Colossians - Commentaries by Charles (Chuck) Hendricks

Regina Conference: 1989, Set Your Mind on Things Above

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Please open to your Bibles to Colossians. Chapter 1. Verse 24. The end of verse 23 whereof I, Paula made a minister. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you? And fill up that which is behind. Of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church. Where have I made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you? To fulfill or to complete the Word of God. Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His Saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles? Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Whom we preach, warning every man. And teaching every man in all wisdom. That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Whereunto I also labor striving according to his working which worketh. In me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea. And for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. That their hearts might be comforted. Being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures. Of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say. Lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit. Enjoying and beholding your order in the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him. And established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving. Beware. Lest any man spoil you through philosophy. And vain deceit. After the tradition of men. After the rudiments of the world. And not after Christ, for in him. Dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And Ye completes in him. Which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands. In the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him. Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, in the uncircumcision of your flesh. Had he quickened together with him? Having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances. That was against us. Which was contrary to us and took it out, took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers. He made a show of them openly. Triumphing over them in it. That no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respective and holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days. Which are a shadow of things to come. But the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility. And worshipping of angels. Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the head. From whom all? From which? All the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered. And knit together. Increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ? From the rudiments of the world. Why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not? Which are all to perish with the using. After the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom and will worship? And humility and neglecting of the body. Not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. If ye then be risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above. Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above. Not on things on the Earth. For ye are dead.

And your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear. Then shall ye also. Appear with him. In Glory. You probably noticed. In the reading of these verses. There are a number of warnings. Given by the Apostle. The laborers of the apostle. He had two ministries, the ministry of the gospel. The ministry of the Church. And he speaks of the. Ministry of the Church as being the mystery. That hidden secret? Which God never divulged in the Old Testament. But now has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Verse 26 of chapter 1, he speaks of that. It's that which completes the Word of God or fulfills the Word of God. The end of verse 25. Paul's ministry. Filled up the missing. Part of divine revelation. It. That which? Filled up and completed the revelation that God was to give to man. Up till then. There was much truth revealed. But there was a hidden secret. A mystery, for that's what the word means in Scripture. It means a secret that was not divulged in times past, but once it's been revealed. It's now for the enjoyment. And for the obedience. Of the Saints. This mystery verse 26 was hid from ages and from generations. But now is made manifest to his Saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles? Which is Christ in you? The hope of glory. If Christ is in US. Then there is a glory which is ahead. He is there. And that's where we're going. Christ in you is the hope of glory. The absolute assurance that glory is the end of the pathway. And so we've been praying much about trials and tribulations and sufferings. And afflictions of the Saints. But the end of the path is the glory. Christ in you is the hope of glory. The end of the Christian pathway is the glory. And if we're living in the good of it now, we'll be living in the sense. That we belong to the glory. We belong to heaven. The heavenly people. Paul laboured. In prayer, fervently, if you read his prayers. In Ephesians. Colossians. It was that the Saints might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. And in order for that to be realized in our souls, we have to understand. This truth that was given to Paul to reveal to us. Verse 27. God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. In Ephesians, the mystery takes the form that we are in Christ. We are seen before God in him. As he is, we are in this world. We are in him and here in Colossians. Christ is in US. Verse 28 Now whom we preach. Warning every man. And teaching every man in all wisdom. That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. This was the burden that Paul had. He warned. He taught. In all wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery. He taught that God, that God's wisdom, that hidden wisdom. God's thoughts, are we interested? In the secret. That God kept to himself. Until there was a man in the glory. And then he sent down the Holy Spirit. To form into one body all believers, and unite them to that risen glorified man in heaven. And now he has revealed to us that secret.

That all that is true of Him is true of you and me. We are in Him. We are one with him. In all his exaltation and glory. And then when that day of glory comes, the Millennium, when the Lord reigns here, we're going to be with him. It says in First Thessalonians 4 The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise 1St, and then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord. In the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Never to be parted from him again. Once we arrived there in his presence, Christ is in US, but that's the hope of glory. One said to

Mr. Darby as he looked around about at the havoc which the enemy was working. In the church and he said, Brother Darby, what will become of us? His answer was most sweet. I know of no future for the Christian, but glory. He looked beyond the difficulties here into the glory which is above. Paul says whom we preach. Not a Christ on earth. Not a reformer. Not one to change this world, Not yet. Not one to improve the conditions of society here. But one who has been turned out of this world, rejected, hated, despised and. He's gone to heaven. The glory must receive, Peter says. The times of the Restitution of all things. He's there in the glory, received up into glory, received up in glory. And we are in him there. The problem today? Is that the world has come into our hearts, in our lives to such an extent. That we are not occupied with the glory. We're not occupied with those eternal realities that we have in Christ. We are not occupied with the secret that God has now revealed to us. We've said we're not really too interested in that secret. I'm not really too interested. In the glory. Well. I'm sure that. That hurts the heart of our God. As he has told out all that was in his heart of love for you and me. So that we might be occupied with not things here. Not getting ahead here, not making a name for ourselves here, but with the glory. And Paul says, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom. This is God's wisdom. That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. And if your Christ is merely. One who has put your sins away. As blessed as that is the very foundation truth of Christianity. That isn't enough. That isn't as oh, Brother Brown used to tell us. Christianity begins on the other side of the cloud. In Acts One, they watched him go to heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And Christianity begins on the other side of that cloud. With a man in the glory, the Spirit of God, a divine person here on earth. To unite us to one another and to himself on high. And we have. Better things now than what this world has to offer. So he was warning every man. Verse 29 whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. Now I'm going to change this a little. As it is in Mr. Darby's new translation to the knowledge, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God. Verse 33. Now the last part of that verse is deleted, in which. Are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? In the mystery of God, this hidden secret that God has now revealed to us, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in that mystery.

Christ. And the church. Do we know what it is? Have we? Have he spent time searching it out? I think there are. At least seven. There may be 12, I'm not sure of the number mysteries. In the New Testament, I don't think there are as many as some think. I think they're just different aspects of the same mystery. But here we have the mystery of God. In that mystery are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Now notice verse 4. This I say, lest any man should beguile you. With enticing words. Enticing words to get us occupied with other things. The enemy is satisfied with far less than you think. He's not just trying to get us to commit some. Gross, immoral act of sin. Of course he does that, but. If he can just get us to walk down here through this world as though we belong here. But this is our home, our lives. Show how much. Of this world we really value. Our lives show it. This I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. And though I be absent in the flesh, yet I may with you in the Spirit, drawing and beholding your order in the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Now we're getting to the verses that I'm really concerned about. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. How we received him, by doing anything. By any efforts of our own? No, not a bit of it. It's all grace. We've received him as God's gift to us in sovereign grace. So he says, as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. We've been brought into this immense blessing. We've been given the faith to receive Him. By grace, By grace, it's a sovereign gift of God. An hour to walk. In the sense of that as we go through this scene. The sense of our own nothingness. The sense that we haven't contributed one thing to the blessing that He's brought us into, it all flows to us from the heart of God. We received him. By faith, through grace. So walkie in him, rooted and built up in him. Established in the faith. As you have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving. And now comes another warning. Beware. Beware lest any man spoil you. Verse four he says, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. Now he says, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy. And vain deceit. After the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Philosophy. That's the world's wisdom. The wisdom of man. And vain deceit is the world's religion. It's all summarized. As vain deceit, man's effort to gain a status before God by works. Christianity is the only religion. I use that term because I don't know a better one to use. It's really not a religion, it's a man glorified man. The only one of all the world religions stands all by itself. It doesn't present works as the means of gaining anything. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us. It's all grace. It's all grace. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, man's philosophy, and man's vain deceit. Man's wisdom and man's religion all assume. A basic fallacy, and that is that man has it within himself. To deliver himself from the ills of society. Man has the power within him to get to God. To establish his own righteousness. To merit salvation. That's the lie of the enemy. Beware lest any man spoil you. Through philosophy and vain deceit. Has that happened amongst us? It certainly has. Are we aware of it? If we're not, it just shows the subtlety of the poison. Which is at work. We have.

In whatever measure, we have displaced Christ in our lives. And put works in its place. In his place we have fallen from grace. If we don't go forward in the sense of grace in our souls and our strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. In the consciousness that all the blessings that we have and enjoy are given to us of God, unmerited by us in any way. Undeserved in any way. It's all his sovereign grace, and that's what gives the power. To live pleasing to Him, so walk ye in him. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him, we received him by sovereign grace. Now walk in that. Stand in that we're saved by grace. We're kept by grace. And one day it will present us. Into the glory. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men. After the rudiments of the world, what does that word rudiments mean? It means the first principles, the essential basic principle upon which the men of this world operate. The principles of this world are that. You have to do something and then you get rewarded for it. The principles of this world. The rudiments of this world which will spoil us, assume that man. Has basically good. In his nature. That's false. The reason the Christian message is so unpalatable to man is because it presents. Man as lost, incorrigibly evil. Under the sentence of condemnation, without any strength or ability to extricate himself from his lost estate. Without strength. Hopelessly lost. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. You're not really as bad as they say, you know. And that's what they teach you in school and everything that you will hear in the classroom, young people who are here under the sound of my voice this morning. You will be taught over and over and over again that man can. Solve his problems, his social problems, his economic problems, his judicial problems, whatever they are, man can solve them. They will not, they will not come to grips with their true condition before God. Man won't come to grips. He won't acknowledge it. He refuses to do so. You have a great campaign launched to correct AIDS and to. Research being expanded so that some some medication, some vaccine, some. Effort on the part of medical science will eliminate it. They never go to the source of the problem. The wickedness of man's immoral heart. Living apart from God, they won't address that. Now in school. This is the kind of philosophy, this is the kind of mindset that you will be exposed to over and over and over again. And unless you are firmly established in the truth of the gospel. It can have a very very. Serious effect upon your spiritual growth. Beware, Paul says. Beware lest any man spoil you. Ruin you. That's what the word spoil means. Ruin your testimony. Ruin your life. If Satan can't get your soul because it's in the hands of Christ. He will go for your life. He wants to ruin your life. He wants you to be a lost dynamic. Before God. And how well he has succeeded. All we have to do is to look around us in the Christian world. And

we will find very few who call themselves Christians who really understand and know what Christianity is all about. They think we're set here to improve. And to correct this world. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. If I really believe, as taught of God in the Scriptures, that this world is not improvable. That man is incorrigibly evil. That he cannot extricate himself from his lost condition.

That the only way he has any hope is in Christ. Yet he goes about seeking to improve his conditions without Christ. And Christians. Christians who are not firmly established in the truth of God. Join hands with the ungodly to improve a world which is under the sentence of judgment. By God. What folly. What a waste of 1's time and energy. When what we ought to be doing is reaching out. Speaking to souls and. Getting the gospel, the only thing that can set man free, The Lord said, if the truth shall set you free. You shall be free indeed. And it's only the truth that can set us free. And He is the truth, and man doesn't have it. We were speaking at the breakfast table this morning. About the most common sin in all of society. It's lying. The very first sin that came into the church was lying. Thou hast not lied to men, Peter said, but to God. Ananias and Sapphira lying, and the very last thing mentioned in Revelation 21. It says all liars shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone. Which is the second death? But we have learned the truth as it is in Jesus. Speaking truth every. Our true state. In truthfulness, and then He will come in in blessing. For us. That all we can be spoiled as long as we're on legal ground, as long as it's up to me to do something in order to merit some blessing or favor from God, or approval even from my brethren. If that's. If that's what is before my soul. If that's what's motivating me or motivating you. You've got the wrong object. You know, they said to the Lord Jesus, Master, we know that thou carest not for any man's person. He broke all social convention when he entered the Pharisees house. He didn't wash before eating. The Pharisee didn't like that. Another time he allowed this sinful woman to come and bathe his feet with her tears. And wipe them with the hairs of her head, and anoint his feet with ointment. And he said, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who in what manner of woman it is that toucheth him, for she's a Sinner. That just isn't done in the nice circles of society. And in John 4, when the disciples came back after they went into the city to buy bread, they marveled that he talked with the woman. Oh, the grace. The infinite Grace. I marvel. I marvel that he's come down and revealed himself to my soul. Such a wretched, guilty Sinner as I was, that he revealed himself to me, to you, and each of us. What a marvel. And yet we can be such self-righteous Pharisees that we can say. We marvel that he talked with that woman. I don't marvel he talked with me, but with that woman. After all, I'm better than she is. I believe the Lord has a controversy with us. Along this line. May God give us deliverance. Because I was just like that. A Pharisee. And by the grace of God, I trust in some measure. At any rate, He has given me deliverance from it. May we all be delivered from it. So that we don't have to pretend to be something we're not. Paul could say, by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace, which worked in me mightily. Worked for the Blessing of Souls. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Philosophy and vain deceit will get you to thinking something well of yourself. You ever hear that? Think well of yourself. Develop a good self-image. Is that what Paul said? Less than the least of All Saints. Not me to be called an apostle. The chief of sinners. Though I be nothing. The whole book of Job was written to come to this conclusion. I am vile and the new translation gives that. I am nothing. To be brought to the sense of what we are.

The presence of God. We manifest. By our very thoughts. In our lives, speaking to my own soul here in everything I've said, it's a 2 edged sword. 1 cannot minister the word without it cutting him just as much. I lost my train of thought, so let's go on verse 8. Beware. Lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Both of those make something of the first man. After the rudiments of the world, that's the way the world operates. And we're immersed in it. And this is what we're being flooded with all the time. We little realize how much this kind of thinking. Affects us. Not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All the fullness of Deity dwells in him, in that man. Bodily. All the fullness of the Godhead. John 11 in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God bodily. 114 And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, the glorious of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. You have those two portions in that one verse, all the fullness. Of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, that man. That blessed man. And ye are complete in him. Which is the head of all principality and power. Oh, when I come into the good of that, I am complete in him. I made full in him. And brought to a state of spiritual perfection in Him. I don't have to try any longer to gain something. I've got it in Christ. It's all mine in Him. Complete in him. Now I can go forward. In the conscious sense of that, that all the fullness that I need, that you need, that we each one needs, is in him, dwells in him, in that blessed man who is at the right hand of God, Christ in glory. We have all in him. And whom you also? Are circumcised. With the circumcision made without hands. This is a spiritual circumcision. The putting off of the flesh the sins of shouldn't be there. The putting off of the flesh. It's the cutting off of the flesh. By the circumcision of Christ, when Christ was cut off on the cross. The end of the old man, the end of the flesh. Buried with him in baptism. Wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God hath raised him from the dead. Were put out of sight in the burial. And now we're risen with him. Through the faith of the operation of God. Brought into a new creation, Christ risen. Is the head of a new creation, a new world? So don't let the rudiments of this world, the attitudes of this world, the mindset of this world. Spoiled you through philosophy and vain deceit. And then he gets into the. The religious aspect of the world. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, which was against us and which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. The law, the 10 commandments, the Decalogue, it can only curse us. It could only. Bring us in as guilty because we violated its righteous precepts. And having spoiled principalities and powers, all the power of Satan that was arrayed against us. He's defeated it and he spoiled his powers. He's gone into the strong man's house and taken all his goods. He made a show of them, openly triumphing over them in it, in resurrection. He is the mighty Victor. We live now of His resurrection life, and we are now living in the power of that in a new creation. Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of in holy day. What does the risen man have to do with meats and drinks and holy days? What does the risen man have to do with this world's religions? Nothing. We now are identified with a new thing. Or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come. The body, the substance of which all these things were just types and figures and shadows. The body, the substance has come. That's Christ. He's the one that's a great anti type. He is the substance, the body.

Of all. The shadows of the types of the Old Testament. Again, let no man beguile you. Of your reward. In a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, these again are things of a religious sort. That man does in order to make himself more acceptable to God. A voluntary humility, crawling up the steps to some temple on your knees. Or whatever it was, I think it was Martin Luther while he was undergoing this kind of a penance. He was smitten down with the truth that man is justified by faith apart from works. And he got up. And was delivered. Intruding into those things which he hath not seen vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. The religion of man, the religion that gives man a status in this world. Something for him to do, something for him to afflict himself with even, and treat his body harshly in order that he might be a better person. Not holding the head. Christ. From which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, from these worldly principles, whether it's of a secular sort or whether it's of a religious sort, we're dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, from all that this world holds out for man. You know in Christianity there are only two externals, baptism in the Lord's Supper, and they both speak of the foundation

of the faith. The death of Christ. Baptism. We are identified with him in his death. The initiatory right of Christianity. It brings us into the outward sphere of the Christians and then the ongoing weekly remembrance of the Lord Jesus. In his death, both Speaking of the very foundation that has brought us into all the blessing that we enjoy. Only two externals and all the rest is spiritual. No instrumental music, no great cathedrals, no stained glass windows, No. Sacramento System No. Offerings and sacrifices. We stand perfect and complete in Christ. And we have access into its very presence by into the holiest. Wherefore if he be dead with Christ? From the rudiments of the world. Why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances? What are the ordinances say that parentheses has to do with the ordinances. Touch not, Taste not, handle not. Which are all to perish with the using. That's the religion of men. Those are the things that man would put us under a ******* put us back under law. You have to do this. You can't do this. You have to do that. You can't do that. You can't touch this. You can't touch that. You can't eat this, you can't eat that. And if you do? You're not living up to the standards of the society. A legal *******? After the commandments and doctrines of men, that's what they are. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom and will, worship and humility, neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. Catholic monks would go off into a monastery on a hill, never see anyone else, and they would afflict themselves. And they would. Punish their bodies and it seemed very humble, but it didn't improve the flesh. Now we have to close. But I just want to finish by reading those verses in chapter 3 if ye then. Be risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above. Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection, your mind. On things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, you have died. And your life is hid with Christ and God. We've died to everything here. To sin to the world. To all that Satan would. Deceive us by. We are dead. Our life is hid with Christ in the very presence of God. And end of the promise when Christ, who is our life? Shall appear. Then shall we also appear with Him in glory? The end of the path is the glory. And when he comes back in glory, we'll be back. We'll come back with him in glory. Will be glorified then. But now we are to apply the principle of his death to our lives. Death to all that is here.

This world, its attractions. Were crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to us. Galatians 6. If you then be risen with Christ. Seek those things. Which are above. Where Christ sitteth. On the right hand of God, set your mind on things above. Not. On things of the earth. A people destined for the glory, united to the man in the glory the heavenly people. Set your mind. On things above.

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