us, all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us and its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Now here's your big Christus Victor statement. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

[9 : 51] Where do we get victory for our enemies? In Christ. Where do we win? Where do we gain the upper hand? In Christ. Back to verse 16, a parasitic promise.

Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you, questions of food and drink, with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. Back to Christ. Those are shadows of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

More parasites. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.

Christ is more than enough, verse 19, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. He's trying to say, to add to Christ is to try to add a second head to your body. Nonsense. Don't make yourself out to be an existential or spiritual or devotional monster.

[10 : 52] Conclusion, verse 20, If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you are still alive to 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?

These have indeed, listen to this, I'm going to make an interesting point here. These indeed have the appearance of wisdom in promoting a self-made religion and asceticism and severity of the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Now here I just want to stop and make a pastoral point, a friendly encouragement. I hope you understand that the devil can use your good desires to lead you to bad decisions.

Well, that's kind of stinky, isn't it? Wouldn't it be nice if we just, if we, it's hard enough to have good desires. You're telling me that even after I get them, I still have tests to pass?

Yeah, that's, that's what the Bible teaches. You see how he ended that? We're seeing something, an insight into the Colossians' desires.

[12 : 02] They want help overcoming their sensuous flesh. Well, that's a really good desire. This is just a quick plug for this reminder that your desires for good things can still lead you to make bad decisions.

They sort of actually create like an opening for the world, the flesh, and the devil to lead you down other trails. And I'd say in addition to wanting to be free of the pollution of the sensual flesh, they just wanted to have good relationships with their community and with their family.

That's a good desire too. But this passage is packed with social pressure. Like this passage is packed with social pressure. And remember, there's no Christian culture at this time.

I'll talk more about that in the application. There's only the cultures they left. Like there's a very little, Christian culture at this point is very thin, but the cultures that they left, whether that be Judaism or paganism, is very thick.

So it's sort of be like, you know, when they talk about hand washing or a new moon Sabbath or something, it's sort of like the smell that pumpkin pie has on most of us. There's a sense in which all of that stuff, like that's where my family is.

[13 : 22] That's where my friends are. That's where my coworkers are. And the desire to belong makes you susceptible to being invited back into this stuff that Christ died to set them free of.

And I think most importantly, they wanted to know God better. Like you, Chris, you mean to tell me that we live in such a messed up world that a person can desire to know God better and that desire can be hijacked by evil and led to something wrong?

I'm sorry. I really am sorry. I wish it wasn't so, but it is so. Even your desire to know God better can be hijacked by someone that presents to you an alternative Christ.

So the Colossians have some good desires and even those good desires are open to being hijacked. Now, this is the Christus Victor sermon for your particular soul.

My aim is for you to be free in a way that is only possible because you only have one ruler, one authority, one king, not six.

[14 : 42] I want you to have one person that gets to tell you what to do fundamentally. I want you to really be free of all of the various hooks, all of the various reigns that the world, the flesh, and the devil could use to steer you, and I want you to just be Christ's.

That's it. And in order for that to happen, Jesus has to rule and subdue the kinds of enemies that we deal with most often, and those are the kinds of enemies that say, it is finished, well, sure, but, nope.

Nope. It's finished. Don't need to add anything else, even for the service of good desires. So, this whole passage has some literary framing that we have to understand in order to break free of all this, and it's framed around one key Greek word that's repeated twice, once in verse 8, and another time in verse 20, and that Greek word is stoikia.

Now, I think we probably have different Bible versions open, I would guess. So, you see here in the ESV that we've got elemental spirits.

Okay? That's the word for stoikia. Stoikia. I think NIV says principles, or principalities. I think there's a bunch of different ways to translate this, and the truth is is that this word has a lot of controversy behind it.

[16:21] Let me break it down to you and give you the safest, most kind of Aristotelian mean version of a definition. The root of the idea is order.

Stoikia was essentially this idea of ABC. It was this idea of first things. And it really quickly, within ancient literature, began to be associated with the elements.

Remember the wind, earth, fire, water stuff that the ancients believed. And then, of course, that concept had something to do with the spirits, the gods that were overseeing these things.

And so, by the time this word is being used in the New Testament, it just means the old order, something like that, the old system. Here's the definition that I think is both the safest and probably the most accurate of anything that I found.

The stoikia are cultural solutions to universally perceived metaphysical problems. I'm using a lot of big words today, just so you know, if you're visiting, don't do this all the time.

[17:35] And I don't think my big words will, like, if you don't know what these words are, I always kind of explain them anyway. Don't be intimidated by them. There's this idea that, well, this is absolutely biblical, that there have been fundamental questions gnawing away at the human heart from the very beginning after the fall.

And those fundamental questions, I think, could be broken down into basically this question. What is God like and what must I do to serve Him in a way that pleases Him and secures me in His blessing and not His judgment?

Something like that. It all kind of breaks down, and we'll work through these categories, into revelation and purification. What is God like and how can I be sure that I am clean before Him?

And the Bible teaches very clearly that these questions have been a part of the human heart throughout all ages and all places amongst all people.

There's no default factory setting for atheism. The default factory setting for every human being is that there is a God. I'm supposed to serve Him.

[18:49] If I do that right, I'm blessed. If I do that wrong, I'm cursed. Death isn't the end. It's the pivot into judgment. These are things people have intuitively understood forever.

And this word stoichia seems to represent the overarching way that cultures have tried to answer those two questions.

What is God like? What am I supposed to do in response to what God is like? Revelation and purification.

Those are going to be the main categories you see in our passage. Revelation strategies. Cultural answers to what is God like?

Purification strategies. Cultural answers to how do I deal with the fact that I know I've sinned or how do I deal with the fact that I want God to see me as good, as righteous, and so forth.

[19:49] These are the two kind of ways that the world has processed this information. Every religion that exists is just answering these two questions.

And generally speaking, I would say more than generally speaking, all religions, except for Christianity, answer them in sort of the same ways. When people point to the universality of certain concepts within all religions, it's because they're all trying to answer the same couple questions.

And there are really only so many possible answers to these questions. So what is the stoikia? What are the elemental spirits? Are they spirits? Maybe.

Are they principles? Very clearly they are principles. You can see that in the text itself. Look at verse 16. Listen for, you decide, we won't separate, I won't give you labels for all this, but listen for revelation strategies, what is God like, and purification strategies, how do I prepare myself to meet God?

He just lists a bunch of stuff. See if you can figure out which one of these is going on, which of the two. Verse 16, therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

[21 : 07] These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head.

Verse 20, if with Christ you died to the elemental spirits, that's our word, stoicheia again, why, as if you were still alive to the world, do you submit to regulations, do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to all these things that are perished as they are used.

That's what the stoicheia is doing. We all come from, in some sense, a tradition that was answering these questions apart from Christ. Whether it happened in our childhood or in our great, great, great, great grandfather's childhood, every single person in this room has an ancestor that left the stoicheia and clung to Christ.

Like, that's what we've all had to experience at one level and in reality we're still dealing with this challenge. That's why it's in the Bible. We're still dealing with it and I'll explain why or how in a minute.

So what Paul's doing in Colossians 2 is he's saying Christ is the final revelation. You don't need to look anywhere else to figure out what God is like.

[22 : 29] Christ is the final revelation. He starts talking that way in Colossians 1. Remember, he is the image of the invisible God. And then as he's actually handling this sense of the stoicheia, these elementary principles or trying to describe what God is like, Paul's like, stop it, stop it.

We know what God is like. Look at verse 6, Colossians 2. Therefore, as you've received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. Here's as we know what God is like, verse 9.

For in Him, the fullness of deity dwells bodily. We know what God is like because we know Christ. and in Him, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

There's not any peace of God to find anywhere else. It's all in Christ. And you have been filled in Him who is the head of all rule and authority.

[23 : 41] So He's saying, stop looking for visions, new revelation, other sources that show you what God is like. We know what God is like because we have Christ. And then He says, not only is Jesus the final revelation, but He's the final purification.

You don't need to be thinking about how all the ways that you need to act to prepare, to make yourself acceptable with God. The stoichia take, universally, every other religion takes an outside-in approach.

Let's clean up this and hopefully it soaks in to our souls and our hearts. I'm going to talk here in a minute about culture, but maybe I'll just take a quick little jaunt real quickly, something I learned this week.

All right. You know I'm in Asia more than I used to be, right? So a lot more than I used to be. I never thought I'd be an Asia guy. It's never on my plans. But anyway, you know, when you travel there, you'll see a lot of older people doing slow motion Kung Fu.

Right? And that's all I'm going to do, just this much. And I'm like, well, that's kind of cool. I don't really, I mean, I can imagine that's good for your body and so forth. And like, you know, anyway, I thought about it, like, why are we all doing slow motion Karate?

[24 : 59] But I kind of moved on pretty quick, you know, and just accepted it. But then I became introduced to the tea ceremony, like, which is, you know, in multiple Asian cultures. I think of Japanese tea ceremony.

But you'll notice the same kind of thing. Like, I'm moving the cup over in a very predictable, almost dance. And then I'm pouring in a very predictable way with a particular angle of the cup and all of this stuff.

And finally, I was like, okay, I've had enough. There has to be something to the slow motion Asian thing. which seems to translate also into, you know, driving. Hey, we got to have some fun, you know, just laid up right there for me.

Sorry. But anyway, so did you know that this is all rooted in one of the concepts within Zen? And that is, you know, which is a religious concept that we purify our souls by purifying our movements? Like, that so much of the cultural downstream effect of slow motion karate or tea ceremony, this is a fundamental idea. We purify our souls by purifying our movements.

[26 : 14] And the more pure our movements are, that has an effect on our souls. So this is a stoikia. It's a cultural answer to a metaphysical question developed apart from Christ.

And they're everywhere. They're just everywhere. You wouldn't believe the number that exists in your own family even if your family is a Christian family. I'll talk to you more about that in a moment. So Paul says that Christ is not only the final revelation, but he's the final purification.

And he uses what is the essential metaphor in the Bible for internal transformation. And that is the circumcision of the heart. It's something God promised the Jews even as he was issuing the law to them.

The day will come when I will circumcise your heart. It's the promise of renewal at the end of judgment in the prophets. I will put my law into your heart. I will give you a new heart, a heart of flesh in replacement of a heart of stone.

And so in verse 11 through 15, Paul says, Christ is the final purification. You don't need to look to any other system to make you acceptable to God.

[27 : 25] In him, you also were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism in which you also were raised with him.

And he concludes all this by saying, Jesus Christ has canceled any record of debt that could possibly exist against you. And it is in this way he disarms the rulers and authorities.

Here's the goal. This is what I want for you personally. When I was a kid, you know, I thank my parents for doing these little efforts to, you know, expand our horizons.

And at some point, I wonder what the parental talk was about this, but they decided we needed to go horseback riding. We weren't really a horse family, you know. So we went to one of these places where you, you know, you rent a horse.

And this was my first experience on horses. I've had terrible horse experiences. Only my wife knows the level of horse trauma I've dealt with. But anyway, so I get on this horse and I'm nervous and I'm a gangly, you know, anemic, sickly kid.

[28 : 39] Not the, you know, not the mountain of masculinity you see today. I used to, you know. I was the quintessential nervous 90 pound weakling. And the horse could feel it.

And I'm on this horse and it does this thing which is kind of a funny, I love the phrase, it spits the bit. It just says, no, I'm not letting you control my head.

It essentially, the horse essentially said, you're not that guy, pal. You know, you're not that guy. And the horse just said, I will not be led. And it did that by getting rid as quickly as it could the bit that would control it.

Wouldn't it be nice if the world had nothing on you? Wouldn't it be nice if you were invulnerable to peer pressure, even in your own home, even in your own family?

Wouldn't it be nice if all of your guilt was taken away never to return so that never once again could anyone manipulate you whether you realize it or not into behaving the way that they want you to for the purposes they have in mind?

[29 : 57] Wouldn't it be nice to just be people who have spit the bit and said, no, Christ is king, thank you very much. all of the competitors need not apply.

The stoichia have nothing to offer me. Christ is the full revelation of God and Christ is the full purification of my sinful soul. That's what we want in our lives.

Now, let's talk about how we apply this concept that we've seen in Colossians 2. We've got four points of application. The first one is that we as Christians generally do not think rightly about culture and I want to just do a quick you know, five minute discussion and I take culture itself comes from the word cultus which means worship and I take the word stoicheia and culture to be maybe not synonymous but basically the same thing.

It's what people when they get in groups produce to answer basic questions that are nagging at their souls. What is God like?

What do I have to do to be on his good side? What happens when a bunch of people repeatedly ask that question over years is a culture. Every culture that exists in the world is that extrapolated

out into particular practices and so forth and if you look closely enough and ask enough whys you will find like I said with the Japanese tea ceremony shocking shockingly spiritual reasons for everything a culture does.

[31 : 44] Really I don't believe in such a thing as neutral culture. It's all rooted out of these fundamental questions. Now some culture is explicitly religious and some is implicitly religious.

I think this is another thing to understand about culture. I call it thick culture and thin culture. In every area of culture whether we're talking about art or music or architecture every area of culture has thick and thin versions.

Thick culture is explicitly religious. It's explicitly religious. Every culture has explicit religion and then thin culture is where those explicit ideas exist but they're not pronounced.

They're in the soup but they're not chunky. Let me give you an example. If I wrote a song about Jesus on the cross I would be producing thick culture.

If I wrote a song about how much I love my wife I would be watering down everything I said about Jesus and his bride into a song about my wife.

[32 : 55] The thin culture is a song about romance but we're told explicitly in Ephesians 5 what is my love for my wife but a metaphor for understanding Christ and the church.

All culture is handling deep questions it's just not all of it is just using formal names and labels and some of it's extracted or diluted into metaphor and so on and so forth.

And all that to just say when you are consuming culture you need to understand you are consuming worship. Probably like you know amongst my top 10 old man fears as I talk to younger people is how indiscriminate they are in their media consumption.

I just want to remind you that everybody who ever made anything has answers to questions like what is God like and how do I make myself right in his eyes and those questions and answers are stoicheia and they you're watching stoicheia you're listening to stoicheia so understand what culture is and then also understand this we as Christians should be putting Christ as Lord in our hearts and then making things we should make things we should make thick culture worship!

whatever and we should make thin culture we should make songs about marriage and about mountains and we should do paintings and we should build spaces and we should make friendships and build careers and make families and so forth with Christ as Lord and all of that is a new culture we are so grateful to have lived in 2000 years of that happening let's be discriminant about what we're consuming and where it's coming from and also be eager to make more of it and let's just be done with the nonsense that to engage in the culture wars is a distraction from the gospel the word literally culture the word literally means worship in some ways the culture wars are just the worship wars just in thick and thin versions so that's one way we can apply this what else oh consider the source of the stoicheia the big question in all the commentaries is are these old elementary principles just from men or are they actually from demons and you'll see this wrestling in all the commentaries well there's evidence to suggest it's from men verse 8 philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition verse 22 human commands and doctrines but on the other hand there's tons of evidence to suggest that there are spiritual indeed demonic elements associated with this

[35 : 45] I'm running out of time so I won't go through the whole thing but 2nd corinthians 10 tells us very clearly that ideas can become strongholds for spiritual entities and I would point to the Pharisees as a great example of this they were a collection of stoicheia that was disguised as God's word ask yourself this question why did Jesus enter in his first sermon saying you've heard it said but I tell you he's not saying the Old Testament said but here's the New Testament he's saying a bunch of people have mislabeled the commandments of man as the commandments of God and I'm here to set the record straight actually Jesus' first work was to detach people from stoicheia from the hearsay the religious hearsay not the actual word of God so all that to say consider the fact that when you are dealing with this question of cultural engagement the other voices that exist consider the fact that the Bible says that there's no such thing as a neutral idea and that ideas can actually inhabit spirits that's something to think about now let's get just more personal

I think it's just good to remember the basic mechanics that are presented as we consider these things and the first one is this understand that your good desires can become opportunities for deception fitting into your family growing in practical holiness even good things can become opportunities for a detour away from Christ remember that the temptation most likely won't be to replace Christ just to give him a hand but the Bible says that our God is a jealous God and he says I will not give my glory to another the greatest way to offend him is to suggest that he needs help

revealing God or purifying you from your many sins one of the enemy's main goals in your life guys would be to mix up God's word with man's word in your mind so that you don't know which is which that'd be one of God's that'd be one of the enemy's main goals is to create a kind of indecipherable salad in your head it's like

I don't know it's like are these bacon bits God or you know like what category are these things the more you know the word the safer you will be from this but it's very clear that right from the very beginning Satan garden all the way through this is one of God's one of the devil's principal goals to mix up what God says and what is said about what God says and fourth you can experience personal Christus Victor the personal peace that comes from Christ as King ruling when you spit the bit when you fight against all of this and you stay rooted to Christ you'd be surprised how incredibly free it is out here to quote a famous YouTuber it's incredibly free out here guys it's because Jesus has made an end to all of my sin and the enemy no longer has any candles to guide me through guilt

I'm not searching out there for insight into who God is I know Christ not only do I know Christ I'm filled with Christ the fullness of him who feels all in all and finally as we navigate the holidays I want you to consider the stoicheia that you're regularly exposed to even in your Christian family let alone your non-Christian family here's the idea I want to sensitize you to there are non-Christian ideas hiding in your Christian home platitudes instincts approaches that are not Christ but they become mixed up through culture through tradition through time be a diligent observer and seek to discern the difference you know there's some common family stoicheia hyper responsibility if I don't hold everything together everything falls apart well actually read Colossians 1 it's not us holding everything together peacemaking at all costs how many marriages have been absolutely shredded because one partner has decided peace at all costs peace at the cost of sin and silence peace at all costs performance based belonging

I am loved because I am useful some families have the stoicheia of feelings or everything and some families have the stoicheia of feelings or nothing but if you want to experience the kind of peace that Jesus has come to bring not only at a cosmic level but in your own heart you'll do as Paul commands us to do and say set apart Christ is Lord he is the full revelation of who God is like what God is like and he is the purification for my sins no other assistance need apply let me lead us in prayer and then we'll introduce communion Father God we praise your holy name for your faithful delivery of the one true Christ would you Lord your

[41 : 37] Holy Spirit help us to see where the temptation has entered to depart from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ would you help us see it in the self talk that we engage in on our own the kind of culture we engage in the kind of culture we consume the family stories about the meaning of life and about identity and about success that we all have to sort through and figure out bring clarity Lord remove all of the false guides the false gospels those things that say implicitly that Christ is actually not enough and make Christ as big as he really is in our hearts!

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