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Open your Bibles to Colossians 2, I will read from verse 16 through 23.

Let No One Disqualify You

¹⁶Therefore **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. ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸**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, ¹⁹and 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.

²⁰If with Christ you died to the **elemental spirits of the world**, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²²(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to **human precepts and teachings?** ²³These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

After finishing the wonderful portion of Scripture in verse 9 through 15 that has told us many of the marvelous benefits we have in Christ, Paul in true Paul fashion, transitions to what this should mean to these Colossian believers, and the transition comes in his usual word, “Therefore.”

The therefore really is summarizing the entire book so far..... but it's more immediate emphasis is in summarizing all the benefits we have in Christ mentioned from verse 9 through 15.... I listed them in your bulletin.....

1. Verse 10 - We were filled with the Holy Spirit
2. Verse 11 - Our fleshly desires were cut off by Christ
3. Verse 12 -13 - We were buried and raised to new life by God the Father
4. Verse 13 - All of our sins were forgiven
5. Verse 14 - All of the record of our sins were placed on Christ

6. Verse 14 - Christ was nailed to the cross by the Father for our sins

7. Verse 15 - God triumphed over Satan and His demonic forces.

8. Verse 14-15 Through the cross, Victory has been won, as we are waiting for Christ's return

All of these amazing benefits are part of what Paul mentions back in chapter 2 verse 4..... they are some of the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge we find in Christ....And, according to verses 6 and 7, these are the things that are designed to help us walk in Him, and they root us and build us up and establish us in the faith..... and don't miss that next phrase... just as you were taught...

When the Word of God is truly taught, we should be learning more and more about all that God has done for us in Christ... learning these things, understanding these things, embracing these things about him does give us deep roots.....strong roots.... It does build us up..... and it does establish us in the faith....

And the reason we need to be taught is because we can't see all of these things....and we did not even know they happened to us, when we first believed.....They took place internally..... And, when you hear them for the first time, or even if you hear them over and over and over.... You really should marvel... "All that happened to me?" Yes! When you believed, you became a new creature in Christ....

This is where Paul has been going.... And now that his foundation has been laid... now that they have been taught.... Now that they are understanding all that has happened to them when they trusted Christ to save them..... now we have the big, "therefore."

And the therefore comes with 2 admonitions..... one in 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.¹"

and the other in verse 18,

"Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions²"

In verse 16, the word judgment simply means exactly what you would think..... it means to evaluate.... Or make a judgment on how someone acts.....you are being evaluated or judged by whether or not you follow their legalistic rules...

1 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 2:16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

2 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 2:18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The word disqualify is a stronger form of judgment.... It means to referee or to judge like an umpire who determines who follows the rules and who should receive a reward.... It can mean to condemn.....and, in Colossae, you would be disqualified or condemned for not following their rules...

we won't make it to verse 18 today, but I wanted to at least let you see that the meaning of these words are similar.

I have been saying this nearly every week for about a month..... these false teachers are doing all they can to promote their teaching and agenda of legalism and mysticism.....and, Paul has given those in this church all of the theological and doctrinal instruction they need to stand firm against the condemnation and scrutiny they are experiencing.....

These false teachers want to control these fairly new Christians.....by giving them man centered, Christless rules, laws, and regulations that they have made up..... things that do not come from God's Word..... and they do not and will not help in their battle against sin and fleshly indulgences....they will not help you in your walk with Christ...

I don't want to preach last Sunday's sermon..... but when you put human tradition, man made philosophy, and basic man centered spiritual truths to try to become holy..... up against what Christ has done for you..... there is no comparison....mysticism, legalism, man made rules cannot give you forgiveness.... Cannot triumph over Satan..... die for your sin and cancel your debt to God..... they cannot remove your desire for sin or fill you with the Spirit.... Paul has made this contrast really, really clear..... **(pause)**

Now, you have been listening to me preach for over a year and a half And you know that normally would jump into our text right now..... my introduction is over, and here we go....

but I want to spend a little bit of time on two side bars before we go back to Colossians 2.....

In Sidebar one, I want to go over the whole idea of Judging..... side bar 2, I want to make sure I explain and give some examples of 21st century legalism....These two side bars should help us in our understanding of verses 16 and 17.....

In this first sidebar, we all need to be reminded that there is a wrong kind of judging and a right kind of judging....

I think there are many people in the church today who have this as their life verse... "Do not let anyone judge you." And, they would use Jesus words to confirm this from Matthew 7.... "Judge not lest you be judged." And, if we took the time to examine all of Matthew 7, we would find

that Jesus is not commanding to never judge, rather to judge with self-examination and humility instead of a phariseeical censoriousness.

People in the church do not want to be accountable to anyone..... Many people have a wrong view of grace..... and they think grace gives them the right to live any way they want, and when you add that to a couple verses out of context in regards to not judging, then you have a congregation of autonomous people who believe that their belief or their behavior should never be questioned....

There is a wrong kind of judging and there is a right kind of judging. And, all through Scripture we are commanded to make wise judgments..... Turn with me to I Corinthians 5

In I Corinthians 5, Paul is dealing with a man who has been living with his step mother..... and it appears that both of them attend the Corinthian church, and the church family, both leaders and congregants have done nothing about this couple's sin..... I will read from verse 1

"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ²And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

³For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.^{3"}

Paul seems a bit judgmental, here doesn't he?

The church apparently was fully aware of the relationship between a man and his step mother..... they had done nothing about it..... it was a kind of sin that even the Gentiles, or unsaved people would have not tolerated..... and Paul pronounced a judgment against Him..... If you read further into the passage, Paul commanded the church to remove the man from the assembly.... Do not let him worship with you until he repents....

This man may have said or may have wanted to say, "Stop judging me." or "Judge not lest you be judged." "Why does this concern you? I am a Christian, she is a Christian, and we love each other."

Regardless of what this man thinks or believes.....Paul clearly shows us that a judgment had to be made in regards to this man's sinful behavior..... not, however, because the behavior violated a man made list.... Not because of legalism....rather, because the behavior violated God's revealed Word.....

3 [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Co 5:1-3). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

We have requirements to judge one another all through the Word of God...

When leaders are considered in a church, whether elders or deacons, there are qualifications from I Timothy that must be met..... and to determine whether or not someone meets them, there must be an evaluation or a judgment..... Wise judgment is part of the Christian life... But, what is so important to know is that our criteria for judging is the word of God.....

and, let me add, as I said earlier regarding Jesus Words that we are to judge with an attitude of humility..... turn to Galatians 6 for a moment..... Our judgment of one another should never be out of haughtiness or pride.....

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ⁴”

First, do you see the evaluation or the judgment? A determination had to take place as to whether or not what someone was doing was sin.... And the Bible would be the source for that determination.....

Then, Do you see the motivation in judging or evaluating here? The motivation is restoration....the attitude behind it is gentleness, with the addition of self reflection.....”keep watch on yourself” don’t ever forget, that you are a sinner, and you can fall to temptation, as well.....

In this little side bar, what I am trying to show you is that judging one another..... evaluating one another is normal part of the Christian life.....

And the criteria or standard for the right kind of judgment is God’s Word..... the Bible does not support any Christian living an autonomous life....living with your own standards, unaccountable to anyone....

So, there is certainly more to say about this..... but I want to be sure that you understand this is not a text that supports the idea that all judging is wrong.....

I just want to make sure we all know that the command in verse 16 to not let anyone judge you has to be set in the Colossian context.....it is not a verse for anyone to use who is living contrary to the clear commands of Scripture...

4 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ga 6:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

In this 2nd side bar, it is important to know that the false teachers were judging them over what they were eating and drinking, and whether or not they were participating in their version of the ceremonial law.....

and they were being judged or condemned by the false teachers for enjoying God's good gifts, and not following the Jewish calendar of festivals, new moons, and Sabbath.....

So, this teaching is coming from a list that is man made, man centered, human tradition, combined with the Old Testament law and it is outside of God's Word, outside of Christ....It was an attempt to limit the freedom on one hand, and add obedience or compliance to the Law on the other.....

So, to break it down even further..... they were giving you a list of things you should **stop doing**..... and they were giving you a list of things you should **be doing**, and they are saying, "if you do what they tell, you will be a better Christian...."

It was pure, unadulterated legalism..... A great definition of legalism is:

" the desire to bind the conscience of others to do something that is not commanded in Scripture or forbid something that is not forbidden in Scripture.

And it always comes from a man made list.

Legalism usually begins with a biblical idea or concept..... then moves to an application..... then, when the application begins to be taught as the command, we now have legalism..... and over time these legalistic ideas become tradition.... And tradition begins to be truth.... And this truth is now taught instead of Scripture.

Let me give you some examples:

Command: I Timothy 2:9, "women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty⁵" Application: Women at Grace Fellowship church must wear dresses down to their ankles....baggy loose fitting pants and shirts..... and their shirt collars must be up to their chins.....

and, over time, instead of teaching what modesty is and what it is not, and giving the freedom for women to dress appropriately, the rules are created and the rules and restrictions are taught instead of God's Word. Binding the conscience and making you a legalist....

5 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 2:9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Example #2...Command: I John 2:15, "Do not love the world or the things of the world."
Application: Movies, media, and secular entertainment are worldly.....So, you should not go to movies, the theater, have a TV in your home because of the influence of worldly thinking....

And over time, instead of teaching what it means to not love the world, and giving people the freedom to live in the world and not be of the world..... A list is created that you must obey or you are judged if you have a TV, or go to the movies...or spend money on secular entertainment.....you see, rules are created..... then the rules are taught instead of the Scripture....

Or how about the Command in Ephesians 6:4, parents are to "bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ⁶" Now I am grateful that we have all 3 forms of educating our kids at Grace Fellowship..... there are some homeschool kids, some public school kids and some Christian school kids....

Grace Fellowship when it was known as Skeels Baptist Church started Skeels Christian School 46 years ago, and we continue to be grateful for the ministry of the school....

However, when anyone says, "The only way to educate your kids is through _____" We are now teaching the application instead of the command.... And this one is really easy to become legalistic about.

At the church I pastored in Florida, we has several home school families who believed it was sinful to put your kids in public school....I think some of them would have said that putting them in Christian School was not quite as sinful, but still sinful.....not only is that total legalism, it makes it so no one from the public school system will ever want to come to church because they know they will be harshly judged.....

When **your** application is the only way to obey the command.... They you have become a legalist and you are limiting the freedoms of those around you..... You are no longer teaching the command raise kids in the fear admonition of the Lord, and allowing the parents to obey the command..... You are teaching your tradition....

Beloved the reason why I am spending so much time on this is because it applies is so many ways..... it applies even to the upcoming election..... there are many evangelicals saying today that if you a Christian, you will vote Republican... That Republicanism and Christianity are now linked, and if a person votes democratic, he or she will be judged.....

6 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Eph 6:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

And, what happens over time when the legalism of a congregation goes unchecked, an environment is created where like the Pharisees they are unified by their own traditions and rules..... instead of being unified in Christ..... and when you go outside those rules, you are not accepted.....

And, this is what was going on in the church at Colossae..... the false teachers were telling the people that they must stop doing some things.....and start doing some other things.....but the weren't from Scripture....

Of course, it was not about dressing a certain way, or not being involved in certain forms of entertainment, or how to educate your kids, or telling you who vote for the person we tell you to.....but the command is the same...

“do not let anyone pass judgment on you in things that have no biblical bearing.”

You see, the reference to food and drink in verse 16 is an obvious reference to at least some of the Jewish dietary laws....and it has the idea of trying to gain spirituality through self denial and restrictions.....In Acts 10, when Peter saw the vision of all kinds of unclean animals on a sheet and the angel told him to kill and eat..... part of the lesson in that narrative is that all foods are clean.... All foods are good to enjoy.... That you can eat bacon, and shell fish.....and rabbit, and even squirrel...

But these false teachers were coming in and limiting the freedoms of these believers and more than limiting them.... They were judging them for simply enjoying all of God's good gifts...

and, we know it is about restrictions because of the reference to the regulations of verse 21, that state, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch." You see, to be righteous, to walk in sanctification, you have to restrict yourself... don't eat this... don't drink that...

You see, some commentators believe that part of the heresy in the first and 2nd century church was a philosophy called Gnosticism....one of the many aspects of this teaching was that the body is bad, only the spirit is good..... so you must starve the body of pleasure and enjoyment..... making abstaining from food and drink seem more godly.....

So, living a life of self denial, piety, and vows of poverty would be considered the pinnacle of holiness and righteousness..... because if you deny your physical body any physical pleasure, you will have greater victory over sin,,,,,,you will have a more righteous walk with God.

Beloved, this thought is not new.....John Newton the writer of Amazing Grace believed that denying himself certain foods would help him maintain moral purity when he was away from his wife...

not because of his diet; rather because of all that God has done for him in Christ..... to free him, to live in Him, and to make Him a new creature with new desires....

So these ideas are not new and they did not exist only in Colossae.....Paul had to correct this type of thinking on more than one occasion..... ...Turn over a few pages to I Timothy chapter 4..... I will read from verse 1.....

I Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ²through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. ⁷

There are many things we can say about this passage, but notice first that our Great God wants us to enjoy, take pleasure in, and give him glory and praise for His goodness to us when we enjoy His good and pleasurable gifts.....

Paul is saying that marriage should not be forbidden and therefore, the physical union and pleasure between man and wife is to be fully enjoyed and received with thanksgiving..... and God created food to be received with thanksgiving, and he gave you taste buds, so you can enjoy his good gifts..... sweet, sour, hot, cold, spicy, mild..... the list is endless.....

we live in the USA and we are blessed to eat from food all over the world.....

Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Indian, Greek, American.....hot dog

God gave us physical bodies to enjoy the physical universe that he made and rules over.....and what a blessing this is..... in that we live in a world that is cursed by sin, marred by sin, that is waiting for its redemption, and yet, God in his mercy allows us to enjoy some of the good and pleasurable gifts he has for us.....

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (1 Ti 4:1–5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

The requirement of celibacy for priests in Roman Catholicism is a complete violation of God's Word..... Now clearly, there are some who are single..... for a variety of biblical reasons that we don't have time to look at..... but when marriage is forbidden, according to I Timothy 4, it is a teaching from the pit of hell, and we know that it has caused multiple problems among men in the priesthood.... who are under a yoke they should never have to keep....

Based on the phrase in Chapter 2 verse 21, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch," it appears that the idea that is circulating in Colossae, that the physical is evil and abstinence from physical pleasure is a mark of holiness.....This is a denial of God being a benevolent creator who cares for his creation.....

Remember, Paul told us in Colossians 1 that Christ is the creator and sustainer of all things.... and as creator, and we as part of his creation, everything created by him is good, He wants us to enjoy His creation.....and as physical beings, we have 5 senses that enjoy all of his goodness..... Sight..... hearing..... Touch.....smell..... taste...

we are coming into the holiday season.....turkey in the oven, pies on the counter....can't you smell it? god is a great God! Do not let legalistic, pharaseical people Rob you of all the joys God has given you.....

And, clearly the mention of drink in Colossians 2 is talking about wine..... or alcohol.....there were only 3 things to drink in the first century..... water, milk, and wine.....and, no one will condemn you or judge you for drinking water or milk.....Remember, Jesus was condemned by the pharisees as a glutton and a drunkard because he ate and drank, while the Pharisees and their disciples fasted.....

it is not hard to find 3 or 4 verses out of context in Scripture in order to create a hard and fast law or rule about abstaining from alcohol.... and it is not hard to make dogmatic, legalistic statements about alcohol that limit the freedoms of others and bind their consciences....

.and as these false teachers were putting the Colossians under bondage by encouraging or insisting or judging or condemning them in regards to eating, they were also encouraging abstinence from alcohol even though there is no biblical basis for it.....

Turn with me to Psalm 104 for a moment.

You cause the grass to grow for the livestock
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth

15 and wine to gladden the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen man's heart. ⁸

God has given us all things to enjoy.....God causes the grass to grow for the livestock and the plants for you and I, so we can have food to enjoy..... and he allows wine in order to gladden your heart..... and oil, another reference to physical pleasure..... they could use oil for a sop to eat, or to anoint their head..... and then bread to strengthen man's heart.....this is such a wonderful verse declaring the goodness and blessing of God on man to enjoy all of the things that God has created,.....

In regards to alcohol, Let me add a couple of things..... first.....drunkenness is sin,

Noah was wrong to drink himself to a stupor and then lay exposed and naked in his tent.... Proverbs speaks in more than one chapter about the danger of wine when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smooth and anyone intoxicated by it is not wise....

One of the qualifications for eldership in I Timothy 3 is that he "should not be a drunkard." It does not say, a total abstainer.... If you call me and I am slurring my words.... There is a problem....

Alcohol should be used in moderation.... And one of the fruits of the Spirit is self control.

The NT command is "do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." It really means to be controlled, and when you drink too much, you are now controlled by the alcohol, not the Spirit of God

2ndly, we also need be very careful to not cause those who are weaker to stumble by drinking in front of them.... What I mean by a weaker brother is there are those who will see your freedom to have a drink and say, "Oh, he is drinking, so I guess I can too...." and you may not know that what you are free to do in moderation will cause a brother in Christ who has a problem with self control will get drunk because of your example.....

So, we need to be careful not to flaunt our freedoms, and we must protect one another..... and careful not to cause others around us to sin.....we can go into more detail about this on another day.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ps 104:14–15). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Our text is not a passage dealing with how we respond to a weaker brother.....

it is clearly addressing the issue that we need not allow self-righteous, phariseical, false teachers deny these pleasures and good gifts either..... this is a passage about not being judged by self righteous pharisees.....these are not weaker brothers..... Your behavior is not making them stumble into sin..... rather they are trying to limit your freedoms and control your behavior....with their Christless manmade rules and regulations, and Paul is commanding you not to let them judge you.. don't let them rob you of your joy in Christ...

but it isn't just about food and drink.....or what they were doing.....the false teachers were also scrutinizing them over what they did not do..... or how they lived in regards to festivals, new moons, and sabbath keeping,.....you see, they were told not to enjoy God's good gifts..... but they were also told you must participate in part of the ceremonial law....

Again, Classic legalism..... don't do this..... and you must do that....

and each of these does have an Old Testament reference to it..... They represent the entire ceremonial law..... Sabbaths are weekly, new moons are monthly, and festivals are annually....

Now, let me be really clear here....The city of Colossae was a Gentile city.....obviously, there was a strong desire to amalgamate the ceremonial law with their Christian faith.....they were already meeting on the Lord's Day, Sunday.....the reference to the Sabbath is not about their regularly meeting to worship as a gathered congregation... it was an addition....

we know that when Jesus rose from the dead, the first day of the week was now the day the church gathered.....and they were no longer required to keep the ceremonial law....

When the curtain was torn in two, Christ fulfilled the law and all it's requirements, so the requirements of keeping the Jewish Sabbath, taking part in the monthly new moon celebrations, and participating in any of the festivals was no longer required....

Yet, just like in our day..... Religion steps in to give a code of conduct in order to add things that if you followed them, you would have a sense that you were getting closer to God.... It is exactly what verse 23 states, they have an appearance of wisdom in promoting self made religion..... It is just an appearance..... it kind of looks like it on the outside...

But it is of no value in stopping the indulgences of the flesh...

Some of you who were raised catholic, now what it is like to be taught things you **need to do** to become holy..... and these are the things you **must not do** to become holy..... Man has always made his own set of rules and regulations in order to approach God, get to know God, or even to get right with God.....

And Paul is adamant that you must not let those who are teaching you judge you or condemn you for not following their rules about the ceremonial law..... and verse 17 gives the reason.

"These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ."

This is such an important part of the text.....All of the Old Testament rituals, sacrifices, their diet, the offerings, festivals, and Sabbaths were things that pointed to the Lord Jesus..... Hebrews 8:5 tells us that these served as a copy or a shadow of the heavenly things....and Christ had a better ministry.

And Hebrews 10 reminds us that these shadows could never fully make perfect those who were drawing near..... but when Christ came, he offered himself once for all..... He was what these shadows pointed to, and now that He is here, these shadows are obsolete.

Think of a shadow for a moment..... it is not real, but it looks kind of real.... it is a copy, but it has no substance... The substance is Christ.... Christ Shadow is the OT law, so to speak..... and when he came to earth, he made his shadow obsolete because He is here.... He is the substance.....

In today's world, I suppose you would say that the shadow is what we see on our computer or phone screen when we interact with friends and family on face time or zoom..... but when we see each other in person is the substance.....

Our daughter sent us a video of 3 year old grandson Ben, and we sent one back to him..... and Court said that he was talking to us the whole time he was watching the video..... he thought it was us, but it wasn't.... it was in image.... We are the substance..... the video is a shadow that points to us, reminds him of us, but it is not us...

When we go and see them face to face..... he has no interest in videos of us.... Why? He wants the real thing.... He wants us.... Grandma and Grandpa are here.....We can talk, we can hug, we can see, taste, and even smell..... we are there with him and do not need to go back to the shadows....

So, we don't worship through ceremonies, festivals, and new moon offerings..... we worship Christ to whom all these things pointed.....which brings us back to the fact that Christ is in us and we are in Him..... and we walk in Him..... and he has forgiven us and cleansed us.....so, we don't have to wait until the festival comes or the monthly new moon offering or the next Sabbath to come before God.....nor do we have to wait and offer a sacrifice for cleansing in order to come into God's presence.....no, we have constant 24 hour a day, moment by moment access to God, not through the Old System..... rather to God through Christ....

Which brings us back to all the benefits in verse 9-15 doesn't it? You don't need the shadows anymore because you have the substance... Jesus is here!

As I come to a close, I think this passage is speaking to 3 different people..... One, it speaks to us legalists.... Yes, I am a legalist.....that is why I said us..... Maybe this has hit a nerve, and you have found yourself placing your applications on others, and you are judgmental... Hold your convictions firmly, but be careful that you are teaching God's revealed Word instead of your application..... and maybe your judgmental attitude has affected others that you need to restore relationships...

I don't have time to tell you how judgmental I have been in the past and how many people I had to go back to and ask their forgiveness for putting things on them that were not biblical

2ndly, it applies to you who are being affected by those who are limiting freedoms, like those in Colossae.....I think when Paul tells them, "Do not let them judge you" he is not saying, go up and put your finger in their faces and say, "Stop judging me..." He is just saying don't stop enjoying God, His goodness, and all He has done for you in Christ.....and don't submit to their rules...

go back over the list of the blessings in verses 9-15,

He lives in you, He has removed your fleshly desires, he has made you a new creature in Christ..... He has forgiven you... all of your sins have been placed on Christ and God nailed Christ to the cross to suffer and die for you.. and sin and death and satan and all the demonic forces have been conquered....

And Christ is here.... He is present.... Worship the substance.....forget about the shadows.... And don't think twice about those trying to limit your freedoms....

And, thirdly, a group I have not mentioned, yet..... Some of you might be thinking.... Rick, I am so glad you have brought this passage to light because sometimes, when I come to church, I feel judged.....I mean, nearly every Sunday, you put me under bondage to come back next week.....

Let me be clear..... This text is not talking about clear commands in Scripture....

The Scripture is clear that the weekly gathering of believers is not an option.... It is not legalism to encourage, exhort, admonish believers to come and meet weekly with God's people..... So, when I say that church attendance is fundamental not supplemental.....that is not legalism, that is a command..... but the command should be easy to obey because of all that Christ has done.....

Because of forgiveness, and Christ paying our debt, and the spirit of God living in us and through us and being new creatures in Christ.....and being brought into His family, His Kingdom..... beloved, when you understand this, you **want** to come and learn more about Him, you **want** to come and worship Him, you **want** to come and sing His praise, you **want** to come and meet with God's people..... calling the church to gather is not legalism.... Anymore than meeting monthly for the Lord's supper....

If you believe this, even when you are on vacation, you will find a bible believing congregation and have the blessing of fellowshiping with them.... And you will find it to be a joy....

Remember, legalism is binding your conscience to do something that is not commanded in Scripture....our gathering is commanded...

But, in this part of Michigan in a couple of weeks, we have a conundrum..... opening day is coming, some believers going to skip church to hunt.....skip church to keep your tradition..... Some of you are thinking.... Wait a minute, now you are getting legalistic....

I knew we should have never hired that guy from California who does know our traditions.....

I mean it is only once every 7 years that opening day falls on a Sunday.... Exactly..... once every 7 years, you get to show your friends and family that the all that God had done for you in Christ is more important than the hobbies you enjoy, the friends and family you get together with.....Christ is more important than your traditions....

Beloved, the substance is here..... and you are called to worship Him.... To love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength..... and give him first place in all you do.....

And why wouldn't we? He paid a debt we could never pay by sacrificing His son, to experience the wrath we deserve.....

All glory be to Christ...