

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**March 30, 2025**  
**COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory**  
**Evading Spiritual Delusion**  
**Colossians 2:1-5**

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. That act of aggression is largely viewed as the beginning of the war. But the truth is that Hitler's Attack on the world began long before 1939. In the mid-1920's, Hitler appointed a man named Joseph Goebbels to spearhead the first stage of battle in the Nazi's attempt to take over the world. From that point until the end of the War in 1945, Goebbels served as Hitler's right-hand man and most loyal and influential supporter.

But Goebbels wasn't a traditional military strategist. He was a philologist, which is an expert in words. His title in the Nazi regime was "Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda." In 1927, he and Hitler began a newspaper specifically designed to spread Nazi propaganda among the German people and beyond. The name of that propaganda newspaper was "The Attack." World War 2 began with an Attack on the hearts and minds of people. Lies and deception and twisted philosophies were the first weapons launched in the global takeover. That's how the Nazi's gained control of Germany. That's how millions of people became willing to watch the Jews rounded up and placed in camps. Before Hitler captured Poland or France or Jews, he captured the hearts and minds of the German people through lies and deception and propaganda. Once he had their minds, he had them.

And as we continue our study of the book of Colossians, our text for this morning reveals that same dynamic is at play in all our lives. We are living in a world at war. There is a battle raging for the hearts and minds of men. But you don't have to be taken captive. You can live free. Friend, there is victory in Jesus.

So, let's dig into our next passage of the book of Colossians.

**Colossians 2.1-10** (focus on 1-5 and pick up at 6 next week)

***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, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 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. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.***

Let me start by giving you our Big Idea from this text and then we'll dig in a little bit at a time.

**Big Idea: We Avoid Spiritual Captivity By Depending On The Power Of Jesus.**

Now, let me show you where I'm getting that from our text.

1. WE NEED TO AVOID CAPTIVITY

### **Colossians 2:1**

***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,***

Paul says he is in a great struggle for these believers. That word “struggle” translates the Greek word “agon.” It’s where we get our word “agony.” It originally meant “to engage in intense struggle, involving physical or nonphysical force against strong opposition— to fight.”

Ok, so Paul is in an agonizing fight. Now, look down at verse 8

### **Colossians 2:8**

***See to it that no one takes you captive...***

Paul isn’t the only one in a fight. All of us are. All of us have an enemy who is seeking to take us captive and rob us of the life Jesus came to give.

### **John 10:10**

***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.***

### **Ephesians 6:12**

***For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***

### **1 Peter 5:8–9**

***Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.***

Friends, we are living in a world at war. It doesn’t matter where we come from or the amount of money we have or don’t have, all of us are living in war torn world with an enemy who wants to take us captive and keep us from the life Jesus died and rose again to give us. No matter who you are, that’s true about you.

As a matter of fact, in verse 1, Paul mentions the Christians of Laodicea. Laodicea is about 10 miles away from Colossae. But even though these two cities were close together, they were two cities on a totally different trajectory. Colossae was a small town in decline. Laodicea was a city on the rise. It was home to a major banking industry, textile production, and famous medical school. So, between poor, Podunk Colossae and thriving Laodicea, you have the whole spectrum of human experience. And, as much as separates them socially, economically, or culturally, there are some things they all have in common. And one of those things is a common enemy.

We have to get out of the mindset of the Christian life as our best life now where everything is smooth sailing or floating around the pool of life with an umbrella drink in hand. As we follow Jesus, our lives will constantly be under attack. The picture Paul is giving us here is one where there are only two options. We are either doing battle or we are living in captivity as prisoners of war.

So, how do we avoid being held captive? Let’s keep moving with our big idea.

## **2. WE AVOID CAPTIVITY BY DEPENDING ON THE POWER OF JESUS**

### *Colossians 1:27–29*

*To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

How did Paul struggle? How did he fight? By the power of Jesus working in Him. And that's what he is wanting for these believers and the believers in Laodicea and everywhere else, as well.

### *Colossians 2:2*

***that their [referring to the Colossians and Laodiceans and everyone else who hasn't met Paul face to face] hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,***

### *Colossians 2:5*

***For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.***

Paul desires for all these believers to come to the place of understanding the truth about Jesus and living by faith in Him – that's how you experience the power of Jesus to fight the attacks of the enemy.

Listen, friends, we are no match against the work of the enemy. That's why we need Jesus. And we don't just need Jesus, we have Him as we trust in Him. That's the theme of Colossians. Christ in us, the hope of glory. In His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus came to do for us what we can't do for ourselves. He lived the perfect life we have all failed to live. He died on the cross as our substitute, enduring the punishment our sin deserves. He rose again from the dead to raise us up to a brand-new life. That means we can live in freedom and victory.

### *John 10:10*

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

Jesus came to bring us victory over the enemy so that we could have abundant life in the midst of the battle. It's still a battle. It's still a struggle. It's still agonizing. PAUL IS WRITING THIS IN PRISON! But, in Christ, it's a fight from the place of life and freedom not from the place of death and captivity. And that's all the difference in the world. As we trust in Jesus, Jesus lives in us. There's victory in Jesus.

And our enemy knows this. Satan knows there is victory and life and freedom in Christ. So, what does the enemy do to try and take us captive and keep us from experiencing a life of freedom in Jesus? What is the enemy's strategy to keep us from trusting in Jesus in the battles of life? He wages a propaganda campaign of lies and deception.

### *Colossians 2:4*

***I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.***

The enemy seeks to delude us with plausible arguments. The word that's translated plausible arguments means "plausible, but false, speech resulting from the use of well-constructed, probable arguments." The enemy is a master manipulator. He knows how to tailor an argument in a way that can make you think something is possible and then probably and once you think it's probable, it's a short step to believing it's true.

[A friend received an email from “me.”]. Whoever these people are, they know that their best chance at fooling people who know me is to make it sound as much like me as possible. Gift cards for widows or single moms. None of them are asking for money to help buy beer for an upcoming staff party.

The power of a lie is in its resemblance to the truth. And that’s how the enemy works. He uses well-constructed arguments that are tailor-made to sound believable to YOU.

For some, this looks like well-constructed arguments that question the existence of God. For others, it looks like a well-constructed argument that makes you believe you are a naturally good person who doesn’t need to be saved. For others, it looks like a well-constructed argument that makes you believe you are such a wicked person, there’s no way you could ever be saved...”the Bible isn’t completely true”...”God isn’t really good”...”Jesus is merely a great man but He isn’t actually God”...

Each of us has our own inclinations in the way we think and the enemy attacks our minds through custom-made arguments that our minds think sound possible. And once we begin to believe they might be true, we are on our way to believing they are actually true.

*Colossians 2:8*

*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,*

Sometimes the delusion of plausible/probable arguments comes through man-made philosophies that sound wise but are empty deceit. Sometimes, those philosophies revolve around human traditions, often religious traditions. Paul says they are according to the elemental spirits of the world.

That phrase “elementary spirits” translates the Greek word *stoicheia*. *Stoicheia* refers to basic components or building blocks. For example, when we learn our ABCs, we are learning the basic components for written language. When we learn the periodic table of elements, we are learning the basic components for the material universe.

But there’s another meaning for the word *stoicheia*. A lot of people in Paul’s day believed that the universe was made up of four basic components, or elements: water, earth, air, and fire. And they believed there were gods who were behind each of those substances. A god of water. A god of earth. A god of air. A god of fire. So, *stoicheia* referred to the false gods people believed were the powers behind the universe.

In verse 18, Paul says the false teachers in Colossae were insisting on the worship of so-called angels. It’s possible that the false teachers were attacking the deity of Christ by saying that He was just one of many other gods, that there were many powers behind the universe and Jesus was just one alongside them.

But rather than spending all of our time focusing on all the possible philosophies and plausible arguments the enemy uses as propaganda to captivate your mind, look at the last phrase of verse 8.

*Colossians 2:8*

*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.*

The bottom line is that the enemy is going to attack your mind with anything, and I mean anything, that will keep you from focusing your heart on Jesus. He will use every argument, every philosophy, every religious tradition, every false god that promises to offer power, every question, every

distraction, every rumor or fear or news story or political agenda. He will use anything and everything to capture your mind and keep you from the one and only thing that can bring you victory and freedom and life – Jesus and Jesus alone.

So, if that's the battle and the enemy's strategy, what weapons do we have to help us focus our hearts on Jesus and build up our faith?

Let me close by showing you three critical components that help you focus your heart on Jesus and guard your heart from Satan's attacks.

## 1. TRUTH

*Colossians 1:28–29*

*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

Paul struggled by the power of Christ to proclaim and teach the truth about Jesus because we can't believe and trust the truth about Jesus if we don't know it.

*Colossians 2:2-3*

***that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

As Paul is working to make the truth of Jesus known, he says his goal is that these Colossian believers would become assured in their understanding and knowledge of Christ.

The way you guard your mind against the lies of the enemy is by focusing your mind on the truth of God's word – which reveals Jesus to us.

When federal agents are being trained to spot fake currency, they don't begin by looking at counterfeit bills. They begin by studying the real thing. For instance, hundred-dollar bills are elaborately designed with certain features that are extremely difficult to reproduce. There are watermarks. There is a security ribbon embedded in the paper. The number 100 is printed with color-shifting ink. The way you spot a fake is by being too familiar with the real thing that you recognize when something is off.

The way my friend knew that it wasn't me asking him for money was because he knows me well enough to know I wouldn't do that. He recognized some things that just aren't like me.

And that's how Paul taught these believers to spot the counterfeit lies of the enemy. Get so familiar with the truth that you can recognize when something is off. Knowing the truth of God's word is the best way to recognize the lies of the enemy.

Read your bibles. Memorize scripture. Engage in small group bible studies. Listen to sound preaching. Jesus said that when we know the truth, the truth will set us free.

## 2. PRAYER

### **Colossians 2:1**

***For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you...***

Paul says he is struggling, or fighting, on their behalf. Most scholars believe he is talking about prayer because he says a similar thing in chapter 4 about Epaphras...

### **Colossians 4:12**

*Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.*

The way Paul and Epaphras battled against the lies of the enemy on behalf of these believers was by praying for them.

We encounter the power of Jesus through prayer. So, pray. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Pray for protection from the enemy's attacks. Pray for deliverance from the enemy's schemes. Pray.

### **Hebrews 4:16**

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

When you sense your need for help against the attacks of the enemy, go to the throne of God in prayer and you will find mercy and grace to help in your time of need. We won't defeat the enemy by coming up with better arguments against his lies, we will defeat the enemy when you look to our Savior in prayer.

## **3. COMMUNITY**

### **Colossians 2:2**

***that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,***

Paul says that our hearts will be encouraged to reach assurance of understanding and knowledge of Jesus as our hearts are knit together in love with other believers.

### **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.*

In other words, you aren't meant to fight alone. Just think of this. All the way back in Genesis 1 and 2, we find the biblical account of creation. God made everything and the bible says that everything God made was good. He made man. And do you remember what God said. He said it isn't good for man to be alone. The first time there's an "it's not good" in the bible, it's before sin entered the picture.

God's design is for us to be connected in life-giving relationship to other believers. That's why the church is called the body of Christ. There are 59 one-another commands in the New Testament. Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). Pray for one another (James 5:16). Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10). Almost 60 commands of Scripture that you aren't obeying unless you are living in close relationship with other believers. You can't enjoy the life Jesus desires to give you if you do life all by yourself.

And the enemy knows this. Which is why in his attempt to deceive you he works to isolate you. How did he tempt Eve in the garden? He waited until she was alone. The lies of the enemy are most effective when we are in isolation.

That's what our Wednesday Night Bible studies are emphasizing the next few weeks. If you aren't a part of them, join us this week. It's not too late to start. Join a small group on Sunday mornings.

Friend, you are in a battle. The fight is real and some of you feel the agony deeply today. And, in many ways, the fight will remain a fight but being on the front lines of the fight is vastly different than living captive to the enemy. So, look to Him. Fix your heart on Him in truth and prayer and community with others.