

# DO NOT NEGLECT

## Sermon Title: Do Not Neglect

### Introduction

**Romans 3:28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

**Romans 5:1 (ESV)** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- How many of us have ever read the above scriptures in our bibles.
- We can see that in order to be justified (to be made right/righteous by God) it is by faith alone.
- How many of us have heard teachings from “Christians” which state that to be justified by God, you need to add something “extra”
- We might have heard these teaching in some parts of the church and this is how false beliefs spread and get anchored in the life of the church when the word of God is not preached and applied properly in the life of believers.
- There are also many examples of falsehoods that have crept into the church over the centuries.
- Today I will be preaching from the book of Colossians
- Colossians is a prison letter probably written when Paul was a prisoner in Rome
- Colossians focuses on Christ’s divinity and existence.
- In this letter the emphasis is made of Jesus being Lord.
- In Colossians Jesus is exalted and Christians are exhorted by Paul to live holy lives.
- There was a false teaching in Colossians **that Paul and Epaphras** (Who started the church at Colossae) felt had invaded the church.
- There are **uncertainties** to what the false teaching was. Paul uses **the truth to defeat the false teaching by emphasising who Jesus was, what He has done. False doctrines and beliefs are therefore destroyed by the truth.**
- **False teachings in that setting and even in our day** usually take place when our **doctrine is not clear and when we don’t know the truth or we know the truth but choose not to apply it in our lives**

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- There are therefore certain aspects of our faith that we should not neglect so that we do not end **up falling astray from the truth.**
- A lot of people are falling into falsehood because they **do not know the truth and they** have not grasped it.
- A lot of people identify as Christians but they do not actually live the Christian life as their belief system is distorted and they do not live by the truth.
- In our nation the majority of the people identify as Christian, but most of them do mix Christianity with other beliefs because even in the church false teachings have crept in which have swayed people away from living according to the word of God
- Going back to the church at Colossae, there was a dangerous teaching that was circulating in the church which threatened the well being of the church
- If we are to relate to our current generation, teachings that are false are creeping into the church because we are exposed to social media and other media houses, and it is easy to be swayed by these and teach a gospel contrary to the truth
- There are some fundamental truths of our Christian faith that we should not neglect if we are to remain standing in our walk with the Lord.
- I have therefore entitled my message, “Do Not Neglect”. Meaning there are some principles we should never discard if we are to remain rooted in Christ.
- The first area I want to share that we should not neglect is :-

### **1. Do not neglect acknowledging the Supremacy of Christ**

**Scripture reading:**

**Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)**

**<sup>15</sup>The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup>For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the**

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supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

- In v.15 Jesus is described as being the image of God and the firstborn of all creation and the image of the invisible God.
- This shows that Jesus is an exact representation of God.
- See Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)

**The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven**

- Jesus is the exact imprint of God. Jesus is fully God.
- As Albert Barnes said, "Jesus is the Father in human flesh".
- Hold a high view of God and see Jesus as Lord
- In v.16 we can see that all things were created through him.
- Jesus was not created when he was born by Mary but he was the agent of creation.
- Everything was created by him for him so that all creation can worship Him
- In v.17 we also see that Jesus holds all things together just as in Hebrews 1:3 where it is mentioned that Jesus holds all things together by His powerful word
- Jesus is Lord.
- In v17 Christ is described as being before all things which shows that He existed before anything else was made.
- In the passage above, in v.18 Jesus is described as the first born among the dead. In Jewish culture, the **term first born** was not one of birth order as we understand today that's why **Esau could "sell" his birthright to Jacob**, Lets read the scripture below:

**Genesis 25:29-34**

**Esau Sells His Birthright**

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<sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. <sup>30</sup> And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.<sup>[a]</sup>) <sup>31</sup> Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." <sup>32</sup> Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" <sup>33</sup> Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

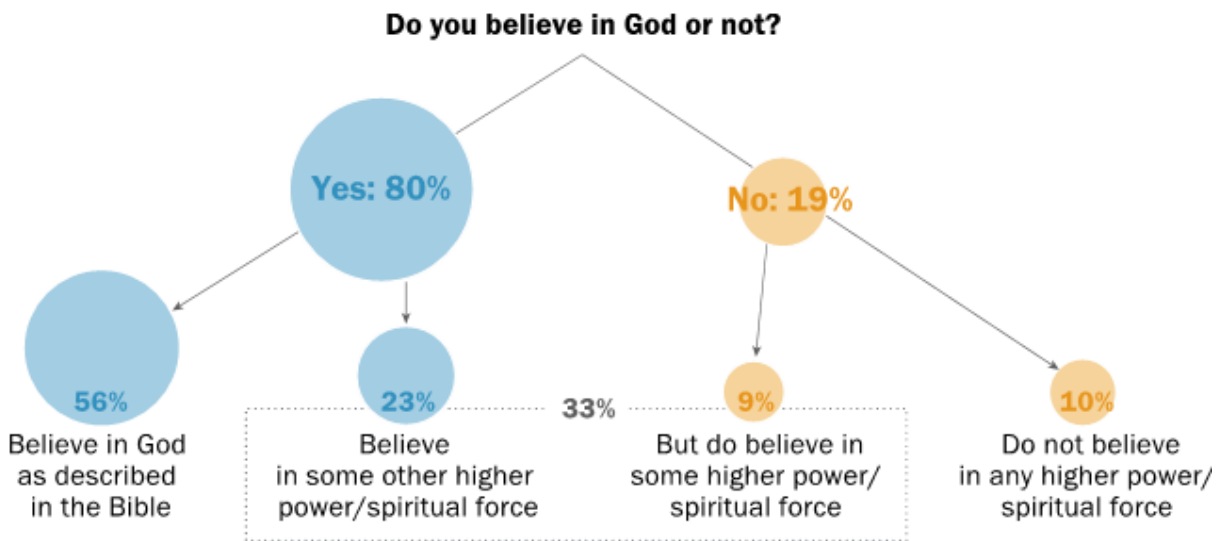
- What the title "first born" referred to in Jewish culture was about **supremacy and authority**.
- Supremacy according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica can be defined as **the quality or state of having more power, authority, or status than anyone else** : the state of being supreme. military/economic supremacy.
- In the current world, supremacy could mean one nation dominating over others in terms of the economy
- One race or people having more power or dominating over other races.
- Russia dominating over Croatia in the war currently taking place
- A first born in Jewish culture inherited a double portion of the properties when the father died and also led the family
- So based on this we can conclude that Jesus is supreme.
- Jesus has authority and power.
- As a church and as a people we should never look down upon Christ or ever neglect acknowledging the authority and power that He carries
- If we neglect acknowledging the authority and power that Jesus carries it is easy to be drawn into falsehoods and wrong teachings that are circulating within the body of Christ today
- In v18 Christ is defined as the head of the body which is the church, this means that Christ is the leader of the church.
- As Christ is the leader of the church, the church cannot function without Him
- Without Christ being at the centre of the church we cannot function or experience God without Christ being at the centre of it all.

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- As the church we need to acknowledge that without Christ we are nothing
- **Why has it been important for me to talk about the Supremacy of Christ?**
- It has been important to define the supremacy of Christ so that as believers we know what value we need to place on Christ
- It is important for us as believers to have Christ as supreme in our lives because as believers if we don't hold Christ dear to us and hold Him as supreme in our lives, we will be drawn to many philosophies and belief systems that will draw us away from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This draws us into falsehoods and takes us away from the truth
- This leads to our Christianity being destroyed and resulting in individuals becoming poor spiritually.
- We will look at some findings by the Pew Research state that about a third of US adults believe in a higher power but not in the God of the bible

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### **One-third of U.S. adults believe in a higher power of some kind, but not in God as described in Bible**



Note: Don't know or unclear responses not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding.  
Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.  
"When Americans Say They Believe in God, What Do They Mean?"

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*The survey questions that mention the Bible do not specify any particular verses or translations, leaving that up to each respondent's understanding. But it is clear from questions elsewhere in the survey that Americans who say they believe in God "as described in the Bible" generally envision an all-powerful, all-knowing, loving deity who determines most or all of what happens in their lives. By contrast, people who say they believe in a "higher power or spiritual force" – but not in God as described in the Bible – are much less likely to believe in a deity who is omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent and active in human affairs.*

- The statistics would not be that much different in our context where African Traditional Religion is dominant and there is syncretism where there is a lot of mixture of Christianity with ATR.
- Most People believe in god in African Traditional Religion but this god is not the God of the bible
- These people who believe in the god of ATR still go to church but they have chosen to listen to other people who have said there is nothing wrong with practising ATR and Christianity
- This practice called syncretism of mixing Christianity and ATR was introduced by leaders in other Christian denominations who wanted to woe Africans to Christianity
- Just as Paul chose to address the church at Colossae by first mentioning the supremacy of Christ, we also need to see Christ as supreme in our lives because of the **false teachings** and **doctrines** and **habits** in our day such as New Age teachings, African traditional religions and other religions that surround us as people of God.
- We therefore need to know the voices and teachings we listen to in our walk with God so that we are swayed away
- We can end up being in the church Of Jesus Christ but become that 33% that believe in a higher power and not necessarily the God of the bible.
- If we are not careful these beliefs that most beliefs that are around us creep into our lives when we have a low view of Christ or if we also don't grasp that Christ is sufficient for us as He hold all things together as we have seen in v.15-18 above. Just as in the statistics above people end up not viewing God as omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing, all seeing), omnipresence-(God is everywhere)

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- Some of the beliefs and habits that are unscriptural that we develop are as a result of us not having the right view of Christ in our lives.
- My question that I leave with you today is
- **What is your view of Christ?**
- **Do you equate Jesus as being at the same level as other gods and belief systems?**
- The answer to these questions will also affect how you worship God and the place of importance He has in your life
- For example, if you have a low view of Christ in terms of His authority and power, you might not place importance on praying to Him because you will feel that He might not answer your prayers
- If you believe that Christ is at the same level as the god of ATR, you will hold the view that God is distant you can not have a personal relationship with Christ
- You will distance yourself from God and you will not see the need to attend church as instructed in Hebrews 10:25.
- You will also not highly regard attending small groups as you will not see the value God places on them as you will not see them as an avenue God uses to equip you as a believer
- You will only attend church when it is convenient for you and when you are in Crisis
- You will put watching soccer or going out on a picnic at the same level as attending church
- Entertaining friends and relatives as more important than attending prayer meetings.
- This is because in ATR, Prayer to God directly is not a necessity on a daily basis and also done through ancestors.
- My encouragement today is that you would hold Christ as supreme in your life
- Give him the honour that He deserves.
- Do not neglect to give him the respect and place of importance that He deserves in your life
- In that way you will not be swayed and dragged into all sorts of falsehoods that are found in the body of Christ today.

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Another way not to drift into false hoods is that:-

### **2. Do not neglect gaining Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding**

#### **Colossian 1:9-14 (NIV)**

<sup>9</sup> For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>10</sup> so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, <sup>12</sup> and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you<sup>[b]</sup> to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- In v.9-10 above, Paul prays for the Colossian church that they would be filled with wisdom and understanding that the spirit gives so that they may live a life worthy of the calling and so that they would bear fruit.
- In Colossae, the false teachers were offering Knowledge and wisdom to their followers which was contrary to the teachings of Christ
- In v.9 Paul Prays that the church there would have wisdom that is given by God
- It is important that as believers we gain spiritual wisdom and understanding from God and not from man
- It doesn't matter how eloquent someone speaks and tries to speak to you what is contrary to Christ, you as a believer should have spiritual wisdom and understanding to know that it is contrary to the word of God.
- Without spiritual understanding as a believer, you become unstable, prone to false teachings and bad habits and you are not able to bear much fruit in your life

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- How do you as a believer gain spiritual wisdom and understanding?
- Lets look again at Colossians 1:9
- **Colossian 1:9-14 (NIV)**
- **<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,**
- The first way we gain spiritual wisdom and understanding is from the Holy Spirit.
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**John 14:16 (ESV) And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,**

- The Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13) guides and leads. **John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.**
- In the context of this verse, the Holy Spirit's ministry was to guide the 11 disciples into all truth
- **You can also ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth.**
- Those who are led by the spirit are **truly sons of God and are part of God's family.**
- In that way those who are led by the spirit, avoid falsehoods
- So what should be your response?
- **Linger in the presence of the Lord.** Don't be in a rush if you want to hear clearly what the Lord is saying.
- When you start living out the word and paying attention to what the Holy Spirit says, the **Holy Spirit will remind you of the things you have learnt from the Word of God and which you need to apply in your life.**
- This make you avoid falsehoods as you will remember what the word of God says.
- **Why is it important to gain spiritual understanding and wisdom?**
- v.10 has the answer (Colossians 1:10). So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way, Bearing fruit in every way and growing in the Knowledge of God.

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- **To walk** is Jewish metaphor on how people can conduct or behave themselves. Here Paul is encouraging the Church to walk in a way that pleases God so as to bear fruit.
- The Parable of the sower in Mark 4 talks about different soils and as children of God our desire should be to be like the good soil so that we are able to bear much fruit.
- The way we walk and the result of bearing much fruit will become a reality when we know God and the comes when we have wisdom and spiritual understanding
- **What does it mean to be fruitful in every goodwork?**
- Obedience and doing what God wants you to do. A few weeks ago we learnt that faith and obedience go hand in hand.

### **John 3:36 NIV**

**Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.**

- Our faith in Christ has to have obedience.
- When our attention is fixed on obeying Christ and pleasing Him, there is also no opportunity for us to be swayed by false teachings, beliefs and doctrines that might want to take away our attention from our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **3. Do not neglect living out your faith**

- Colossians 2:6-8
- **<sup>6</sup> And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. <sup>7</sup> Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.**
- **<sup>8</sup> Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers<sup>[a]</sup> of this world, rather than from Christ.**

Lets look at the above scripture in another version (Message)

**<sup>6-7</sup> My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now *live* him. You're**

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deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start *living* it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving.

<sup>8-10</sup> Watch out for people who try to dazzle you with big words and intellectual double-talk. They want to drag you off into endless arguments that never amount to anything. They spread their ideas through the empty traditions of human beings and the empty superstitions of spirit beings. But that's not the way of Christ. Everything of God gets expressed in him, so you can see and hear him clearly. You don't need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him. When you come to him, that fullness comes together for you, too. His power extends over everything.

### **3. Do not neglect what you have been taught**

- Continue to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and let your life be built up in Christ.
- Be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The standard definition of “disciple” (noun) is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him — someone who, because of God's awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. (Desiring God)

- In Colossians 2:7 Paul was talking to the church at Colossae about the foundations of their faith that they were taught by Epaphras.
- Paul was calling the church back to the foundational truths.
- He was urging them to go back to the truths.
- Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a lifelong process and there is a never time when one reaches a stage where they can say , “I am done I have matured enough”.
- V.7 is clear “Let your roots go down in Him”.

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- When your life is centered upon the teachings of the Lord, your faith grows strong, and you will be strong in the truth you were taught.
- Let's read
- **Colossians 2:8-10 (Message)**

**<sup>8-10</sup> Watch out for people who try to dazzle you with big words and intellectual double-talk. They want to drag you off into endless arguments that never amount to anything. They spread their ideas through the empty traditions of human beings and the empty superstitions of spirit beings. But that's not the way of Christ. Everything of God gets expressed in him, so you can see and hear him clearly. You don't need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him. When you come to him, that fullness comes together for you, too. His power extends over everything.**

- When you are firmly rooted in the truth you will not be swayed by false doctrines that come to sway you from the truth.
- Sweet talkers on youtube, facebook, Instagram and Facebook will not sway you.

**So what are some of the foundational habits you need to continue with throughout your life?**

**1. Reading and meditating on the word of God.** Give yourself time in the word of God. Spend time in the word. There are no shortcuts. After reading the word of God Live according to the word of God

E.g. If the word says give generously as in 2 Corinthians 8 where there is a description of how the Macedonian church gave beyond their means you must obey the word and give as the word of God instructs.

Its just not about continuous study of the Word of God but live it out. You also mature in your faith when you live out the word of God.

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**2. Prayer. Spend extended times in prayer.** Don't just talk all the time. Have moments that you keep quiet and hear what the Lord is saying to you. Prayer is not one way communication but two way communication with God.

**3. Place importance on fellowship with other believers.** Fellowship is not merely socializing with believers but includes being there with other believers to hear the word, to pray, attending church, bible studies etc.

### **Conclusion**

- Today we have learnt that you cannot neglect having a high regard of Christ in your life if you want to continue to remain in the truth and in the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Remain a disciple of Jesus, keep learning from Him
- Rely on the Holy Spirit to gain spiritual understanding and insight
- By doing this you will not be tossed and turned by false doctrine

### **PRAYER**

Lord I pray today that you would deliver your people from falsehoods. Where people have been entrenched in syncretism and have mixed Christianity with other beliefs, free them from these falsehoods. Open their eyes so that they can realise the false teachings that have crept in. Help them to renounce false beliefs from a young age, that they have been taught and that they think are right. In the mighty name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

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## **Works Cited**

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